

The Mystic Geek - Spiritual AF Sundays

# **What's the Deal With New Years' Resolutions?**

# What We're Going to Talk About

- Origins of New Years' Resolutions
- New Years' Resolutions Statistics
- Impact of this tradition
- How to create heart-centered resolutions for the coming year



# The Origins of New Years' Resolutions

4000 YEARS AND GOING!



# Ancient Babylon, 4000 years ago

IT WASN'T CELEBRATED ON JANUARY 1ST!!!

- Akitu: 12-day celebration at the beginning of the agricultural season
- Participants made promises in the hopes that following through would lead to a successful year





## Enter Julius Caesar

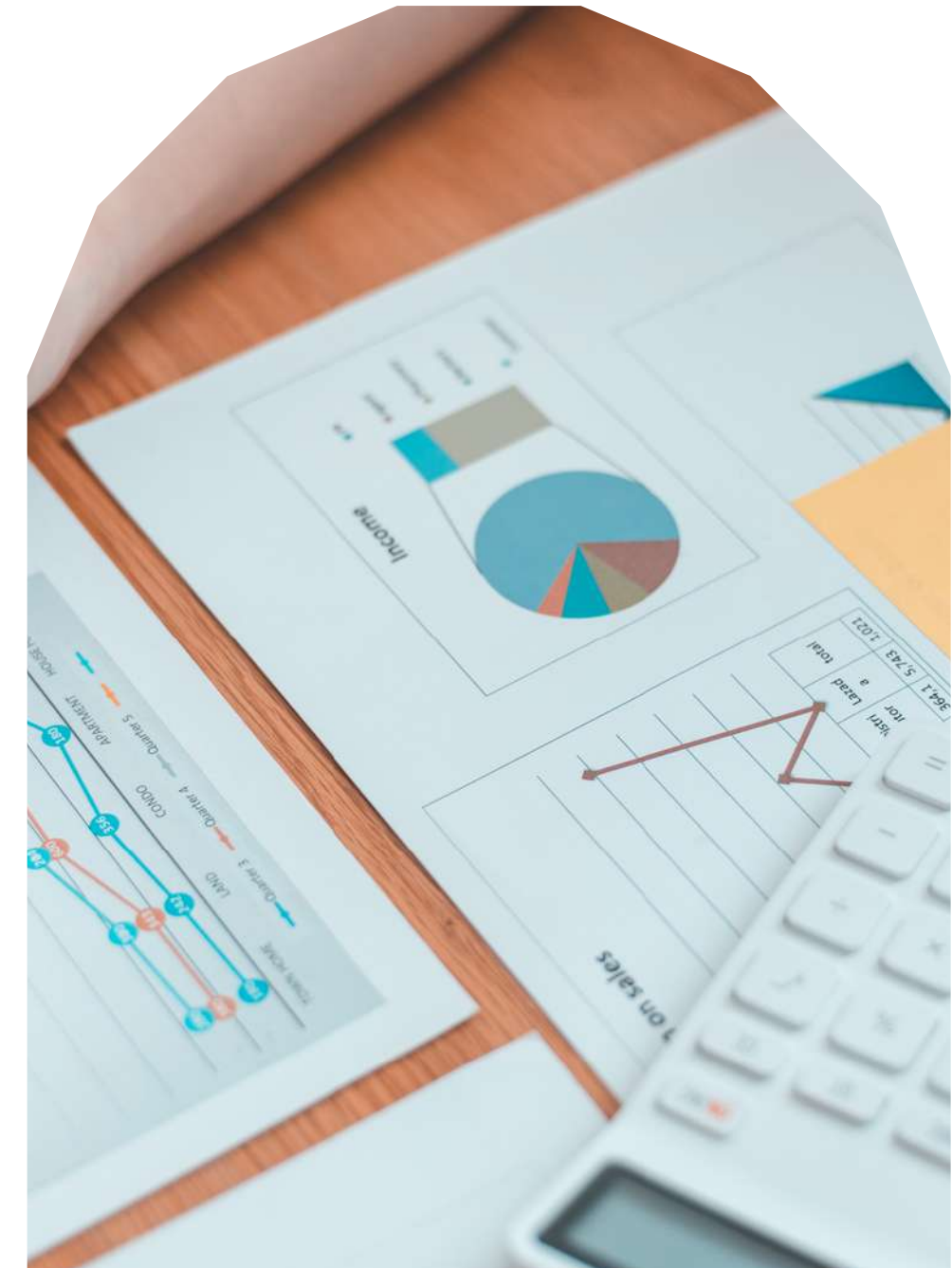
### HOW THE NEW YEAR MOVED TO JANUARY 1ST

