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# No boring resolutions, please

By LOUISA LIM

**Failed your New Year resolutions yet again? Well, never mind that, because real help is on its way, and it doesn't involve making yawn-worthy "to-do" lists or pointless strategies.**

Ah, resolutions. How I love to hate them. As if turning another year older isn't bad enough, you are also forced to grapple with your misdeeds of the past year and come up with a list of lofty rules to live by.

*How dull, I hear you say.*

Well, join the club (which I presume is more than a billion-strong by now). Even Mark Twain is in it (at least he was) because it was he who came up with this little nugget of wisdom: "New Year's Day... now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week, you can begin paying hell with them as usual."

"I've been making resolutions I can't keep for over a decade now," says a friend of mine, Sarah H, 29, an interior designer. "I always feel compelled to begin on a clean slate because the New Year is associated with fresh starts. Now I'm starting to think that if I were to set more realistic goals like gaining weight and watching more trashy sitcoms, it might work."

But *wait*, it's time to stop.

With the financial storm whirring in from all sides, the last thing we need is a forecast of more doom and gloom. Thankfully, there are an increasing number of professionals who are willing to help you take charge and make things right. Although putting the "happy" back in Happy New Year costs money, it's better than watching helplessly on as another year roll by and leave you in its wake again.

## **Resolve #1: Get More Sleep**

What do the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Chernobyl leak and Challenger space shuttle explosion all have in common? According to Dinesh Rudra — organiser of the Sleep Workshop (012-2226 206) I recently attended in PJ — these disasters are a result of technical complications caused by sleep-deprived individuals.

Studies show that tired people don't accomplish much (apart from messing up) in their lives, making this the most important resolution of them all. As for me, I've been getting less than seven hours of sleep every night — hardly the recipe for productivity.

The workshop focuses on both the theory and practical. Dinesh dispenses handy information on how to improve your quality of sleep (tip: having a peanut butter sandwich before bedtime and sleeping on your left side) while his partner, Kavitha Muthusami, takes participants through various breathing and stretching exercises.

The best thing about these classes is that they're fun and cost only RM30 (all of the money will go towards a

charitable fund for single-parent families). Plus, you get to meet others with the same problem.

Hard-core insomniacs who need professional help would be happy to know that just a plane ride away are sleep centres offering overnight assessments. For 14,000 baht (RM1,406), patients at Bangkok's Bumrungrad Hospital ([www.bumrungrad.com](http://www.bumrungrad.com)) are wired up to a state-of-the-art machine that monitors vital signs and brain waves so doctors can come up with a diagnosis.

Singapore's Pacific Sleep Center ([www.pacificsleepcentre.com](http://www.pacificsleepcentre.com)), meanwhile, is where you can find Asia's first Medical Sleep Spa, which combines counselling with relaxation treatments. Rates vary, but a Sleep Spa Enhancement Programme that includes a massage and a facial costs about S\$450 (RM1,079).



**Every breath you take:** Kavitha Muthusami demonstrating to the Sleep Workshop's participants (below, centre) on the various breathing and stretching exercises.



## Resolve #2: Resuscitate Your Wardrobe

"Oftentimes, women come to me only if they're going through a bad divorce. Otherwise, they're going through a transitional period in their lives, like being married to someone who's just been granted *datukship*," says Wendy Lee from Chapter One ([www.chap-one.com](http://www.chap-one.com)), a professional image consultancy firm.

"But in order to change, you have to really want the change. For instance, one of my clients was a man from Hainan who has just secured a position in one of the top three firms in Beijing. He really wanted to make an impression, and was therefore very easy to work with."

My excuse is just as valid: my wardrobe is as fresh and appealing as a dead duck. I *needed* Wendy's help. Her long list of clients includes the rich, the not-so-rich, as well as the famous (she's the wardrobe consultant for the

news presenters at Media Prima).

With Wendy, colour charts don't just fall into the four categories of spring, summer, autumn and winter. In a personalised colour analysis (RM750), you're expected to sit through a personality test before a colour chart is created for you.

She'll then be able to tell you ways to achieve the best colour contrast and how to bend colour rules.

The personalised figure and style analysis, meanwhile, costs RM950 and is an exclusive franchise brought from Australia. The client is measured all over before a customised fashion portfolio (detailing the best swimsuit, evening wear, trousers, collar design, etc) is created for their body type.

Want more?

Opt for the full-blown makeover, which comprises colour analysis, figure and style analysis, a wardrobe assessment and personalised shopping services, for RM2,000.



**True colours:** Wendy Lee shows the writer how to bend the colour rules for both makeup and clothes.

### **Resolve #3: Have More “Me” Time**

If there's one thing royalty can do and do mighty well, it's getting others to do the dirty job for them. Thanks to Quintessentially ([www.quintessentially.com](http://www.quintessentially.com)), a personal concierge company that seems to have taken the UK, US, and Asia by storm, this is now possible for average folks like us.

Quintessentially, which will be opening its first office in Malaysia in the coming months, is the brainchild of Ben Elliot, nephew to Camilla Parker-Bowles, and he certainly knows a few things about pleasing even the most demanding client, including Richard Branson and Madonna.

Some of their more impressive achievements include flying 40 roast ducks from London's Four Seasons Restaurant to a private dinner party in Thailand, securing an opening ceremony VIP box at the Beijing Olympics, and organising the rental of a football stadium in Barcelona for a game between friends.

The annual membership costs US\$5,000 and offers free access to a Dedicated Lifestyle Manager, who's at your beck and call 24/7. According to Quintessentially's website, it's a small price to pay for their members-only privileges and services, not to mention the passport it offers them to all that is hip and stylish in today's world.

Think membership fees are too steep? You can still enjoy some of Quintessentially's services. I did — just to see if it lived up to its hype.

I contacted Quintessentially Escape, one of Quintessentially's sister companies that specialises in creating custom, once-in-a-lifetime getaways. As much as I love vacations, planning one has always been a hassle.

My request? Spending two weeks in Europe with three of my closest girlfriends, doing fun and less touristy things together. Budget? To spend as little money as possible, without backpacking.

They replied with a comprehensive itinerary within two working days, Italy being the destination. There, they had arranged for a personal shopping experience, an exclusive VIP after-hours art tour, a private truffle hunting tour, a private wine tour, a painting course, a cooking lesson, internal flights, and 11 nights in some of the most beautiful hotels in Italy – all for RM14,000 per person.

*Accellente!*



Learn something new this new year like maybe how to manage a yacht at sea. — AP Photo

#### **Resolve #4: Learn Something New**

There's nothing better to shake you out of that comfort zone than a new and exciting pursuit. I know one of these will be ticked off my bucket list before 2009 is out.

Want to fly? Get an internationally accredited Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) from The Royal Selangor Flying Club ([www.rsfc.com.my](http://www.rsfc.com.my)). The training takes eight months and costs RM33,975. Those who have neither the time nor money can take a one-time class for RM820 per hour.

Many other states also have their own Aviation Clubs like the Tanjung Flying Club in Penang and Elite Flying Club in Johor Bahru.

Dreamt of sailing around the world? Make it a reality by taking up lessons in Malaysia's oldest and largest sailing academy at the Royal Selangor Yacht Club ([sailinmalaysia.com](http://sailinmalaysia.com)).

Choose from a variety of courses, from basic, one-day practical training, to a six-day skipper theory that teaches you how to manage a yacht out at sea.

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