



## **New Year's Resolutions – Overrated?**

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I tend to view things with a mostly positive attitude...and when it comes to New Year's Resolutions, I am POSTIVE I'm going to fail at them. Miserably. Besides, if it's a goal that is so important to me, why wait until the calendar changes to give myself permission to begin working on it? That's why it's been years since I officially made a New Year's Resolution. I wasn't planning on making one this year either, however, I got a little too "bid-happy" during the Radiothon To End Child Abuse in December. So apparently, now my 2017 New Year's Resolution is to complete the Triatholon in Nisswa that I ended up "winning." Oops.

When I got the official notification that I had won an entry into the Triatholon, I panicked. I wasn't concerned about the 5K run – I completed my first half marathon last summer. Biking 12 miles? Meh. My 7-yr old and I did the 17-mile Loop The Lake Festival last June. No, I mostly freaked at the thought of being in front of hundreds (thousands?) of people ...in a bathing suit. Talk about a good reason to start training! (Well, that and the fact that my 20-year high school reunion is the following weekend.)

Though I'm not fond of New Year's Resolutions, I am all in favor of setting goals, bettering ourselves and taking care of our own health and well-being, especially as we age and most DEFINITELY if we are a Caregiver. But what does that look like and how can we tackle our goals, especially if they are larger and long-term?

One of the best tools I have learned in the past few years is one we teach in our Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes. Each week, we set an Action Plan that includes a simple, specific and realistic idea that we can easily accomplish in the upcoming week. It should be something we WANT to do (not feel like we HAVE to do) and is something to take care of ourselves: reconnect with a friend we have lost touch with, schedule someone to stay with our loved one, go for a walk around the block or just sit in silence for 5 minutes and breathe. We also look at setting longer goals and how to break them up into weekly Action Plans, in order to strive for success and minimize stress.

Scheduling time to take care of yourself each week doesn't have to be elaborate, but it does have to be deliberate. Be intentional - writing it down or telling someone about it will help with accountability and allow for celebrations when you succeed. (Nothing says accountability like announcing your New Year's Resolution in on Facebook.) Though my goal was somewhat unplanned, it is also a challenge I've considered in the past and I now look forward to accomplishing training each week and celebrating at the finish line. Besides, I'll do anything for a free t-shirt.