

BECAUSE WORDS MATTER

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New Year Resolution Mistakes

There are two common mistakes that people tend to make before they even start to make their New Year resolutions: they think about what they "should" do, rather than what they really want to do. And worse they think in about what they should stop doing, rather than what they actually want to achieve. "What should I do this year?" "What should I stop doing?", "What do other people suggest I should work on?" To be successful at any change, you need to really want it. Unless you take time to consider what it is you really want (rather than what you should do or should stop doing) you will invariably end up making a resolution to which you are not entirely committed. Without commitment,

you aren't motivated and after the first setbacks or obstacles you will quit. So the first rule of New Year Resolutions is only to make ones that you are committed to – don't make a resolution simply because it is "the thing to do", or because someone has told you that you should. The irony of it is that New Year's resolutions have the potential to be very powerful because making them is such a well-recognized practice. Everyone knows that everyone else is setting resolutions. And what a great mutual support network that can provide! This external motivation and support, along with your internal motivation – the desire to succeed – is what can make the difference between success and failure.

The Global Classroom

Ahmad Farooq

Education that seeks to meet the needs of the 21st century must be global in outlook, says Fernando Reimers, professor of international education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "The world is increasingly interdependent," says Reimers, who will lead a professional education program at HGSE called Think Tank on Global Education. One of the key tasks of progressive educators is to help students understand what that interdependency will look like in their own lives, he says —

"what globalization means, and what it means for them." In this Harvard EdCast, Reimers frames global education as "a great opportunity to help students develop the skills

they'll need for the 21st century." "Global education gives us an opportunity to make education more interesting to students by connecting students to the world around them," he says. When thinking about the skills that will be necessary for success, include: •A capacity to understand the world and to function globally •Intercultural competency •Foreign language skills •Knowledge of world history •Knowledge of geography •an understanding of globalization. "They are no longer the province of a few selected individuals destined to work in foreign relations or international trade. They have become a common necessity for most educated people".

Inspirational Quotes

Shahzaib Fareed

1:- "Life is about making an impact, not making an income".
2:- "Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement".
3:- "The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity".
4:- Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.
5:- "Life isn't about getting and having, it's about giving and being".
6:- "The mind is everything. What you think you become".
7:- "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now".
8:- "Winning isn't everything,

but wanting to win is".
9:- "You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore".
10:- "There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing".
11:- "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined".
12:- "Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear".
13:- "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can".
14:- "A man does not have to be an angel to be a saint".

Earth is our Home

Sajid Ali

Earth, our home, is the only planet known to have an atmosphere containing free oxygen, oceans of liquid water on its surface, and, of course, life. Earth is the fifth largest of the planets in the solar system — smaller than the four gas giants, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, but larger than the three other rocky planets, Mercury, Mars and Venus. Earth has a diameter of roughly 8,000 miles (13,000 kilometers), and is round because gravity pulls matter into a ball, although it is not perfectly round, instead being more of an "oblate spheroid" whose spin causes it to be squashed at its poles and swollen at the equator. Roughly 71 percent of Earth's surface is covered by water, most of it in the oceans. About a fifth of Earth's atmosphere is made up of oxygen, produced by plants.

Earth spins on an imaginary line called an axis that runs from the North Pole to the South Pole, while also orbiting the sun. It takes Earth 23.439 hours to complete a rotation on its axis, and roughly 365.26 days to complete an orbit around the sun.

Some statistics about Earth, according to NASA: Average distance from the sun: 92,956,050 miles (149,598,262 km). Perihelion (closest approach to the sun): 91,402,640 miles (147,098,291 km). Aphelion (farthest distance from the sun): 94,509,460 miles (152,098,233 km). Length of solar day (single rotation on its axis): 23.934 hours. Length of year (single revolution around the sun): 365.26 days. Equatorial inclination to orbit: 23.4393 degrees. Scientists think Earth was formed at roughly the same time as

the sun and other planets some 4.6 billion years ago, when the solar system coalesced from a giant, rotating cloud of gas and dust known as the solar nebula. Earth is the only planet in the universe known to possess life.

There are several million known species of life, ranging from the bottom of the deepest ocean to a few miles into the atmosphere, and scientists think far more remain to be discovered. Scientists figure there are between 5 million and 100 million species on Earth, but science has only identified about 2 million of them. Earth is the only body in the solar system known to host life, although scientists suspect that other candidates — such as Saturn's moon Titan or Jupiter's moon Europa — have the potential to house primitive living creatures.

