

# Making Ripples

by Amanda Bancroft

2019 just trotted in, pulling a wagon of possibilities with it. Each of us has the potential to make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others, and everyone's wagon is unique. But sometimes none of those possibilities are unloaded. Fear of uncertainty or failure displaces our motivation and creates the result we most want to avoid.

“According to a YouGov poll, the most common aspirations for the coming year in the U.S. are to eat healthier, get more exercise and to save more money. Almost one third, perhaps more realistically, said that they wouldn't be bothering with any resolutions,” Statista.com noted. Why is it more realistic to jump straight into nothing rather than to try, and fail, at a resolution? At least with trying, there's a chance. Yet there could be wisdom in resolving not to make a resolution.

When asked if he's made a New Year's resolution, my husband proclaims, “I make goals, not resolutions.” More often than not, he achieves them even if it takes him almost a decade to do so (such as going off-grid). The calendar or time of day or number of failures means nothing. If he wants to succeed, he just keeps trying, innovating new solutions when old ideas don't work. Even when he falls into a manhole and gets 8 stitches and loses lots of money, while feverish in bed he will still be planning his next step towards the goal. Just as importantly, he has the strength to take time out for self-care and sees play as part of the journey towards triumph, rather than a detour.

Achievements tend to happen when we're flexible and doggedly determined to succeed or keep trying no matter what. So if January 1<sup>st</sup> resulted in a complete flop (or maybe a hangover), don't give up on your goals. Making a resolution is a lot like traveling abroad to a place you yearn to visit: yes, you'll experience something positive wherever you go, but there will still be sick days. There will be days in which nothing is accomplished, but it's foolish to head home just for missing a day or two. Being flexible means that if your goal is to exercise every morning, but it's evening and you haven't exercised yet, do it now rather than give up exercise.

The world's not going to get better unless people change it. This is a long-term, multi-year process. Even something as personal and immediate as losing weight and saving money is much more involved than 365 days of checkmarks. The strength we show in moments of failure can pull us towards success. Our minute-by-minute resolve at any time, any place is more important than a New Year's resolution dictating times and places for achievements. Start now, mess up, and begin again. You'll get there if you want it badly enough.

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist living in an off-grid tiny house on Kessler Mountain. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer tips to those wanting to make a difference at [www.MakeRipples.org](http://www.MakeRipples.org).