

Instant New Year's Resolutions from Ben Franklin

Ben Franklin once said, "Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve." This little ditty is heavily quoted during this time every year as people make their goals for the coming year.

But what many may not realize is that Franklin's famous quote is part of a longer list of 13 goals and resolutions which Franklin made in his youth. As his [autobiography tells us](#), Franklin concentrated on one goal each week, and in doing so, was able to make his way through the list four times a year.

Such a practice, Franklin admitted, clearly demonstrated just how far short he fell in these areas. Yet his self-examination was not in vain, for in his old age he was able to look back and see how his practice of these principles had given him the successful life he enjoyed.

Are you approaching the New Year with an eye toward personal improvement, but unsure of where to start? Why not check out Ben Franklin's list of resolutions and consider adopting one or more for yourself?

1. Temperance

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. Order

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. Frugality

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself, i.e., waste nothing.

6. Industry

Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. Sincerity.

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. Justice

Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. Moderation

Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. Cleanliness

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. Tranquillity

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. Chastity

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. Humility

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.