



Harbourside North

January 2023

Welcome to the U3A Harbourside North Bulletin and the first for 2023.



We look forward to your suggestions for topics and contributions for inclusion in this year's editions. paulacastileu3a@gmail.com

The Editors

Ursula Schappi and Paula Castile

New Year Resolutions

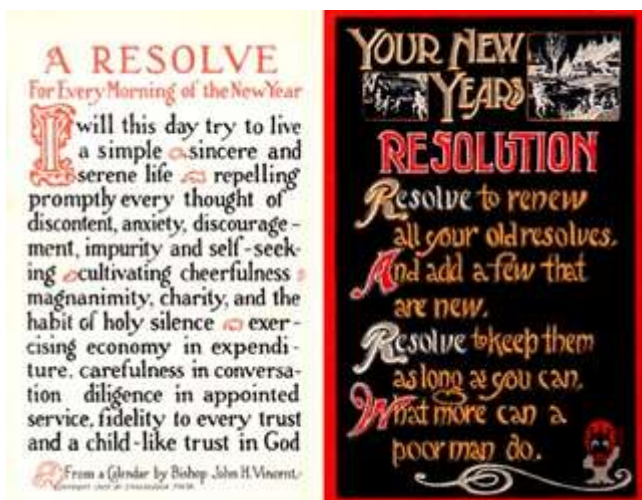


Image ex Wikipedia

Making New Year's resolutions is an old tradition going back to the Romans and earlier civilisations. The Romans made promises to Janus, the Door-Keeper between the Past and the Future. Janus is also the name giver of the first month of the year, January (Ref 1). This marker, the beginning of a new year, invites us to review the past and gives us an opportunity to start afresh.

The success rate of New Year's resolutions is notoriously poor. This is partly because we set overly ambitious goals (*I'll not eat any chocolate this year*) or poorly defined goals, (*from now on I want to lead a happy life*) or we set goals that we do not expect to achieve in the first place (*I'll be fluent in Japanese by the end of this year*).



"Well, last year I kicked gambling ... the odds are 3 to 1 the New Year will be a good one."

We may treat these New Year's resolutions as a joke and make light of it for not keeping them. However, if we do this too often, it may undermine our confidence in ourselves, warns Awosika in Medium.com, an American platform for curious minds (Ref 2). They define 'promise' as anything we tell ourselves that we were going to do, big or small. More specifically they write: 'We don't literally tell ourselves "I promise" like we would to someone else, but we treat these phrases like promises, even if subconsciously. As we make those promises, we build momentum. As we break those promises, we lead ourselves to the path of inertia'. The more promises we break, the more credibility we lose in ourselves and the less likely we are to bring about changes in our lives.

Of course, there are books to help you keep your promises. In fact, there is a whole industry of self-help publications. It covers topics, including confidence building, mental health, relationships and mindfulness, time

management, setting financial and career goals, and many other areas that we may wish to change in our life. Dymocks provide a list of Australian self-help writers and motivators (Ref 3).



Casie Kozyrkov (Ref 4) encourages us to steer away from borrowing other people's solutions and develop our own. Above all, we should develop a 'failure plan', that is, contingency planning of alternatives is key to success in the long run. 'Build in a plan for adapting your approach if you fall short of your target ...'



'Self-help' by definition is all about using our own efforts and resources to better ourselves and achieve new goals. Ironically, often to get to that stage of self-sufficiency, requires a little guidance from a variety of sources.

Self-help has been around for thousands of years, writes Jessica Lamb in Publishing Perspectives (Ref 5). Aristotle is said to have believed that reading had healing capabilities. The collapse of certain systems

of beliefs which once provided guidance and meaning, allowed self-help to become even more popular. Self-help provides a language with which to discuss private and difficult problems. Unfortunately, sometimes that language slips into a meaningless discourse. The self-help industry sometimes has charlatans exploiting the vulnerable, however, there are also good people. While self-help book buyers may not be cured of whatever ails them, feeling better is not to be discounted.

One of this year's classified self-help books is Michelle Obama's: *The Light We Carry – Overcoming Uncertain Times* (Ref 6). In Obama's words, the aim is to give readers a 'glimpse inside my personal toolkit' – the strategies she uses to be 'more comfortable, less paralysed, inside of uncertainty'.

A review in the Guardian (Ref 7) clarifies that: The book contains 10 of these techniques, ranging from 'starting kind' (it's best to ignore the first negative thought that comes into our heads in the morning and instead we should be 'inviting' a 'better and more tender one') through to 'the whole of us' (life is better when 'we grip hands with another soul'). Miraculously, these self-help bromides don't come across as cloying, mainly because Obama is so disarmingly honest about her fears, failures and all-too human flaws.



Jessica Irvine, (self-help author of *The Bottomline Diet* and *Money with Jess*) decided to ditch any new year's resolution this year. In the SMH digital edition of 27th December, Irvine writes that she now considers it is more important to find the right balance, over time, between eating and movement, between saving patterns and earnings... So instead of announcing her

New Year's resolutions she tells readers that *'my actions will be guided by whether they give me pleasure, not whether they are on a list of things to do. We know that for New Year's resolutions to work, they're best designed to be specific, time-based and public – the latter, in particular, helping to make you more accountable. But my word of this year's method works quite the opposite, being best to be broad, ongoing and private ... or balanced'*.



So, perhaps we should make a list of what brings us pleasure, commit it to memory and let it guide us throughout 2023.

One of our pleasures (Paula and Ursula's) is to look forward to "the meet and greet" with U3A members at Mosman Square, on Wednesday 25th January around 10.30 am. See you then!

References:

Ref 1: Wikipedia, New Year's Resolution

Ref 2: <https://medium.com/swlh/how-to-stop-breaking-the-promises-you-make-to-yourself-5406808aec13>

Ref 3: <https://www.dymocks.com.au/books/non-fiction/self-help-and-motivation/>

Ref 4: <https://kozyrkov.medium.com/the-15-new-years-resolutions-you-need-to-make-right-now-c0ec111bd212>

Ref 5: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2013/11/a-short-history-of-self-help-the-worlds-best-selling-genre/>

Ref 6: <https://www.penguin.com.au/books/the-light-we-carry-9780241621240>

Ref 7:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/20/the-light-we-carry-by-michelle-obama-review-a-guide-for-life-from-the-former-first-lady>

Ursula and Paula



President's Message

January 2023

Dear members

I trust you had a Happy Festive season in the company of loved ones, and I send you my warmest wishes for 2023. And what a u3a year it is going to be!

We begin with a **Meet and Greet other u3a members: Wednesday, 25 January at 10:30am** at Mosman Square and Mosman Seniors Centre (next to Mosman Council Chambers). We are always looking for new members, so please bring along a friend who might be interested in joining u3a. **Complimentary coffee and sweets. Please wear your u3a nametag.**

Those of you who ordered a hard copy Course Book will have received it in the mail and all courses for all regions can be viewed on our web site: <https://sydneyu3a.org/>

We have twelve venues across the lower North Shore with a staggering array of courses each week – so you are sure to find something that appeals to you. Remember you can attend courses in any other region across Sydney, all for one low membership fee. In Harbourside North alone that means there are about 276 courses to choose from! So book if necessary and add it to your diary so you don't miss anything.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Michael Suckling

President, Harbourside North

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And we still have the Lunar New Year to celebrate.

