



# Resolution Solutions

Happiness is just a few clicks away

**H**appy new year! This is the year you're going to get in shape, land your dream job, put your financial house in order, quit smoking, work at the homeless shelter and spend more time with your loved ones.

Or at least that's what you promised to do on New Year's Eve. Every year at this time, I see the influx of resolute newcomers at the gym. They crowd the place until early February, and then they're gone for another year. Making resolutions is easy, keeping them requires a little more work.



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If you're one of the many people who has trouble with resolutions, [HappinessProjectToolbox.com](http://HappinessProjectToolbox.com) may be able to help. The website is not specifically a New Year's resolution site. It's set up to help people take action to make their lives happier any time of year.

## The magic bus

The site is the brainchild of Gretchen Rubin, a lawyer turned writer. Apparently, while riding a bus one day she had an epiphany — she wanted to be happy. For the next year, she pursued her "happiness project," exploring happiness-related science, popular culture and the "wisdom of the ages."

The website, in addition to a book and a daily blog, was the result of her sojourn. The tools she developed to become happier are now available to everyone.

## Top 10 resolutions

- Get in better shape
- Quit smoking
- Get organized
- Volunteer for a good cause
- Spend more time with family
- Drink less
- Get finances in order
- Learn something new
- Get a better job
- Enjoy life more

The toolbox contains eight tools:

1. **Resolutions** — commit to concrete, measurable actions
2. **Group Resolutions** — challenge a group to take a resolution
3. **Personal Commandments** — identify principles to guide your life
4. **Inspiration Board** — Pull together things that inspire you
5. **Lists** — keep any kind of list
6. **One-Sentence Journal** — keep up with a manageable journal
7. **Secrets of Adulthood** — remind yourself what you've learned
8. **Happiness Hacks** — share tips about how to boost happiness

You don't need to use all of the tools in order to achieve happiness. The site advises you to use the tools that appeal to you. If posting inspiring quotes or pictures motivates you, use the Inspiration Board tool. If making lists keeps you organized, use the Lists tool. If you want to see how others are achieving happiness, the Happiness Hacks tool is for you.

In order to use the tools, you have to register, which is free. When you use a tool, the posts of other users are visible. It's interesting, and

potentially inspiring, to see what other users have posted. Posted Resolutions range from "become a size 4/6" to "have faith," while Personal Commandments cover everything from "don't worry, be happy" to "be a force of nature." The other tools all contain a variety of posts from trivial to profound. You can choose to make your posts public or private, and you can change the designation whenever you want.

## Happiness is a warm blog

The Happiness Project Toolbox site has a bright and cheery design with a rainbow of colors. The navigation is easy to follow and functions well. Random animated icons of balloons, fruit, umbrellas, power tools and more fly away from the top of the page, adding a whimsical feel. The tool descriptions expand and contract one after the other, just long enough to read them, adding more motion to the page. Despite all the movement going on it's not as distracting as the moving advertising on many Web pages.

In fact, other than a plug for the author's book, the site doesn't have any advertising. The purpose of this site really does appear to be helping people become happier with no strings attached. While a lot of the advice that's posted sounds sappy or cliché, there's a reason that things become cliché. It's usually because they express a universal truth.

**KEVIN O'NEILL** is a graphic artist for The Times-Tribune. Contact him at [koneill@timeshamrock.com](mailto:koneill@timeshamrock.com) with links to your favorite websites.