

# Old habits die hard

Keeping your New Year's Resolutions using NLP

MASTOOR KHAN  
SPECIAL TO THE EPOCH TIMES

## MOST COMMON NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

- Get out of debt
- Lose weight and get into shape
- Quit smoking
- Spend more time with the family
- Get a raise or promotion at work
- Find a new job
- Take a holiday
- Help others
- Learn something new
- Go back to college

The statistics on how many people actually manage to follow through with their New Year's resolutions make depressing reading.

A study of 3,000 people carried out by the University of Hertfordshire found that by the end of the year, only 12 per cent of respondents had managed to stick to their New Year's resolutions.

Here's another sad statistic: three quarters of people who make a resolution to stop smoking start up again – usually very soon after they'd quit. Every January, without fail, gyms are inundated with hopefuls, buzzing from their New Year's celebrations, forking out for yearly memberships. In fact gyms will take on new members, vastly over capacity, safe in the knowledge that for most people any enthusiasm for the treadmill will fizzle out well before February.

Setting a self betterment goal – and then not being able to carry it through successfully is very demoralising. Is it just difficult because we lack will-power? David Key, NLP trainer and consultant at Auspicious Ltd, explains how the science of NLP sheds light on why so many New Year's resolutions fail miserably.

"We get what we think about. And we think faster

than we realise. Here's something to ponder: there are more cells in the human body than there are stars in five galaxies – and every cell is affected by what we think. NLP can help; it provides the equivalent of a user-manual for our brain.

"I had a client who came to me with his goal – he said he needed me to coach him to achieve it. And this was something that he'd wanted for a very, very long time. His goal was to have a tidier office. His desk and paperwork were a mess. He could never find anything when he needed it. Consequently everything was chaotic and took him much longer than it



GET WHAT YOU WANT: Simple NLP techniques can help with your New Year's resolutions

should have done. Now, this may seem like a very small thing, and something very easy to resolve – all he had to do was to tidy up after all – but he just hadn't been able to do it and it was really detracting from his quality of life.

"So I sat him down and asked him a few simple questions: 'What do you really want? 'I don't want a messy office any more.'

"So, what do you want instead? 'Well, I'd like a tidy office.'

"What else will change in your life when you have a tidy office? 'I'll be able to find things when I need them.'

"What will happen when you're able to find things when you need them? 'I'll be able to do things more quickly.'

"What else will you get if you're able to do things more quickly? 'I'll have more time to spend with my wife and kids.'

"That was his light bulb moment. He suddenly jumped up and said, 'Erm, you know what David? I don't think I need coaching. I'm off to tidy my office up right now.'

"Once people have clarified what it is that they do want, instead of what they don't want, and thought through all of the positive benefits of making that change, in a logical way, it gives clarity to the goal.

"Whilst my client had been focusing on the mess and how much he hated his chaotic surroundings, and how miserable it was making him, he wasn't able to see the solution. For the brain, every behaviour has a positive intention, whatever it is. This is one of the fundamental beliefs of Neuro-linguistic Programming. This client's intention for not tidying his office was to save him more time, but actually it had the opposite effect.

One of the defining characteristics of all successful people – in whatever field – is

## TIPS FOR SETTING A NEW YEAR'S (OR ANY TIME OF YEAR) RESOLUTION

If you're unhappy about something: ask yourself 'what do I want instead?'

Any NYR that has the words 'lose', 'give up', or 'don't want' is negative. It involves losing something and is consequently more difficult to keep.

Say: 'I want to be financially free', or better still 'I want x amount bank balance', the more specific the better, rather than, 'I don't want to be in debt'. This subtle difference can make or break your NYR.

There are three fundamental questions that successful people tick.

- 'Is my goal possible for me to achieve?'
- 'Am I capable?'
- 'Am I worthy of achieving this goal?'



that they set compelling goals for themselves. People need goals in life. Without them, you're like a ship without a rudder. But it's not enough to simply set yourself a goal. Goals need to be framed correctly. Take a look at how the top three of the ten most common resolutions are framed, linguistically, and you'll see why most NYRs fail.

"What NLP users learn," David continues, "are tried and tested techniques for communicating with our brains in very precise terms. Modelling skills based on observations and questioning of really successful people. NLP helps with clarifying our true goals in life. Many people mistake tasks for outcomes. Tasks are what you do to achieve outcomes. You may or may not enjoy them. When you know they are getting you what you want, you can bring more energy to them and enjoy them more."

"Often there is an incongruence between what people want and what they're doing every day to get what they want. Much of the time, people's actions and thoughts are simply self-sabotaging."

