

MARISTPOLL

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Being a Better Person Tops List of 2017 Resolutions

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Being a better person, 16%, tops the list of New Year's resolutions for 2017, knocking weight loss, 10%, from the number one spot for the first time since ringing in 2014. Exercising more, 10%, ties weight loss for second place among those who are likely to make a 2017 resolution. Spending less money and saving more, improving one's health, and eating healthier receive 7% each and round out the top New Year's resolutions for 2017.

Last year, the top resolutions were losing weight, 12%, getting a better job, 10%, exercising more, 9%, stopping smoking, 9%, improving one's health, 9%, being a better person, 8%, eating healthier, 8%, and spending less and saving more, 7%.

Gender, age, or geography makes a difference. Women, 19%, are more likely to mention being a better person than any other resolution. Among men, being a better person, 12%, ties with exercising more, 12%. Looking at age, Americans 45 years of age or older, 21%, are more likely than younger Americans to resolve to be a better person. Among those under 45 years old, there is little consensus. Being a better person and spending less money and saving more each receives 11%. Losing weight and exercising more follow with 9% each. Of note, among those under 30, being a better person, 13%, edges out exercising more, 10%. Among those 30 to 44 years old, spending less and saving more, 16%, takes the top spot.

Regionally, 21% of residents in the West and 16% in the South cite being a better person as their 2017 resolution. Being a better person, 15%, and losing weight, 15%, vie for top honors in the Midwest. In the Northeast, weight loss, 12%, tops the list followed closely by being a better person, 9%, and improving one's health, 9%.

Are Americans planning to make a 2017 resolution? 44% of Americans, up from 39% last year, say they are either very likely or likely to do so. A majority, 56%, report they are not likely at all to make a change.

Younger Americans are more likely to make a New Year's resolution than their older counterparts. 51% of those under 45 years old, compared with 39% of older Americans, say it is likely they will promise to change an aspect of their lives. The older a person is the less likely they are to make a resolution. While 55% of those under 30 years old say they will make one, 48% of those 30 to 44 years of age, 45% of those 45 to 59, and 32% of those 60 and older say the same.

Do Americans keep their New Year's resolutions? Of those who made a 2016 resolution, 68% said they kept at least part of their promise. 32% did not. The proportion of those who said they stuck to it is up slightly from the previous year, 64%, and is at its highest since 2013 when 72% reported they stuck with their resolution.

More men, 75%, compared with women, 62%, kept their 2016 resolution. The proportion of men who stuck with their resolution is up from last year, 65%, while there has been little change among women, 63%.