



## Five easy new year's resolutions actually worth keeping

Well friends, it's that time of year again. That time when we reflect on the previous 364 days and take stock of the things we want to change in the next 365 days. I like the idea of new year's resolutions. In fact, last year my resolution was to set up this blog and try to write at least one article per week. Some weeks I succeeded more than others, but in general, I hit most of my own editorial deadlines.

The issue with resolutions is: many people try to make drastic life-changing alterations that inevitably set themselves up to fail because the goals they set are either unrealistic or the person is unprepared to make the necessary changes to achieve them. To me, I prefer the "baby steps" approach (yep, from [What About Bob?](#)) of setting new year's resolutions. Find a few things in your life you want to change, and have the capability and commitment to change, and start doing it one baby step at a time. To that end, below are five easy new year's resolutions that are actually worth keeping. The benefits of these goals far outweigh the effort needed to achieve them. Best of all, you will notice results right away.

### 1. Say "thank you" [at least] once per day

I have a colleague who sits down at his desk every morning and writes a thank you note. It's never

anything fancy and the note recipient may not have done anything extraordinary, but he thanks at least once person per day for some act of kindness or help provided. It may just be a simple two sentence note to say:

*“Thank you for all your time, dedication and perseverance on our project. The quality of your work is outstanding and it is making a big difference to so many people in our organization.”*

Imagine looking back on your year through the lens of your email archive and seeing over 225 (approximately 45 working weeks \* 5 emails per week) thank you emails to your colleagues. Now that’s something to be proud of...

But let’s call that a “best practice.” It doesn’t have to go to that level of formality. It could be quick verbal thank you, a text, or just a pat-on-the-back with a “good job.” Whatever form or format it takes, ticking off a thank you once per day will not only make you feel good, it will uplift those around you.

## 2. Say “hi” to people in the hallway

One of my friends remarked to me earlier this year:

*“You ever notice when you pass someone in the hallway, if you know them, you nod up; if you don’t know them, you nod down?”*

Honestly, I had not noticed but when I started paying attention to it, he was right! So, the rebel that I was, I decided to break social norms and started saying “hi” to people as we passed in the hallway. I also made a concerted effort to nod up; especially to those I did not know. At first, some people were shocked and a few didn’t reply. But then I started to notice something interesting... The people who were previously “down-nodders” (aka did not know me) became “up-nodders” (aka knew me) within 1-2 hallway “hi’s.” I was amazed. So, I made the change permanent: I tried to say hi to as many people in the hallway

as I could (without being “creepy”). Give it a try. I’m sure you’ll be converting “down-nodders” to “up-nodders” in no time.

### 3. Smile

**Nat King Cole** had something when he sang about the virtues of smiling. You ever notice that those who smile more just seem to have an easier, and arguably better, time in their work and personal lives? The research supports this observation. **Arch Lustberg**, the legendary communications guru, often stated that your goal as a communicator is to be “liked.” Being liked helps make the message more digestible by the consumer. Your face is your billboard for likability and smiling is the first headline that anyone reads. Making a commitment to smile more, even if sometimes it feels a little unnatural, will inevitably brighten the day of those around you and you will get back every bit of positive energy you project.

### 4. Ask questions

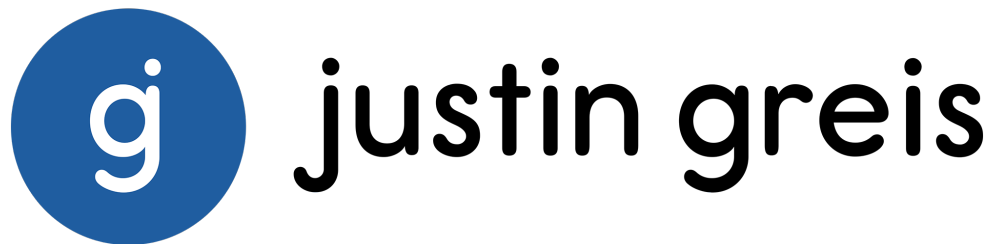
I wrote an article earlier in the year about **The Rule of Three Questions** which encouraged people to ask three questions of other people in a conversation before the topic was turned to you. It’s no secret that everyone loves to talk about themselves; after all you are the foremost authority on yourself! Asking questions is a selfless investment in getting to know someone. What you get back is a relationship, which is invaluable. Asking more questions demonstrates genuine interest in the other person and a desire for a relationship. Just make sure you remember what they say and ask follow up questions. Last thing you want is to turn a well-intentioned question into a disingenuous effort by not listening or responding to their replies. That’s called pulling a “**Handsome Dan**.” (*Party on, Wayne!*)

### 5. Pay it forward

Help someone with a difficult assignment, take something off your boss’s or colleague’s plate or just do something nice for someone. Paying favors and good deeds forward drops relationship capital in the bank. After all, you never know when you may need someone else’s help to do a project or favor for you.

It's much easier for someone to say no to you if you've never done anything for them.

So, with that I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. Thank you to all of you out there for your readership, feedback and continued support. I have some exciting articles planned for 2015. Here's to another great year together!



hi, i'm justin  
(nice to meet you)

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