

MAIN ARTICLE

Why do 43 per cent of New Year Resolutions bite the dust even before January is out?

It should be the perfect time of year for setting new horizons and breaking bad habits. The Christmas break gave you the chance to step out of your routine and think about what matters most in life. And a New Year signals the wiping of the slate and the chance to start afresh.

Yet research shows only three per cent of us are likely to keep to resolutions for 12 months. And almost half don't stick to them for more than a month. Surveys say Friday January 20 is the deal-breaker; the day when the UK's collective willpower is most likely to be broken has been dubbed "Fail Friday" as a result. Sheffield life, career and business coach Martin Bennett says he can help people to change their life for good.

He starts by finding out what they want to achieve in life and what has been holding them back; before there can be blue sky thinking, an honest assessment needs to take place. Then positive strategies, plans and goals are agreed.

"Even breaking a habit, like stopping smoking, could depend on making a change on a deeper underlying level," says Martin, who has an internationally accredited Level 7 coaching diploma and an 18-year career in human resource management to his name.

He set up MJB Coaching (www.MJBCoaching.co.uk) in 2016 after making his own New Year Resolution to run his own business.

"Anxiety and indecision can root people to the spot. They need to understand what is causing that and learn how to move forward and start living the life they want," says Martin, who will be guiding people through strategies and techniques to make permanent changes to their lives in a six-week Positive Transformation Course. Run with Sheffield hypnotherapist Gina Mayolin of FeelGood Therapy, the course starts on January 23.

Martin understands more than most how old wounds to confidence and self-worth can have an effect years down the line.

He was bullied as a schoolboy in Rawmarsh. I was picked on because I was clever and for my physical appearance. It hurt, but I got through it because I believed in myself. I developed a resilience but I am sure it had an effect on me and who I have become," he explains.

"I put up with many difficult situations because I had doubts about myself. Going to University was the initial springboard to putting those things behind me and it doesn't affect me today. But I have seen many people who never get over knocks to their self-esteem. These experiences led me to wanting to help people from an early age." Martin went into a successful HR career wanting to help people to grow and develop in their careers, head happily into retirement or cope with the blow of redundancy and find a positive way forward.

It took him from British Steel, Forgemasters and Rotherham Council all the way to Australia. But it also led to a huge period of indecision.

“At 31, I decided to quit the conformity of my life. I left my job, remortgaged my house and headed off travelling without a plan,” he says. He explored Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan before he arrived in Australia.

It sounds hugely brave, but he admits: “Although I was following the urge to throw everything in the air, I did feel incredibly anxious.” The irony is that he pretty much rebuilt the same ‘normal’ life in Australia. Just as his tourist visa was about to run out he decided to get a HR management job with a manufacturing company in Sydney. He settled, found a home, built his career.

But two years later, the granting of his permanent residency visa threw him into a commitment quandary again - and he did the same thing in reverse. He quit his job, went back to Rawmarsh to sleep on his parents’ floor and searched for a job so that he could rebuild his life in the UK.

However, this was not the end of the matter, as he found himself ping ponging between the two countries for a long period, unable to commit to either, and his relationship with an Australian girl ended as a result. This was a wake-up call. He realised he needed to make a clear decision about his future in order to get the most out of it.

He stayed in the UK, moved his career to London and is now settled in Sheffield, where he lives with his partner and their three-year-old daughter.

He says: “I look back at things I’ve done in my life and ask myself: What the hell was I doing? But my past helps me greatly in understanding other people’s life issues. “Anxiety over making decisions is very common. Making a decision brings a consequence and causes change. People think that by avoiding a decision they are avoiding a consequence. But instead they become stuck in a holding pattern and don’t find happiness and self-fulfillment.”

He now coaches people in all sorts of dilemmas; some want to change careers, to set up a business or to improve their relationships. He also works with businesses to help their managers and employees be more confident and grow their skills.

He believes most people do know what the right decision is but are afraid to acknowledge it. And that it’s his job to open their eyes to a better life.

- Positive Transformation Course runs from January 23 for six weeks at The Circle, Rockingham Street, Sheffield. Cost: £120. Book at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/positive-transformation-course-tickets-29730544860>