

Love in 2007: A New Year's Resolution for Your Relationship

by Jean MacKenzie

With the New Year upon us it is time again to think about making resolutions. Unfortunately more than a few people have given up on New Year's resolutions after one or more good intentions went awry. You see it takes more than enthusiasm and grand aspirations to keep a New Year's resolution.

However, New Year's resolutions are good things. Striving to be a better person is always an admirable idea. But, I've got an even better idea. If you are married or dating than why not make a resolution as a couple to improve your relationship? "But," you say, "we're back to the original problem. How do we make sure we will follow through with our resolution?" Well, one frequently recommended way of keeping your New Year's resolution is to pair up with a friend who will help motivate you. If you work with your spouse towards a mutual resolution then you will inherently have someone to support you and motivate you towards achieving your goal.

Here are some other tips to help you accomplish your relationship goals and develop a more intimate relationship in 2007:

1. Be realistic

You will only discourage yourself if you make resolutions that you can never achieve. If you've never taken a dance lesson before than it would be unrealistic to set a goal of winning a national dance competition. However, if you would both like to learn to dance then you may want to set a goal of being able to strut your stuff and the New Year's eve ball 2007.

2. Describe your resolutions in specific terms

Instead of "We want to create more romance in our marriage," opt for "We will set aside time for a date once a week." or "We will set aside 15 minutes each day to talk with each other without distractions such as children, telephones, or television."

3. Create a Plan

In order to be able to follow through on your resolution you must work together to determine what steps will lead you to your goal. For instance if you resolve to eliminate a major debt than you will need to determine how you are going to go about it. Will you read a book on financial management, hire a financial planner, will one of you take on an extra job, or will you look for ways to reduce your spending. What steps are require to reach your goal and when will each step be accomplished?

4. Write Down Your Resolution and Plan

Commit your resolution and plan to writing and review them often. Writing down your goals will keep you focused on them and will thus make you more likely to achieve them.

5. Remain Flexible

Don't let obstacles, even a momentary lapse in motivation, discourage you from following through. Be prepared to adapt your plan as needed. If you plan on talking daily and you get off track start over again. If you plan on a date night on a particular night of the week and some other event crops up on that evening than revisit your plan and find another time slot. If you are trying to pay off debt and a major repair comes up regroup and adjust your goals accordingly. If you find your steps are more difficult than you anticipated then reassess your plan and create simpler steps. Remember, great things

don't happen over night.

So, whether your resolution is as simple as adding more affection to your relationship or as grand as going on a second honeymoon I hope these tips will help you to reach your goals and create a stronger and more loving relationship in 2007.

About Jean

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

Where do you start?

Look no further.

1. **Go to www.jeanmackenzie.com and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, **“10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.”**
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

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