



## **First Steps to a Better You “I Want to Be a Better Person”**

### **Tiny Steps to a Better You**

You want to do better this year than last, don't you? And yet only 8% of people meet the resolutions they make at the beginning of the year. 80% are done by February and have become resolved to not even try to meet their resolutions.

Peter Herman, a Psychology professor, blames our inability to follow through on the “false hope syndrome.” According to Herman, this syndrome occurs when a person makes a resolution that is unrealistic and is not in line with that person's internal view of themselves. In other words, you can make all the resolutions you want about being a success in the New Year, but it won't be attainable if inside your self-talk says you are a failure. He says it not only does not work, it is damaging to your self-worth.

It is clear that the first step you and I need to take to become better people this year is to get control of our “self-talk.” Scripture calls this a “renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:2). Someone or someones in our past told us one thing about us that was negative and we believed it. To change that self-talk we have to listen to better talk.

### **Principle 1: You can't be *transformed* until your mind is *reformed*.**

Your thoughts are the key to how you approach your life. If you want to live a better life you have to think better thoughts. Take a moment and survey where your thoughts come from. Make a list of what you put into your mind during the day.

Then next to each one label the impact it has on you as “positive,” “negative,” or “neutral.”

**Source of Thought Input**

**Impact on My Thoughts**

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

(Add as many lines as you need as you think about your thoughts)

Now make a plan to renew your mind. Scripture is the best place to start. In the space below write out your plan for reading Scripture. Let the Word tell you who you are and fill you with positive thoughts about this life and your part in it.

**My Plan for Reading Scripture**

(Your plan may be to sign up for a reading plan on a Bible app, work through a daily devotional guide, etc. Be specific. Name the process you will use, when you will read, and for how long. Remember to start small. Create a tiny habit and let it grow. And if you miss a day don't quit. Just get back on track the next day or at a different time.)

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**Principle 2: Training Partners Increase My Likelihood of Success**

Gym rats know that it helps to have a training partner. Another person can help “spot” you so you can lift more weights. Runners know it helps to have a club to run with. On those cold mornings you are more apt to climb out of bed and lace up the running shoes if you know others will be waiting for you.

The same is true in life. When you find a few others who are on the same path as you, it helps you stay on that path. If it's a diet, surround yourself with healthy eaters. If its learning about the ways of Jesus, find a few others who want to live like him too. If it's becoming a better parent, find someone who is a few steps ahead of you and has done a good job of parenting.

In the space below name the improvements you want to see in yourself as a person. Then to the side list the people who can be your "training partners":

**Life Improvements I'd Like to See in Myself**

**Possible Training Partners**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Principle 3: "Do or do not. There is no try!"—Yoda**

Eliminate the word "try" from your vocabulary! Either intend to do what it is you want to do, or just don't. Most people who use the word "try" are not committed. Imagine Jesus calling someone to follow him and getting the reply, "I'll try." That's not an answer, is it? Either you start following him or you don't.

In the same way there has to be an intention to be obedient to what your renewed mind is telling you about yourself. Want to be less angry this year? Then read about anger, pray about the source of your anger, and tell your training partners what your plan is to begin controlling your anger. Remember: train, not try.

In the space below reflect on areas you are finding that you are not obedient to what you know God is calling you to be.

**Where I Need to Practice Obedience**

**Progress I'm Seeing in Obedience  
(Mark specific instances when you see improvement)**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Congratulate yourself! Walking through these exercises has already helped you begin the process of thinking differently and training instead of trying.

2018 is going to be your best year yet!