NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ARE BAD FOR YOU

You are going to read a text about New Year's Resolutions. Six sentences have been removed from the text. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

It's nearly that time of the year again when you can turn over a new leaf, start from scratch, or just try and be a little bit better in the coming year. Millions of people all over the world will be making New Year's Resolutions.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ARE BAD FOR YOU

Everyone has a mental list of habits they would like to change, and the New Year seems like a perfect time to start. "New Year, new you" is a phrase you will see repeated in print. But this is just singsong rhetoric. **1)** ☐ The year will certainly change, but you will likely be the same person on January 1st that you were on December 31st.
The statistics are bleak: only 8% of people who make New Year's resolutions stick to them, and those who don't usually abandon them after just one week. **2)** ☐ And it is unrealistic to think that you can immediately overcome a habit you have spent years establishing. But is this necessarily harmful? **3)** ☐ If your New Year's resolution is to eat less, but you have no plan in place — or even if you do have a plan and you fail — you will do damage to your sense of self-worth. If you already have a complicated relationship with food, your likely coping mechanism for failure is eating more food. **4)** ☐ The same can happen with drinking, drug use, smoking, finding a mate, exercising, etc.

The practice of making resolutions itself dates back to ancient Babylon, who made promises to their gods for the New Year, often having to do with concrete, easily achievable tasks. **5)** ☐ When you tie your behavioural change to a specific date, you rob yourself of an opportunity to fail and recover, to "fail better." If you believe that you can only change on the New Year, you will have to wait a whole year before you get another shot.

Just the act of making a resolution can make you feel temporarily better, enough that it obviates further action. Steve Salerno, author of Sham: *How the Self-Help Movement Made America Helpless*, says, "Do we all not know people who make the same resolutions year after year? Or maybe we are that person. My concern is that the resolution takes the place of the action, as it is also true with so many millions of people who sign up for an endless succession of self-help programs: They think some magic words, some promise, will magically transform their lives, when we all know that the real transformational work is tough, and usually involves sacrifice and unpleasant choices."

Here's a better idea. **6)** ☐ If you fail at any of these small steps — which you inevitably will — brush it off, and realize that failure and recovery is part of any process.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A) Instead of listing an abstract goal like "lose weight," think of specific small steps you can take, every day, that will have the same result.

B) Just because it sounds right to your ear does not mean that it contains any meaningful truth.

C) Now promises are made to ourselves and are primarily psychological in nature.

D) There's a good chance that it is.

E) Thus the New Year's resolution to eat less can actually result in your eating more.

F) Unrealistic resolutions are fated to fail.

G) You can improve your life by starting something new, by trying harder at something, by cutting down on something, or even giving up something.

LIVEWORKSHEETS