

The top New Year's resolutions barely change year after year.  
Get fit, lose weight, eat better, drink less, spend less, save more.  
And on the surface, they sound really sensible.

But when you look underneath,  
they often come from this feeling that we're not enough as we are.

Hi, welcome to You Keep Me Sane.

I'm Aileen.

And I'm Julie.

And we're two friends navigating life's ups and downs together  
from opposite sides of the world.

Hi, Aileen.

How are you?

Hi, Julie. How are you?

I'm good, thanks.

Yeah, I'm good.

I just can't believe it's New Year's Eve.

It's kind of crazy.

Neither can I. It's crazy, isn't it?

I quite like it though.

I quite like New Year's Eve because it's like  
that sort of space between last year and the new year,  
which begins tomorrow.

And I think there's something strange about that time, isn't there?

Like you're sort of either reflecting or planning,  
looking back at who you've been  
or forward to who you think you should become in the new year.

Yeah, that's true.

But I do have to say New Year's Eve is called Hogmanay,  
you know where I'm from.

I know, why is it called that?

I know. I don't know, actually.

I must look.

It's a very good question.

What does that mean?

I don't know.

New Year's Eve.

We're going to have to look that up.

We need to.

Yeah, someone made it up.

But yeah, it's a kind of mix of hope and pressure at the same time. You feel this collective expectation in the air, like we're all supposed to be writing a new story, starting fresh at midnight, shedding our old selves, you know, like new year, new me.

Yeah.

Honestly, I mean, by the time February rolls around, most of us just feel guilty for not becoming that person.

I know, it is a bit crazy having that pressure, isn't it? Because then guilt can kind of creep in, right? And you feel bad about yourself.

You start out with all this motivation thinking, yep, okay, I'm going to join the gym. I'm going to have green smoothies and I don't know, journal. I remember last year, I was going to do my daily gratitude and I started out so well, but then like all the other ones, you know, by week three or four, they kind of go by the wayside.

It's like terrible.

Is it terrible?

No, it's not terrible.

But it makes you feel terrible because you start out with these things that you then don't do.

Good intentions, yeah.

I know it's funny because the top New Year's resolutions barely change year after year. Get fit, lose weight, eat better, drink less, spend less, save more. And on the surface, they sound really sensible. But when you look underneath, they often come from this feeling that we're not enough as we are.

Yeah, I know, basically.

You look at that list and it's like either be richer, healthier or look better, which is crazy, isn't it? It's like we're trying to fix ourselves, I guess, instead of understand ourselves.

And again, it's that whole "I'll be good enough when" mindset.

You know, we call it self-improvement, but I guess it's really self-rejection, actually.

I don't think we would have realized this  
if we hadn't started our podcast, actually,  
because it just seemed like the right thing to do.

I know, and all of these things.  
Yeah, and I just think a lot of the resolutions  
come from comparison as well.

Because you see people on social media  
talking about their big goals, their vision boards,  
their word of the year,  
and it makes us feel like we should be doing the same.

Like if you don't have a five-year plan by January the 2nd,  
somehow you are kind of behind in life.  
It's ridiculous.

I know, it is ridiculous.  
And I think that comparison thing is really debilitating.  
It's difficult, but it is interesting  
because it's a hard mindset then to break.

You know, you have the vision boards and the five-year plan  
because society rewards that constant striving.  
But then I think striving without self-acceptance,  
it just becomes self-punishment.

As you say, we would never have thought of those things like this  
until we started really delving into self-worth.

But it's terrible because you end up in this loop  
where we chase something,  
not because it brings us joy,  
but because we're then desperate to feel worthy.  
We feel so much lack,  
and then we chase the things to fill the hole.

I know what we do is shocking.

I actually remember too many years back,  
I set this resolution of going to get fit,  
as I usually do.  
I've always loved my exercise.  
I wanted to cycle outside more often,  
and this was in Glasgow.

It's quite funny because I dreaded —  
if you wore a black bin bag under your sports gear,

you sweat more, which meant you would burn more calories.  
And I did.

And then I realized,  
I'm not doing this to be strong or healthy.  
I was doing it because I was ashamed of my body  
and I wanted to lose weight.

Every cycle at that time felt like penance,  
not empowerment.  
I've never done it since.

I hope not.  
That's hilarious.  
I have never heard of anyone doing that.

How old were you?

Well, you probably didn't need to  
because you grew up in the sunshine.

Well, I was still living at home,  
so I was probably about 18 or 19.

Oh, that's funny.  
That is so funny.  
I just can't believe it.

I mean, I've actually done a lot of things  
in the name of looking better too.  
So that's a thing.  
I kind of get it.  
Okay, it's the most ridiculous one I've heard,  
but I do get it.

What's your most ridiculous one?

I don't know.  
I remember I used to put chili powder in my water  
because I knew that would speed up my metabolism.

Oh my God, did that end up —  
You must have been on fire.