"I have clients who come to me with fairly small goals," David says, "and clients who have come to see me with very ambitious goals. The process that the brain needs to go through is the same. One client, who'd had a well-run but modest bakery for 12 years, wanted a multi-million pound business within two years. He had one two-hour session with me a month, for 18 months. After 18 sessions, his business was turning over in excess of £3m. And I never gave him one bit of advice..."

I just asked some good questions."

Stopping smoking is another common goal David is often asked to help with. "I always ask, before I coach people that they keep a diary for a week. Jot down timings, where they were, what they were thinking about when they smoked. This identifies all the triggers. I can tell when they're making it up. Approximately 70 per cent of people keep the diary. The other 30 per cent don't come back; it's too difficult, or it's not important enough to them. For people who do come back, there's a very high success rate. Nicotine is only in the bloodstream for two days. It's their beliefs that need changing. Typically, they're able to stop smoking within two hours."

Auspicious courses last for two days and are held in the beautiful surroundings of Fanhams Hotel in Hertfordshire, and other venues around the UK.

A limited number of places are available on a complimentary basis. David Key says: "The complimentary courses are for people who are new to NLP, to come and find out more about it first-hand. People can then go on for a further two days and obtain an NLP diploma, if they wish. We set a lot of time aside for goal setting, as it's very important to most people. We cover a lot of ground – rapport skills, conflict resolution, and sensory acuity. We dispel lots of common NLP and hypnosis myths."

There's a full listing of courses on [www.auspicious.co.uk](http://www.auspicious.co.uk) or phone 0845 434 0149 and speak to an adviser.

## LOOSE LEAF

ALEX FRASER



## Seasoning's greetings

Another Wuyi masterpiece from the same provenance is a Rou Gui, literally "Meat Cassia". Meat is mentioned because Cassia, a crude form of cinnamon (*Cinnamomum cassia* or *aromaticum* rather than *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (ie. Ceylon cinnamon), also referred to as true cinnamon) is mainly used in China etc. for enhancing meat. This style of oolong has hints of this spice as well as the typical charcoal-fired character of teas from the area and a very satisfying "throat taste". Ours is not 100 per cent hand-made, a great rarity, some of the cooling between firings being performed in rotating bamboo drums rather than by tossing in flat baskets. A small difference but seriously reflected in the price.

Our third Wuyi Oolong, again world-class and 1000 per cent hand-made, is a Shui Xian (Water Sprite) Oolong

that is from "Ancient Trees", which are over 100 years old. This is typified by some flowers but more hints of caramelised fruit. Old tree teas tend to be less obvious, more subtle, yet more profound. A young French lady, conversant with oologs, described our other, less grand, Shui Xian as tasting like tarte tatin. Pure poetry. There are only 14 kilos of this tea produced each year: a true rarity and also of exceptionally mellow, fruity delicousness.

The New Year is upon us and though there are difficult times ahead, may we approach them with optimism and consideration for others.

Thank you for reading my ramblings, if you have, and if not, why not? All best wishes for 2009.

Alex runs East Teas in Borough Market on Fridays and Saturdays. Email [epoch@eastteas.com](mailto:epoch@eastteas.com).

## Fruit and nut biscotti with white chocolate glaze

SANDRA SHIELDS  
SPECIAL TO THE EPOCH TIMES

This delightful mixture of dried fruit and nuts will use up any leftovers from Christmas. It also makes a delicious, crisp biscuit which is relatively lower in fat than other biscuits. Decorate with the white chocolate glaze and you can enjoy it after dinner with coffee or as a snack at any other time.

### INGREDIENTS

MAKES 18	
220g plain white flour	2 large eggs
2 tsp baking powder	1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp salt	110g dried cranberries
115g unsalted butter, room temperature	110g unsalted pistachios
140g caster sugar	40g dried apricots, cut fine
	112g Swiss white chocolate, chopped

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Mix together flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl. With an electric mixer, cream together butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the eggs and vanilla. Add the flour mixture a third at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in the cranberries, pistachios, and apricots just until blended. Dough will be sticky.
- Divide the dough in half and shape into 25x2.5cm (10x1 inch) logs. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place logs on the paper. Bake logs for approximately 30 minutes. Cool the logs on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, then transfer to a cutting board. With a sharp knife and a firm stroke to minimise crumbling, slice each biscotti diagonally into pieces that are 1.5cm (1/2 inch) thick.
- Lay the biscotti cut side down on the baking sheet and bake for another 10 minutes. Turn the pieces over and bake another 10 minutes. Cool on wire racks.
- Melt white chocolate in the top of a bowl over simmering water and stir until smooth. Drizzle the white chocolate with a spoon over the top of the biscotti.

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