

Is It the Right Time for a Fresh Start?

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Scientific American:

Around this time of year, I tend to look back at the list of commitments I made in early January: I will exercise more often, spend more time with family, do a better job balancing my personal and professional lives, leave my laptop home when we go on vacation, and so on. And yet, only two months into the new year, I find I am not doing such a good job. And I am sure I am not alone. On January 1, people around the globe commit with vigor to all sorts of virtuous goals, from losing weight to being a more understanding boss or partner to eating more healthfully to saving more money. And, before too long, most of us find we're back where we started.

Setting virtuous goals at the beginning of the year can be quite effective, recent research tells us, since the first day of the year is a *temporal landmark*. Temporal landmarks signal the start of a new, distinct time period — making us feel we can start from a clean slate. They highlight a contrast between current and future goals (which are often different!) and can thus be a relatively simple way to motivate yourself to accomplish your virtuous goals. So, here is the good news: If you feel like you already failed on your resolutions like me, you do not need to wait till December 31 to start fresh. You simply need to identify a good temporal landmark, and give it another shot.

Read the whole story: [Scientific American](#)