It probably just gave me a hernia or something.  
I don't know.  
Probably just bad news.

I know, because it just ripped up my digestive tract.

You wonder why you've had all these problems  
with gut health, Julie.  
Now it's all come out, the confession.

You never told me that before.  
That is so ridiculous.

Yeah.  
I don't know why I did that.  
I think I read that J-Lo at the time was doing it.  
And I was like, oh, that must be.

Oh, you had to do it.  
Oh my goodness.  
It's crazy.

But actually, when you look at these ridiculous things,  
it's the why you're doing them  
that matters so much more than the what you're doing.

Because you can do the exact same thing, right?  
You can go for a run, you can eat salad.  
If your motivation is "I hate myself,"  
you're going to give up on it.

I think if it comes from that place of self-loathing,  
it's not going to last.  
Because no matter what you do,  
you're not filling that hole  
where self-acceptance should be.

I think if it comes from a place of,  
"I love myself enough to care for my body,"  
then it's a more sustainable pursuit.

Yeah, because I hadn't realized it was that.  
It was that loathing of bodies or whatever it is.

And we tell ourselves we just need more willpower  
when actually what we need is compassion  
and really kind self-talk,  
like you would talk to a friend.

Exactly.  
And maybe more honesty too.

I think one reason resolutions fail  
is because they're often too big  
or too disconnected from our real lives.

We set these goals  
for an idealized version of ourselves,  
not the person who's tired,  
juggling a job, kids, mental load or whatever,  
and actually wants something completely different.

Yeah.  
And we forget to make space for the human side.

Change isn't easy.  
It takes repetition, not revolution.  
Habits take time.  
Even unhelpful ones become comforting  
because they give structure to the day.  
So letting go of them almost feels like a loss.

I read about this study by Dr. Philippa Lally  
at University College London.  
The research found that on average,  
it took 66 days for a new habit to become automatic.

Some people took 18 days  
and others up to 254 days.

So yeah, it does take a while.  
Because habits are tied to emotion —  
stress, loneliness, boredom.

So when you scroll late at night  
or pour another glass of wine,  
it's not always about willpower.  
It's about soothing something  
we haven't yet named.

And sometimes the thing we're soothing  
is the belief that we're not enough.

That's why so many resolutions fail.  
We try to change behavior  
without changing the story underneath.

You can't hate yourself into transformation.  
At least not one that lasts.

And yet we keep trying.  
Every January, we write a new list.

This year I'll be more disciplined,  
more confident, more productive.

But underneath it all,  
we're still measuring our worth  
by how much we do.

I'm so glad I've stopped doing them  
because I've always set myself up for failure.

Studies show only about 8–12% of people  
keep their New Year's resolutions for a full year.

I have never been part of that statistic.

No, that's really low.

But as we say, they come from the wrong place.

I think at the heart of it  
is wanting to feel better.  
And self-worth gets tangled up in performance.

We chase achievements to feel valuable,  
but when we can't sustain them,  
we feel like we've failed again.

Even when you get them,  
the lack inside isn't filled.

So we keep circling,  
waiting for permission  
to land in our own lives.

What we really want  
is acceptance, connection, contentment.

We tell ourselves we'll start  
when things calm down  
or when we look a certain way.

It's so punishing.

Life keeps happening in the meantime.

Growth is already happening  
and we don't notice it.

So maybe the real resolution  
is to stop postponing peace.

Progress isn't linear or glamorous.  
It's small, quiet acts of kindness to yourself.  
And then doing them again tomorrow.

Curiosity matters too.  
Why do we want what we want?

When the answer comes from love,  
it will always be easier to sustain.

So maybe instead of new year, new me,  
the goal is to know ourselves better.

Change doesn't always mean doing more.  
Sometimes it means unlearning.  
Resting.  
Letting go.

Stepping off the treadmill of self-improvement  
and remembering that who you are today  
is already enough.

Real change happens in connection, not isolation.

So wherever you are listening,  
take a breath and know  
you don't need a brand new version of yourself.

The version of you here right now  
has made it through everything so far.  
That is resilience.

So however you're spending the evening,  
cheers to small beginnings, soft changes  
and remembering that you're enough already.

Happy New Year, everyone.  
Thanks for listening.

See you next year.  
And next week.  
Bye.

Thanks so much for joining us.  
We hope you're feeling more understood  
and a little less alone.

If you have something to share,  
email us at [hello@youkeepmesane.com](mailto:hello@youkeepmesane.com)  
or message us on socials [@youkeepmesane.pod](https://www.instagram.com/youkeepmesane.pod).

Please remember, we're just two friends  
sharing personal experiences.  
We're not qualified coaches or therapists.

If you need professional help,  
please seek advice from a licensed therapist.

You Keep Me Sane acknowledges the Boon Wurrung people  
of the Kulin Nation,  
the traditional custodians of the land  
on which part of this podcast was filmed.  
We pay our respects to their elders past and present.