

I actually kept my 2013 New Year's resolutions

Wayne Hoffman, Idaho Freedom Foundation

I've never been a big fan of New Year's resolutions. But last year I came up with two that went my way, and who am I to question results. The two intersect with personal and professional aspects of my life.

My first was to lose weight. Oh, I know. Hardly original. But it worked, to the tune of 30 pounds lost since the start of the year. I weigh slightly more today than I did when I left high school. I feel better. I'm more active. I ran a half marathon last spring, and I'm looking forward to my next big race. I'm eating better, smarter and in more satisfying portions. I'm probably saving money on food, if not on clothes.

My second resolution was to find opportunities to work with unusual allies and broaden my circle of friendship. I did that, too, having built unusual coalitions of liberal and conservatives to champion criminal justice reform and the reform of government entitlement programs. It is extremely rewarding to see political persuasions unite behind ideas on which they can agree, with a common end goal of improving people's lives.

I hope we'll see nonviolent people spend less time in prison and more time being productive members of society. I hope we will see fewer people in government food lines and more getting real help that turns lives around and saves them and their families from generations of poverty.

I guess New Year's resolutions aren't so bad after all. So here are two more, again, personal and professional:

First, keep the weight off. Boring, but let's not argue with success. I feel better having lost the pounds, and I don't know, I think I look better, too. Maybe my success will be an inspiration for others looking to make the resolution they need to start a new year, too. Maybe in 2014, I can tackle a marathon. Who knows.

Now the professional one: I want to spend more time listening and less time talking. I want to get to know the people around me better. Aren't we all guilty, at some level, of thinking the most beautiful sound is that of our own voice? I have the best job in the whole world, getting to meet new people all over the state and country. I'd like to do a better job hearing what others have to say.

I don't like to announce my own shortcomings, and I suspect someone might take it as an opportunity for criticism, but, as they say, let he who is without sin cast the first stone. If we were perfect, New Year's resolutions wouldn't be ubiquitous.

I take comfort in the fact that the year ends better than it started with more friends, more successes, more opportunity; of the lives I have touched, I believe I touched most in positive, useful ways. Of my family, we created many warm, happy, lasting memories.

Along the way, there have been more laughs than tears, more joy than fear, more excitement than boredom. I'm looking forward to another start, the newness and freshness that only a new year can bring. I hope the same is true for you in 2014.