- In 46 B.C., Julius Caesar moved the beginning of the year to January 1st
- In ancient Rome, January was linked to Janus, the two-faced god who looks both forward and backward.
- The beginning of the new year is a time when we reflect on the past and look to the future

# In the modern day

## POLL BY YOUNGOV AMERICA

- 23% of surveyed Americans made at least one New Year's Resolution in 2020
  - Exercising more (46%)
  - Eating healthier (45%)
  - Career ambitions (19%)
  - Saving more money (31%)



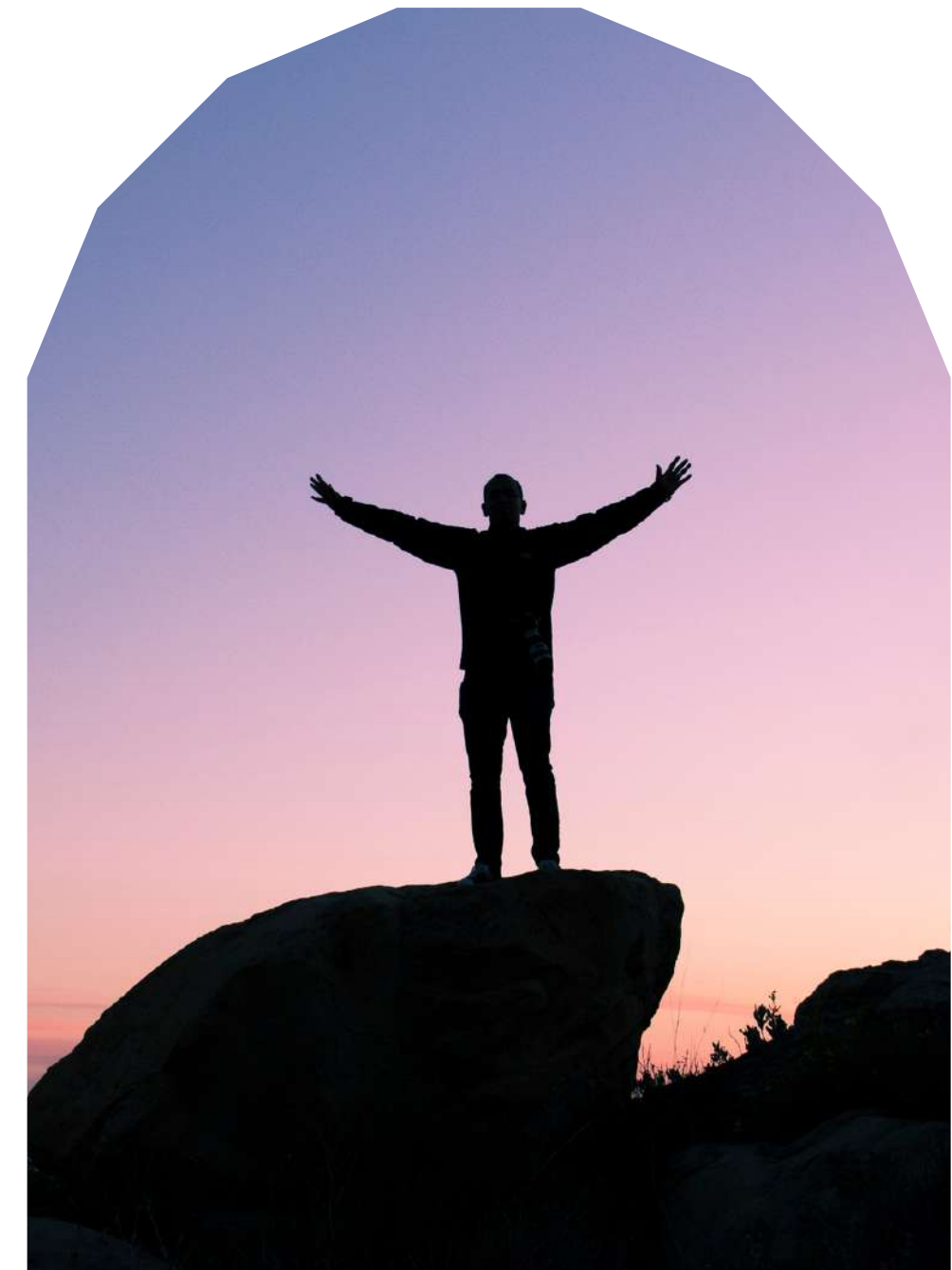
# Do New Years' Resolutions Work?

AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

# Achieving Our Goals

POLL BY YOUNGOV AMERICA

- Of people surveyed who made New Years' resolutions in 2020:
  - 49% kept at least one resolution
  - 35% kept all their resolutions





# Achieving Our Goals

STUDY BY UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

- Of 200 people studied:
  - 77% maintained pledges for one week
  - 19% maintained resolutions for 2 years





# Why we keep doing this to ourselves

## FRESH START EFFECT

- We use time transition points to "reset" from the past and encourage change
- Typical "fresh start" periods are the start of a new week, month, or year



# Fresh Start Effect

## DOES FRAMING MATTER?

Katherine Milkman from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania studied whether the way we frame time impacts our desire to change and set goals.

Which of these two inspires you more?:

- Third Thursday of March
- The First Day of Spring



# Transtheoretical Model of Change

## READINESS MATTERS

- Pre-Contemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action
- Maintenance



# Approach or Avoidance

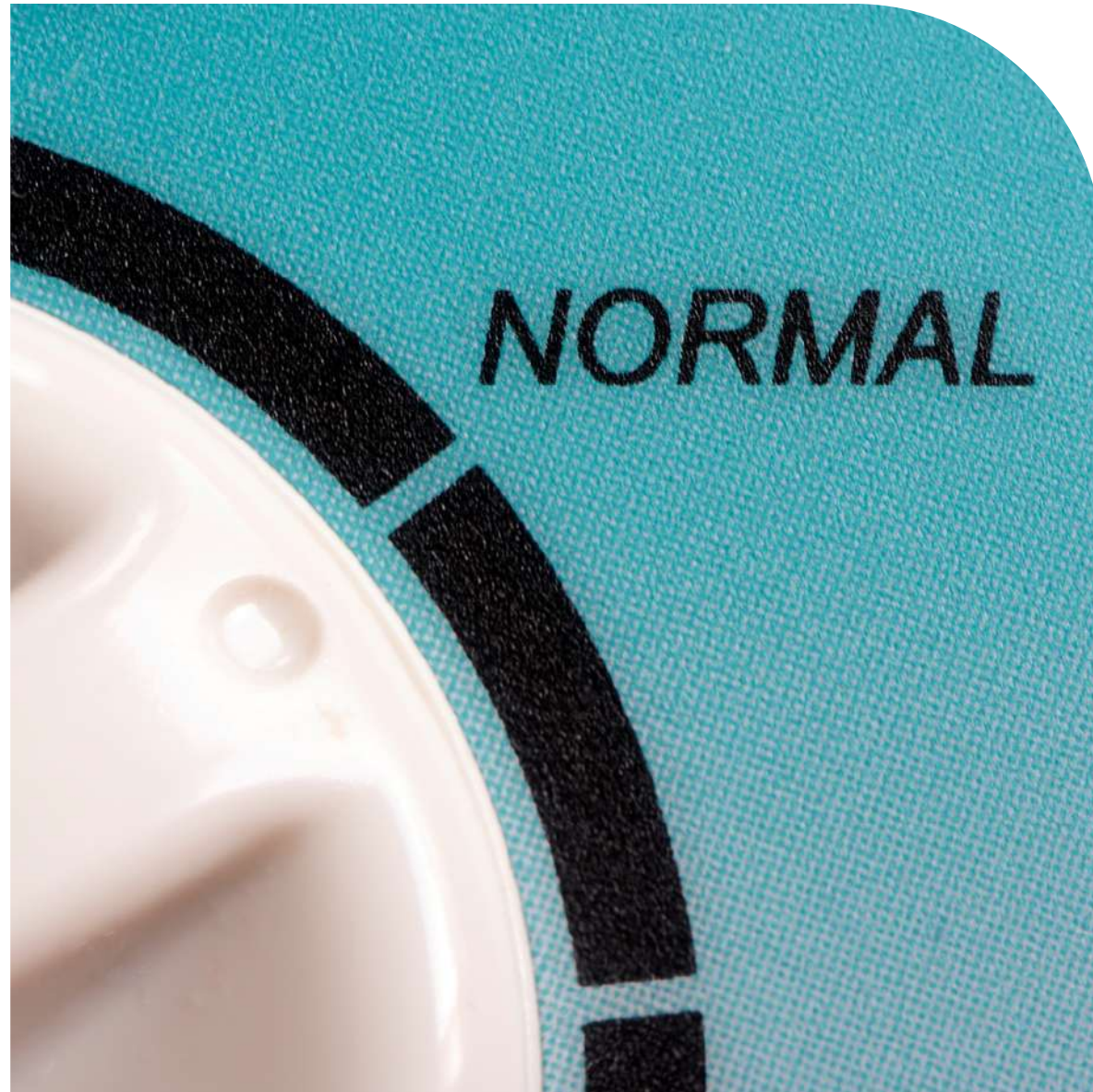
## TWO GOAL STRATEGIES

- Avoidance-based: Focused on removing something from your life (ex: fewer sweets or screen time)
- Approach-based: focused on integrating something new (ex: reading or exercise)
- Carlbring, a researcher from Stockholm University, monitored the progress of 1066 individuals who set new year's resolutions at the end of 2017.
  - Those who planned approach-based goals had an average success rate of 25% higher than those with avoidance-based ones.



# The Problem With New Years' Resolutions

CONCERNS & CRITICISMS



# Self-Improvement

WHAT ARE WE STRIVING TOWARD?

- Self-improvement implies we aren't sufficient or we are somehow broken.
- Goals typically align with what society deems to be desirable traits.
- Standards for what is considered "normal" or "desirable" are often unattainable





