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## New Year, New You [Main](#)



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# 9 Secrets of Motivated People

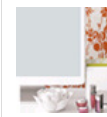
Real-life strategies that will help you to actually accomplish the goals you've set for yourself this year.

by Lesley Alderman

New year, new you. It's the perennial January catchphrase that holds such conquer-the-world promise. And then, well, you get sidetracked with conquering your to-do list. But even the loftiest resolutions (running a marathon, writing a book) don't have to fall by the wayside come February. Staying motivated—and achieving what you set out to do on that bright New Year's Day—is surprisingly possible. Just follow these nine mantras, provided by researchers who study motivation and backed up by women who have used them to realize their biggest ambitions.

**1. When you make a plan, anticipate bumps.** Before even trying to achieve a goal, target potential pitfalls and troubleshoot them. Peter Gollwitzer, a professor of psychology at New York University, in New York City, says that people who plan for obstacles are more likely to stick with projects than those who don't. In a 2009 study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Gollwitzer compared two groups of women who wanted to be more active. Both groups were given information on leading healthy lifestyles. But the second was also taught how to foresee obstacles (example: "The weather forecast is bad, but I'm planning to go for a jog") and work around them using if-then statements ("If it rains, then I'll go to the gym and use the treadmill rather than skip exercising altogether"). No surprise, those in the second group fared better. Michelle Tillis Lederman of New York City practiced this strategy when she was writing a book last year. She installed blinds on her home-office door to minimize disruptions and hired an editor to give feedback on each chapter so she wouldn't get stuck along the way. She also established rules, like checking e-mails only after she had written for two hours. "It was easier to follow this plan," says Lederman, "than to wrestle with every distraction in the

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moment." Her book, *The 11 Laws of Likability* (American Management Association), will be published later this year.

**2. Channel the little engine that could—really.** A person's drive is often based on what she believes about her abilities, not on how objectively talented she is, according to research by Albert Bandura, a professor of psychology at Stanford University. His work has shown that people who have perceived self-efficacy (that is, the belief that they can accomplish what they set out to do) perform better than those who don't. That self-belief is what helped Ingrid Daniels of Newark, New Jersey, leave a stable corporate job to develop a T-shirt line after the birth of her first child. "It never occurred to me I could fail, even though I had no experience," she says. Today Daniels runs two successful small businesses (the T-shirt company and a line of stationery), which allows her to stay at home with her three children.



- a. At school.
- b. At work.
- c. At a party—we had mutual friends.
- d. Online.

Answer Now



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