



## Don't break the chain

By Jon S.

The calendar will turn over in less than two weeks, and with it a new year, a new beginning. For many, this is a time of resolutions. Five of the most common are to eat better, work out more, lose weight, make smarter financial decisions, and spend more time with family.

According to [Dan Pink in his book \*When\*](#), Google searches for the word “diet” are 80% higher on January 1<sup>st</sup> than on a typical day. Similarly, you see gym parking lots full in January, but what happens? By February and March, it's much easier to find a spot. Pink backs this up: “Research shows that a month into a new year only 64 percent of resolutions continue to be pursued.” Ultimately, [less than 10% of New Year's resolutions are kept](#).

So, what's a resolver to do? Clearly, pursuing a goal, building a new habit, or breaking an old one requires commitment and perseverance. Procrastination and inertia challenge you every step of the way. Temps fall below zero and your desire to leave the house, let alone go work out, takes a back seat to the warm and cozy confines. We've all been there in one way or another; it's a slippery slope.

We humans are motivated by a variety of factors. One of the strongest is progress because it leads to momentum, which overcomes these roadblocks and leads to further progress. So how do you create a framework to accomplish your goals that is built on progress and momentum?

[Jerry Seinfeld](#) helped introduce more to the American lexicon than any other modern-day comedian. Yada, yada. The Soup Nazi. Close talker. Art Vandelay. Regifting and double-dipping. Serenity now! The list goes on and on. How did he become one of the most successful comedians of all-time? By writing jokes...every day. Here's how his system worked.

First, Jerry would hang an annual calendar on his wall. Then for each day he wrote jokes, he would take a red marker and cross off that day on the calendar. After several days of writing jokes, there would be a chain of red Xs. His goal at that point was not to break the chain. Through deliberate practice, Jerry turned small wins into bigger ones down the road.

There's a reason phrases like day by day, step by step, and inch by inch are popular mantras. This is how you attain progress, and ultimately, momentum. There are no overnight successes. There's no easy button. Find a tracking mechanism that helps you reinforce the progress you've made, cements the habits you've built, and motivates you to continue. With your 2021 resolutions, you (and I) have one job...don't break the chain!

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