

# Setting New Year's goals

January 1, 2013

Most of my life, New Year's resolutions just didn't make sense.

Maybe that's because I feel most folks make too big of a deal over the New Year. What's so great about Jan 1, anyway?

Life flows from day, to week, to month, to season, to year in an ongoing stream. The first day of a year never feels all that different from any other day. Birthdays, wedding anniversaries and graduations are bigger events than *any* Jan. 1. Even Y2K.

Life hinges on random dates far more dramatically than the beginning of a year. For example, my parents were involved in a catastrophic [car wreck](#) on a July afternoon. That day affected them, as well as our family, far more profoundly than anything that happened on the first day of 2012 or 2013.

But I began re-thinking New Year's resolutions very early one day this summer. It was one of the numberless mornings when I awoke at 5, dressed in the dark, laced up my sneakers and went out for a run.

This all started more than three years ago, when my buddy Peter told our Sunday school class I was going to run a half marathon (13.1 miles) with him. Peter had been after me to do this for ages, and he finally figured — correctly — he could shame me into it. If he told everyone I was committed, then I'd never back down. And so we ran our first half marathon together, and I loved it.

Almost exactly a year ago, as I completed yet another half marathon, I set a goal for 2012: I would run a full marathon — all 26.2 miles of it. That's what pushed me to get up at least five days a week all summer and fall to run anywhere from five miles to 20 miles.

Here's the weird part: I failed to make my goal, but I never regretted pursuing it. The Saturday after Thanksgiving — just two weeks before the Dallas Marathon — I pulled a muscle in my left calf. At my age, that meant I couldn't rehab my leg in time to push it for 26.2 miles.

Still, I thoroughly enjoyed all the 1,000-plus miles I put in as I trained. Sure, I felt down on race day, because I wasn't there, running. But I loved the early-morning quiet. The exuberance of exercise. The opportunity to think and pray alone on the road. The power of sweat. The euphoria of endorphins. The satisfaction of feeling stronger and in better shape than I'd ever been in my life.

And it never would have happened if I hadn't set a goal. Achieving it was secondary to pursuing it.

So, I'm setting goals for 2013. If I don't aim for them, I'll never achieve them. And even if I don't make all of them, I'll glory in the challenge and be a better husband, father, co-worker, family member and friend because of them.

What are they? Well that's a personal question, and I won't tell you the complete answer.

But you can bet completing a full marathon is on the list.