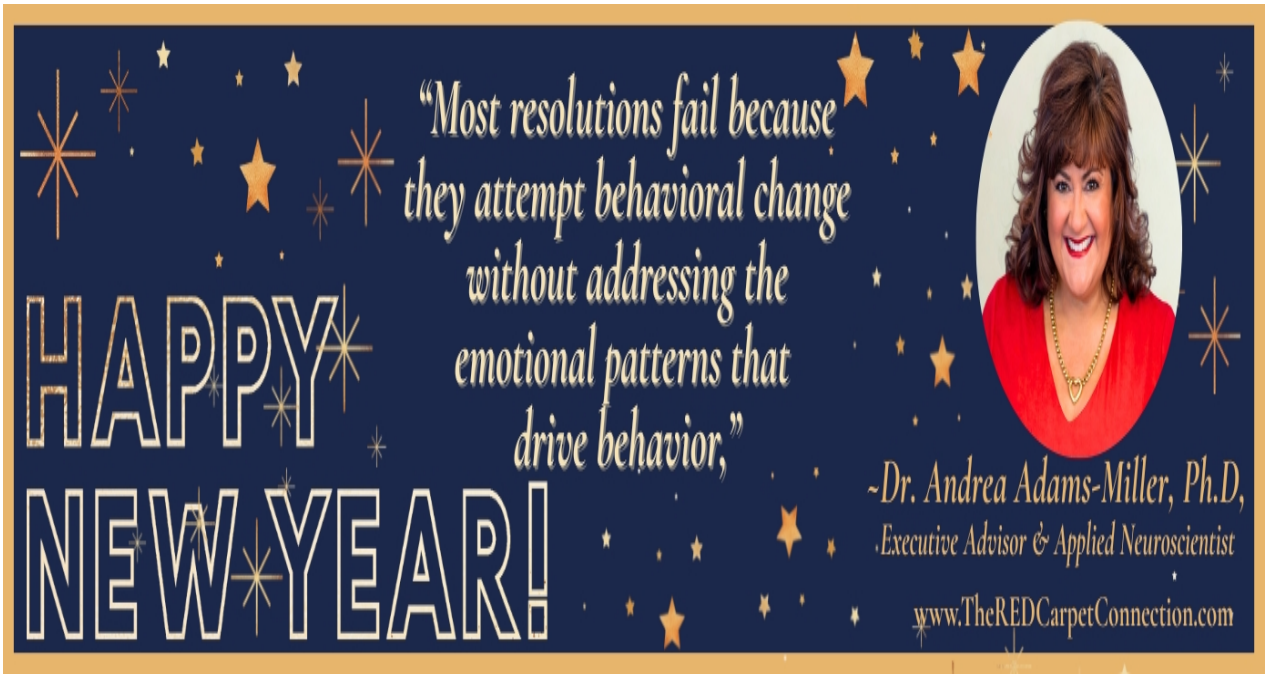

New Year?s Resolutions Fail for Most Americans?Dr. Andrea Adams-Miller Explains the Brain-Based Reason Why

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As New Year's resolutions fill gyms, spike budgeting apps, and workplace performance guides roll out new performance goals in the first weeks of January, Dr. Andrea Adams-Miller of The RED Carpet Connection LLC says a familiar national pattern quietly re-emerges: strong intention followed by rapid drop-off.

Each January, millions of Americans set New Year?s resolutions focused on health, finances, relationships, and personal improvement. Yet most resolutions fade within weeks.

According to Dr. Adams-Miller, this outcome reflects predictable behavioral patterns rooted in emotional memory, identity reinforcement, and habit circuitry rather than motivation or discipline.

New Year?s resolutions are typically made during periods of heightened optimism. However, behavior is guided by emotional familiarity.

When a resolution conflicts with established emotional patterns and identity cues, the nervous system

defaults to what feels known, even when that behavior contradicts stated intentions.

?Most resolutions fail because they attempt behavioral change without addressing the emotional patterns that drive behavior,? Adams-Miller explains. ?This expert commentary is based on applied neuroscience and behavioral research showing that the brain prioritizes consistency and perceived safety over aspiration.?

Peer-reviewed research has documented this pattern for decades. A longitudinal study examining New Year?s resolutions found that while initial change efforts are common, sustained follow-through is far less reliable.

As psychologist John C. Norcross and colleagues observed, ?Change attempts are 'ubiquitous,' but maintenance of change is rare? (Norcross et al., 2002, p. 399).

Neuroscience research helps explain why this occurs. When new goals introduce emotional strain or internal conflict, the brain defaults to established habit loops that favor familiarity over change (Graybiel, 2011). This tendency becomes more pronounced under stress, when efficiency and predictability take priority over novelty. January timing further amplifies the effect.

The period follows weeks of emotional saturation involving family dynamics, financial reflection, social comparison, and year-end evaluation. These experiences reinforce existing self-concepts. When resolutions challenge those self-concepts without recalibration, internal resistance emerges.

Dr. Adams-Miller notes that this resistance is frequently misinterpreted as self-sabotage. ?From a behavioral standpoint, the nervous system is often protecting identity, not undermining success,? she says.

Research on self-regulation further explains why pressure-based approaches often backfire. Behavioral scientists Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs describe the scope of the issue plainly, noting that ?self-regulation failure is a major problem in modern society? (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007, p. 115).When goals are framed around force or self-criticism, emotional friction increases and follow-through declines.

Studies of identity-based motivation show that behavior stabilizes when actions reinforce self-concept rather than contradict it (Oyserman, 2009). When resolutions align with how individuals see themselves, or who they believe they are becoming, resistance decreases, and consistency improves. Additional research indicates that anchoring new behaviors to existing routines strengthens follow-through (Wood & Neal, 2007), while recognizing early progress supports memory consolidation (McGaugh, 2015).

According to Adams-Miller, these findings explain why resolution collapse is widespread and predictable. Her interpretations reflect applied expert commentary on existing research rather than clinical diagnosis,

emphasizing behavioral alignment over willpower.

Dr. Andrea Adams-Miller provides educational guidance, strategic advising, and applied behavioral insight focused on emotional patterns, decision-making, communication, and performance. Her work addresses non-clinical emotional experiences, including stress responses, motivation challenges, habit formation, and behavioral alignment.

Confidential interviews determine her availability to advise and train individuals, leadership teams, and organizations on applying evidence-informed strategies that align emotional patterns, identity, and behavior to support sustainable performance and long-term change.

About Dr. Andrea Adams-Miller

Dr. Andrea Adams-Miller is an applied neuroscience-based communication strategist, executive advisor, and international speaker. Her work focuses on interpreting behavioral research to help individuals and organizations understand how emotional patterns and identity influence decision-making and performance.

About The RED Carpet Connection LLC

The RED Carpet Connection LLC is a strategic advisory firm specializing in communication intelligence, influence strategy, and cognitive clarity. The firm works with executives, entrepreneurs, organizations, and public figures to align messaging, emotional awareness, and decision-making for sustainable impact and long-term credibility.

Disclaimer: She does not diagnose medical or psychological conditions. Individuals seeking medical or clinical mental health care should consult appropriately licensed professionals.
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