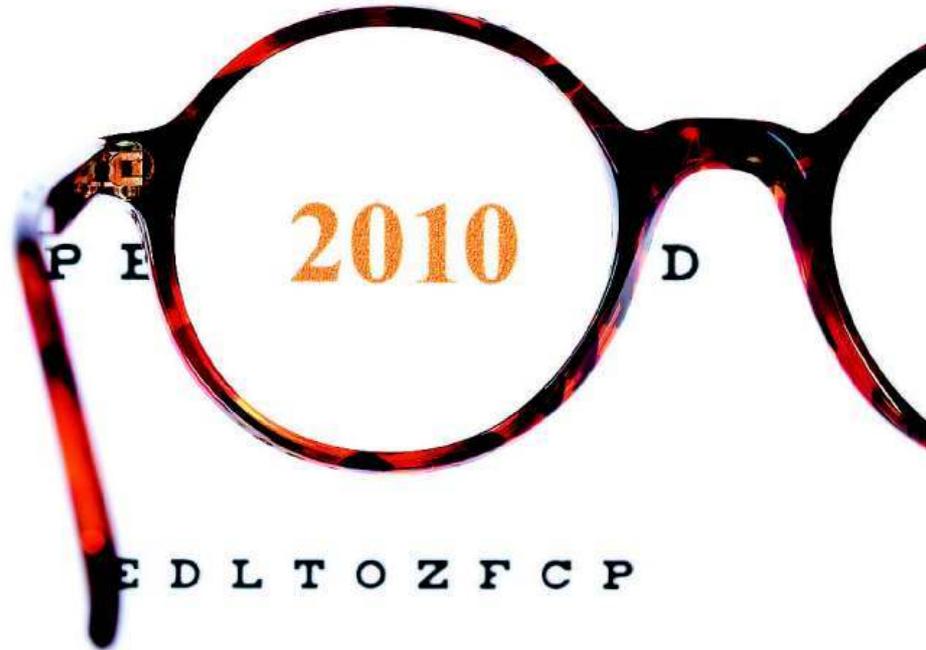




L E F O D P C T

F D P L T C E O



**Time to focus**

Consider what's important in life

# Don't dream it, resolve to do it

Make your New Year's list count, writes Fiona Purdon

THIS time every year author and public speaker Andrew Griffiths sits down and makes not one but two lists.

He catalogues all the things that have made him smile and achievements he has been proud of throughout the year and then he looks at all the things he wants to do better in the new year.

Griffiths has developed a set of life strategies after surviving tragic events from when he was a baby.

He and his sister Wendy were left as babies by their teenage parents (his father was an alcoholic) to be cared for by an elderly neighbour. They were mentally and physically abused by the old "grandmotherly" figure.

Griffiths has overcome drug and alcohol abuse in his teens, when he was involved with criminal gangs, before he turned his life around.

Wendy was raped as a teenager and then lost a baby from SIDS before she died from a heart attack about a decade ago.

"Wendy dying was my greatest fear in my life, the worst thing that could happen to me," Griffiths says.

"I thought life was over but then you get through it and I found my inner strength."

Griffiths won his battle with obesity, losing more than 50kg, and he now lives in Cairns where he is an entrepreneur, a keynote presenter, specialist consultant and business author.

His latest book is *The Me Myth* (Simon and Schuster, \$30).

Here are his 10 new year's resolutions:

## 1. Let go of the old stuff holding you back

It is easy to be obsessed with the past until you realise that there's no point in hanging on to stuff that is no longer serving any purpose.

Everything has a use-by date – let go of an ex-partner by disposing of their possessions. Get rid of your victim mentality.

Be determined not to torture yourself with your past.

## 2. Develop the habit of looking at situations from other peoples' point of view

The art of empathy is a wonderful thing that can help with any situation whether with work colleagues, partners, family and friends.

Empathy is less about confrontation and more about getting a higher level of connection with people and then you can enjoy life.

## 3. Don't be afraid to get uncomfortable

We all get into our comfort zones, so it is good to have your cage rattled a little bit mentally, emotionally and physically.

That's how we grow as people, otherwise we can lose our passion, energy, flexibility and enthusiasm.

## 4. Learn not to judge a book by its cover

Be more open-minded about people you meet. We are all guilty of leaping to conclusions and judging quickly. You can meet some amazing people. The scruffiest guy at a function can be the richest and smartest person in town.

Talk to people you would not normally talk to.

## 5. Step up and take responsibility for your life

If you have an issue, deal with it.

Don't put off the hard decisions. It is easy to blame others, but it's important to take responsibility for yourself. You can take control back by stepping up and taking responsibility.

## 6. Remember to stop and celebrate along the way

It has been a tough year with the uncertainty and fear of the global financial crisis.

We have lost

the art of celebrating and patting ourselves on the back. Make a list of all the things you are really proud of achieving this year.

It is great to celebrate the little things and to do the same with others when they have had success.

People are too hard on themselves.

## 7. Stop comparing yourself with others

This is so fraught with danger. There is always someone better looking and richer.

It is part of our culture, especially with possessions, that people slave away to have the latest products such as a plasma screen TV and they can miss out on living a full life.

## 8. If you lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas

Look at the people in your life, especially the five people you spend the most time with – are they supportive, nurturing, positive or negative and toxic? I believe that you become like the people you spend time with, so surround yourself with people who have qualities and characteristics that you want.

## 9. Do more of the things that rock your boat

Make a list of the things you love to do. When people say they are mad keen on fishing but they last went fishing eight years ago, that's a memory, not a hobby. We all have family and time constraints but try hard to fit in the things you are passionate about, such as catching up with friends, going to the movies and enjoy life more.

## 10. Self-improvement

Invest in yourself emotionally, physically and financially – go to the gym, buy new running shoes, listen to audio book CDs.