Effects of Stigma, Stereotype & Labels

Momina Nusrat

Stereotype threat the fear of being judged on the basis of negative stereotypes, and the fear of doing something that would confirm those stereotypes is insidious. It's a cyclical, self-fulfilling phenomenon, where members of stereotyped groups can feel so much pressure (consciously or not) from the weight of those fears that it inhibits their performance. Studies have demonstrated the effects of stereotype threat on everything from academic performance to athletic competition.

We see many students with learning-related disabilities reporting significant feelings of stigmatization. In an experiment, students are assigned to take a math test. In one case, students are asked to reveal their learning disability on a demographic form, in the other they are not. The stress of identifying brings their disability to the front of their minds and significantly affects their ability to perform on the test. Early results indicate that stereotype threat is present and sub-

stantially affects student performances in math.

The results are quite amazing when you consider that we are seeing the same students underperform on a math test nearly 15 percent lower in response to a very small manipulation. It will be interesting to see if this finding holds once data collection is complete, but these findings are consistent with the larger stereotype threat research literature. What can educators do to recognize and help students overcome these social-emotional threats? Teachers can make a huge difference. A big key to mitigating students' feelings of stigma is really in that relationship between teacher and student. So much of the time, as we progress up the grades, there's less focus on teachers developing a close interpersonal relationship with the kids in their classroom. Yet having a close and supportive relationship with a teacher can make all the difference for a student who feels undervalued or stigmatized. As a first step, I think teachers can begin

to ask kids what they think, how they feel, or what they're experiencing in class. It's a really powerful concept — ask them. As you're developing relationships with your students and focusing on that as part of your teaching, ask: How is this going for you? How could I make this work better for you? Ask specific questions and then make changes they can see; then ask again. You gain understanding by asking kids, but you also create a culture where kids feel valued. Sometimes the threat piece comes out when kids make assumptions about how a teacher might be biased against them because of prior experiences. If the relationship is strong and open, those assumptions don't come into play as much. Giving substantive, critical feedback ("I am giving you this feedback because I know you are capable and can improve.") rather than sugar coating has a large impact on reducing students' feelings of stigma and significantly improves engagement and performance.

Understanding Neglect

Komal Zulfiqar

Why is a caring relationship with an adult so important to a child's healthy development? The biological benefits that children gain from a stable relationship with a committed adult can power their success, even in spite of poverty and trauma. Understanding why some children beat the odds is important, but for many educators, especially in high-need schools, it's equally important to understand the biological effects of not having that support. What happens to neglected children? For a child's healthy growth, responsiveness from caregivers is the key. When that responsiveness — the "serve and return" interaction that shapes the brain — is lacking, dangerous biological and developmental delays can result.

The Center on the Developing Child calls it "a double-whammy" for healthy development: "Not only does the brain not receive the positive stimulation it needs, but the body's stress response is activated, flooding the developing brain

with potentially harmful stress hormones." In these cases, ongoing fear and anxiety can affect the brain. Neglected babies can experience delayed growth in head circumference and in overall body size. Severely neglected children have been found to have smaller prefrontal cortexes, an area of the brain that supports executive function. Children who have experienced neglect in institutional settings exhibit diminished electrical neural activity, decreased brain metabolism, and differences in neural reactions when processing information, such as identifying others' facial expressions. Neglect happens along a continuum of severity, from sporadic inattention to chronic under stimulation to severe neglect in a family or in an institution. Chronically under stimulated children have few opportunities to interact with adults, and therefore may have little exposure to developmental enrichment opportunities. Severely neglected children may have so few interactions with adults

that basic nutritional and physical needs go unmet, putting them at risk for severe impairments to their health and development. In school, neglected young children are more likely to have trouble distinguishing emotions in others, and pre-schoolers are more likely to be overly dependent on their teachers. The reduced executive function of neglected children can lead to academic delays and difficulties with attention. Neglected children are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to have poorer reading skills than their cared-for peers. Adolescents and adults with histories of neglect are less likely to engage productively with peers. Neglect is a more common form of abuse than physical or sexual abuse, but it gets less attention and fewer services than either. And this lapse is critical, since early intervention by giving a child exposure to a caring, responsive adult and by providing therapeutic care is the key to recovery.