# Cultural Messages of Personal Responsibility

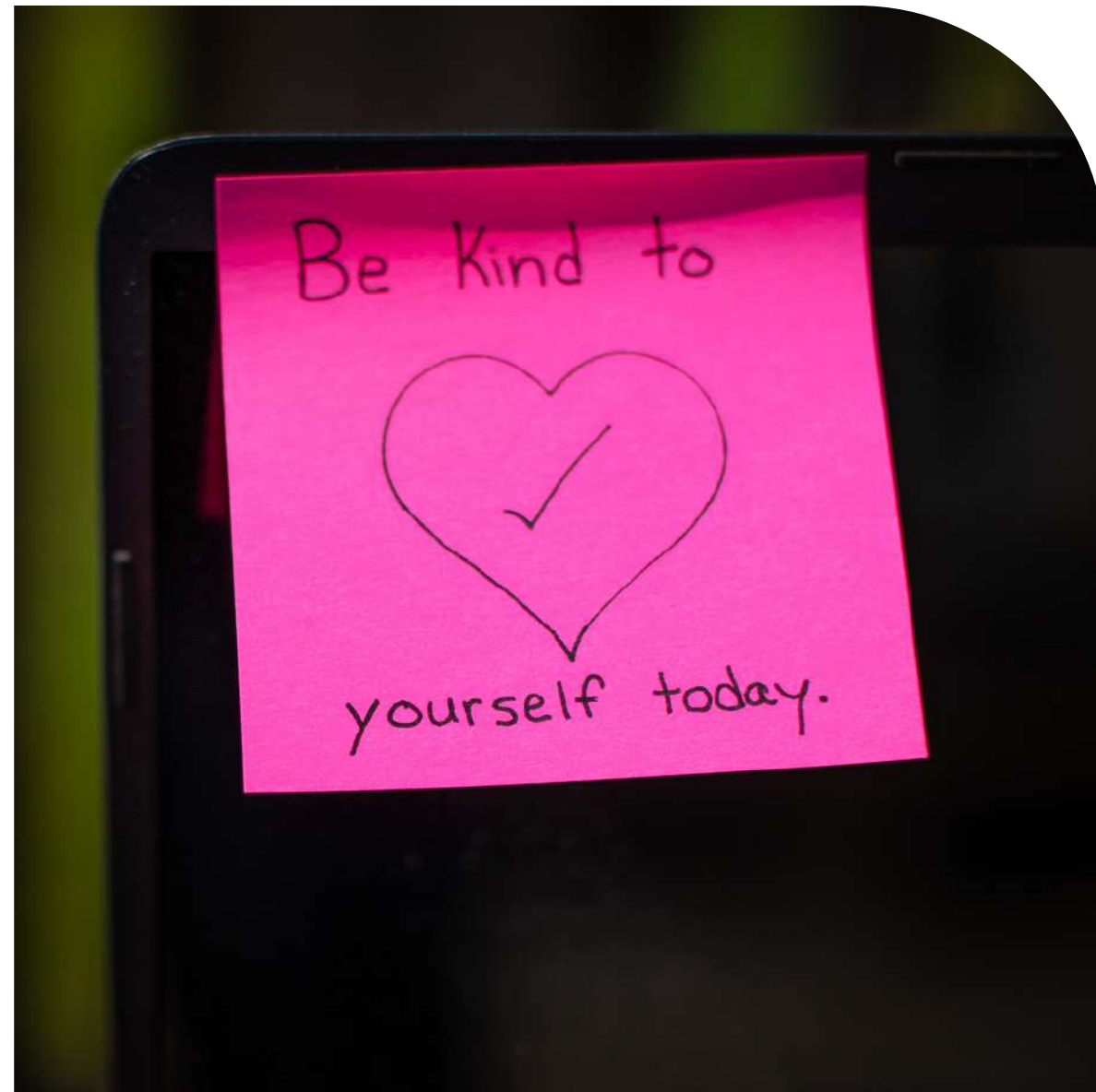
PLACING THE FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL OVER SYSTEMIC ISSUES

- Self-improvement implies something about us that is "broken" that WE need to fix ourselves.
- Fails to acknowledge systemic issues (lack of access or information) that are the source of what we see as problem areas in our lives



# You Do You!

MAKING HEART-CENTERED GOALS



# Be Kind to Yourself

## GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION

- It's okay to make mistakes!
- Recognize where you are at as well as where you want to be in the future
- Acknowledge your successes, no matter how small



# What matters to you?

USE THIS AS THE BASIS FOR GOALS

FYI - I have a resource on my website to help you with this process!

# Goal Planning

## MAKE IT EASY (EASIER)

- Focus on what is realistic and attainable
- Break down your goals into smaller, achievable step
- Find ways to have fun!







# Accountability

## GET SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

- Lean on your family and friends - your biggest cheerleaders!
- Seek a mentor or coach if you need additional support



# Track your progress

## STEP BY STEP

- When we're in the day-to-day grind, it's hard to see how far we've come
- Tracking progress isn't just about seeing where we're at versus our goal - it's also about seeing where we're at versus where we started

# Set Spiritual Goals

## CONNECT TO YOUR PURPOSE AND TO OTHERS

- How do your goals help you connect with the world around you or leave the world in a better place?
- Research topics related to social change
- Pledge to keep tabs on current events
- Volunteer and give back to your community





# No obligation!

YOU DON'T NEED TO SET  
RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

- Find a starting date that works for you
- Seasonal cycles (solstices/equinoxes)
- Moon cycles (new moon)





**Questions?  
Comments?  
Ponderings?**

LET US KNOW!

Email Address

jess@themysticgeek.com

Leave a voice message

<https://www.speakpipe.com/TheMysticGeek>

# Upcoming Episodes

JANUARY 8TH
Finding Balance Between Rest and Action

JANUARY 15TH
The Myths of Self Care