

Restful Resources

with Dr. Saundra

Tools and Advice to Guide Your Rest Journey

3 Restful Resolution Strategies to help you achieve your goals without stress or shame

As the new year unfolds, are you still holding onto the hope that *this* year will be different? Maybe you set resolutions with the best intentions—committing to better habits, healthier routines, or long-awaited goals and now question if you have the energy to see them through. Research shows that **91% of people fail to keep their resolutions**. That statistic alone can make you want to quit!

The reasons for this is rooted not in a lack of willpower but in psychology. Many resolutions are built on *expectations* or fueled by *external pressures* - two components of chronic stress. Resolutions trigger a cycle of stress, guilt, and shame, ultimately leading to burning out our desire for the goal and abandonment of it.

Let's choose a restful approach to resolutions. Rather than striving for perfection, what if we approached our goals with a focus on mindfulness (mental rest) and spiritual rest? Mindfulness invites us to intentionally focus on the present without judgment. It offers a powerful way to work toward resolutions while preserving mental rest and resilience.

Here are **3 Restful Resolution Strategies** to help you achieve your goals without stress or shame:

1. Shift Your Focus to Progress Over Perfection

The pressure to achieve perfect results often leads to frustration and paralysis. Instead of fixating on the end goal, celebrate small wins along the way. For example, if your resolution is to exercise regularly, focus on consistency rather than performance. A 10-minute walk is just as worthy of celebration as a 60-minute workout.

Why It Works: Research on positive reinforcement shows that small, consistent rewards increase motivation and make habits stick. Progress—not perfection—is what builds sustainable change.

2. Schedule Intentional Pauses

One of the biggest mistakes we make when pursuing goals is doing too much, too fast. This leads to exhaustion and eventually giving up altogether. Instead, schedule mindful breaks into your day. These pauses give you time to rest mentally and emotionally, allowing you to return to your goals refreshed.

Try This: Set an alarm to pause for five minutes at least twice a day. Use this time to take deep breaths, reflect on your progress, or pray for strength and clarity.

Why It Works: Mental rest reduces decision fatigue and increases clarity, making it easier to stay focused on what matters.

3. Replace Self-Criticism with Self-Compassion

When you stumble on your goals—and you will—be kind to yourself. Rather than saying, “I failed,” say, “This is hard, but I’m learning.” Shifting the narrative from criticism to compassion helps you move forward without shame. (Spiritual Rest)

Try This: When negative self-talk creeps in, ask yourself, “What would I say to a friend in this situation?” Then, extend that same grace to yourself.

Why It Works: Studies on self-compassion show that kindness toward oneself increases resilience and reduces feelings of failure, helping people stay on track with their goals.

As you pursue your goals this year, remember that resolutions don’t have to be a source of stress or shame. Let’s commit to progress over perfection, rest over hustle, and grace over guilt.

Which of these approaches speaks to you most? I’d love to hear your thoughts. Simply reply to this email and let me know how you’re approaching your goals this year.

Rest Well,
Dr. Sandra

Dr. Sandra Dalton Smith is the author of the bestselling book,

Sacred Rest

Her new book, *Being Fully Known* continues the conversation on rest from *Sacred Rest*, diving deeper into the powerful concepts of mental, emotional, and spiritual rest.



Pre-order a copy of Being Fully Known: <https://amzn.to/4juplin>