

# New Year's Resolutions **YOU**tions

## "New year, new me!"

This all too familiar social media post seems to divide us into two groups of people: Those of us who roll our eyes at the cascade of identical statements declaring gym memberships, changes in diet, newly chosen hobbies or the decision to break habits. And those of us who identify with the statement and see the new year as a time to press the reset button; to try to make positive changes to do better and be better. But what's behind the custom of new years resolutions and, given the fallout of 2020, are they going to help or hinder us in 2021?

## The Sciency Bit

Psychotherapist, Katherine Schafler, believes that we make new year's resolutions because we're somehow emotionally hurting. This hurt may not be obvious to us, but on some level we know that our current habits and actions aren't helpful to us. Therefore, we make mostly unrealistic promises to ourselves in the new year, to do things differently. Some use this hurt as fuel for change, but if these resolutions come from a negative place; a place of thinking you're wrong, bad or not good enough, they will most often fail and be followed by stronger feelings of guilt, shame and self negativity. Sound familiar?

## 2021

Did you know that only 8% of people who set resolutions actually achieve them? So, after a year filled with loss, pain, fear and grief, do we really need to set intentions that are most likely going to end in us punishing ourselves? What if, instead of making 'resolutions', we set realistic, kind, mindful goals, that stem from a place of strength and not self-criticism. Goals that we can adjust to suit our unpredictable world. And for those of us who use resolutions as a way to "fix" what we see as flaws in ourselves, maybe consider surviving 2020 and a world wide pandemic enough this year.

## "In 2021, my goal is to be..."

- more patient
- a better listener
- happier
- less critical self-critical
- mentally healthier
- kinder to myself
- more focussed on my self-care
- less resistant to change
- more aware of being overly selfish/selfless
- more forgiving of myself
- open to new opportunities