

## Early New Year's Resolutions

I know, you don't make them anymore. But I think you should try again this year, and I'm happy to help.

December is a good time to make your resolutions – if you break them all as fast as you did last year, you can always make more next month with everyone else. Or you could use the same ones again – there's really nothing wrong with them. It's not *their* fault you're a slug.

If you break any, it's good to feel guilty about it – guilt's a great motivator. Actually, most resolutions are geared to correct things that you *already* feel guilty about. That's a lot of guilt going around, which is good for businesses like health clubs and diet centers, not to mention several major religions.

Now that you've already spent about as much time thinking about resolutions as you intend to, let's get to work. It's important not to make ones that are so ambitious that you have no hope of keeping them, like "Become rich by Thursday." Why set yourself up for failure? You already have enough emotional baggage.

For beginners, there's always "Avoid becoming a serial killer." A little more challenging would be, "Make sure your socks match before leaving the house." But because I know you so well, I'm going to suggest some that address your unique attributes.

Your first resolution should be "Eat less" and your second should be "Exercise more." That's right, just the same as last year. You can argue that you're really not in that bad of shape, but I can't understand what you're saying while your mouth is full of Christmas candy.

Next is "Take the bus more." This is because you are not such a good driver. You obviously don't know what turn signals and passing lanes are for. It's not okay to drive like a 90-year old unless you are - that's right - 90 years old.

Number four is “Carry a squirt gun for when you encounter rude, impatient people.” Squirt them – they need to know. Don’t forget to mix in a little antifreeze this time of year.

A corollary to the above is “Take a course in self defense.” It may come in handy some day, especially if you go around squirting oversensitive people.

Number five is “Never comment on a man’s thinning hair unless you wish to be struck repeatedly with his fists. Some men are sensitive about this. So I hear.

Next, repeat after me, “I’m going to caucus on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.” I don’t care if you don’t think you know much about the candidates or politics in general. In my opinion, you’re highly likely to caucus for the wrong candidate anyway. But it’s important that our turnout demonstrates to the rest of the country that we don’t have corn-for-brains here in Iowa.

Here’s my favorite resolution, especially this time of year: “Throw away all of those mail order catalogs you’ve been receiving from greedy, capitalistic out-of-state merchants.” It’s much better to spend your dollars with greedy, capitalistic *local* merchants.

Next, “Just say no.” Sometime during the next two weeks, someone will ask you what you want for Christmas. Tell them, “Thanks, but I have everything I really need. Make a donation to the Crisis Center or another charity in my name.” You’ll feel warm all over.

Last and least, “Eat more fruitcake.” Fruitcake is a vastly underrated and misunderstood food, despite being at the top of the Holiday Food Pyramid. “Gourmet fruitcake” is not an oxymoron. You may receive one for Christmas. Eat it.

That’s enough for now – you have plenty to work on. By the way, I expect to get your best effort this year – make me proud.