New Year's resolutions need reinterpreted

By Haley Gimpel

New Year's resolutions are venus flytraps waiting to launch their attack on you: the fly. They look so pretty and perfect, like they will lead you to something fulfilling. But in reality, they will only make you feel imprisoned in its jaws. Too much pressure is applied on people to transform into an entirely different person through New Year's resolutions. Eating clean, exercising more, saving money, increasing education, furthering relationships, and quitting bad habits are all examples of what people want to accomplish. Don't get me wrong, the intentions are great. But these resolutions contain little wiggle room for life, which could lead to no change at all.

According to Google Dictionary, the word 'resolution' means "a firm decision to do or not to do something." This definition itself is limiting. It insinuates that your resolution has to be all-or-nothing: 100% or 0%. As a result, when people mess up a few days of their resolution plan, they just drop it completely. It's like spilling a drop of milk, then deciding to dump out the entire gallon.

So instead of referring to them as a resolution, maybe they should simply be goals and ambitions. Google Dictionary defines 'goal' as "the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result." New year's goals can be what you desire to improve, even if you have to take the small wins over huge accomplishments. A win is a win.

But, goals have to be realistic, specific, planned, and somewhat achievable. If you say one of your goals is to be happier, make it more in-depth. What makes you happy? Will you spend more time with family, find hobbies you love, or explore new experiences? Suppose your goal is to be healthier. This calls for making a schedule and a plan. It doesn't have to be anything crazy; what days you'll work out, what kind of workouts you'll do, what food you'll put on your grocery list, and how much sleep you'll get should suffice as a plan.

Goals don't need to be time-limited. You could conjure up one big ambition, such as buying a new car with cash or advancing your education, which may take longer than a year. If so, just carry it over into the next year. Don't limit yourself to imaginary rules.

For my goals, I set a few small aspirations, with one overall objective for the year. I want to place at State Journalism, post more on my art social media account, get all A's in classes, research career ideas, and possibly apply for a summer job. My overall objective is to complete the Bible Recap and deepen my faith in God. My goals are specific to my life and are all things I can control (for the most part). Personalizing your goals makes them feel real and attainable.

Just remember: nothing moves if you refuse to budge. Goals will render useless, just like resolutions, if you don't actually intend to put in effort. As they say, if you're going to talk the talk, you should walk the walk. Instead of feeling stuck in the loop of failing your resolutions each year, giving up, and starting new next year, set goals you can achieve. Do not limit yourself to what you're 'supposed' to do. Plant the seed of ambition to escape the bite of New Year's resolutions.

Graphic by Haley Gimpel