

Joe Ebel: New Year's Resolution Solutions

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(Photo: Submitted photo)

It's a new year, and each January many of us resolve to make a positive change in our health behaviors like quitting smoking, losing weight, or exercising. But, most of us will fall short of our goals by March.

Those are all great health goals to pursue, and this year I propose that we build a team to help us succeed together. If you are struggling with changing your behaviors to improve your health, chances are you know one or more family member, friend, or co-worker who are facing the same challenges. Team-up with that person, or join an existing group, to work together, provide support, and hold each other accountable.

Having someone with whom you can schedule regular gym visits, go on a run or walk, share healthy recipes, or just talk to when you are struggling can have a big impact on your ability to stick with your resolution.

The key to changing our outcomes (succeeding where we have failed before) may lie in supporting others. Partnering with someone to help them achieve their goals builds a peer support system, where shared experiences and struggles can move everyone ahead.

The same is true for quitting smoking. Quitting with a partner, attending cessation classes, or calling a quit-line, can help you to kick the habit. In Licking County, Licking Memorial Health Systems offers free cessation classes to residents, and the Licking County Health Department offers referrals to cessation providers. The state also offers a free quit-line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or you can visit www.ohio.quitlogix.org.

Tracking apps, which can help you log steps and physical activity, as well as calorie intake, can be a very helpful tool for both weight loss and fitness. Recording what you eat throughout the day helps you make healthy nutrition decisions. Fitbits and other devices that track physical activity and steps/miles walked each day can help motivate us to keep active, which is always a challenge this time of year. You can even create or join groups to compete for weekly step count bragging rights with your friends.

Perhaps one of the best outcomes from working on shared goals with another person is that it builds meaningful relationships that improve our overall well-being. Making new friends, spending time with someone who supports you, encouraging others to succeed, and developing a network of support while working to improve your health sounds like a success to me, regardless of what the bathroom scale reads in March.

Have a happy and healthy new year!

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