VISIBLE AUTHORITY · FRAMEWORK SERIES

FRAMEWORK NO. 06 · RESEARCH & DIAGNOSTIC GUIDE

BEHAVIORAL CHANGE & GOAL-ATTAINMENT ARCHITECTURE

Transformative *Breakthrough*

Why New-Year Resolutions Fail and a 3-Pillar System for Sustained Personal Change — drawing on goal-attainment research and the authors' combined 21 years of training and coaching (clients from 80+ nationalities).

AUTHOR

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CORE ARCHITECTURE

3-Pillar Breakthrough Triangle · Mindset vs. Systems Deficit Map · 6-Dimension Diagnostic Rubric

SCOPE & EVIDENCE

Gallup (2022), Marist Poll, University of Scranton (Norcross et al., 2002), Marlatt & Kaplan (1972) · 21 Years Training & Coaching (Clients from 80+ Nationalities)

EDITION

Visible Authority Framework Series · first issued 2025; redesigned 2026

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01 / OUR COLLECTIVE DREAM

Character Refinement Under *All-Time-High Stress*

Why lasting personal success stems from refining character—and why record workplace stress disrupts conventional habit-building rituals.

People who aspire to leave a meaningful mark in this life recognize the importance of becoming their best selves. At root, enduring success is an outcome of reaching one's highest potential—and that potential is unlocked only through deliberate refinement of character.

Yet transforming how we live and work inside today's demanding environment has become an extraordinary challenge. According to the **Gallup Workplace Survey (2022)**, daily stress among working adults reached an all-time high. Emotional disruption makes it harder to pursue meaningful long-term goals or sustain foundational daily habits. Across professions and life stages, people want more from themselves—yet lack a reliable architecture to make that change stick.

For decades, millions have turned to **New Year's Resolutions** as a collective ritual to become better versions of themselves. Setting resolutions has become an annual cultural fashion because the act of declaring a fresh start carries an unmistakable burst of emotional energy. That initial surge feels real—is there not an energizing lift simply in writing down what might change? Yet the decisive question remains: **does the resolution ritual actually work in the complex, high-friction environment we inhabit today?**

> "We all have a collective responsibility as human beings to become better versions of ourselves to fulfill the purpose of life."
>
> FOUNDATIONAL PREMISE · TRANSFORMATIVE BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH

01

Character Before Tactics

Meaningful outward achievement follows inward character refinement. Sustainable transformation upgrades who a person becomes, not merely a temporary January checklist.

02

The Stress Friction Tax

Gallup's 2022 global workplace findings report record stress levels. Emotional disruption makes new habits harder to sustain precisely when they are most fragile.

03

Ritual Energy vs. Execution

Calendar milestones create an immediate motivational spike, mistaking the pleasure of declaring an intention for a system capable of surviving ordinary Tuesday afternoons.

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02 / THE YEARLY VICIOUS CYCLE

44% Set Resolutions. *Fewer Than Half Keep Them.*

Resolution-adherence research shows steady attrition within six months—and a compounding toll of frustration and relational strain.

According to the **Marist Poll Survey**, roughly **44% of adults in the United States** report being likely to make New Year's resolutions. Yet resolution-adherence research from the **University of Scranton** (Norcross, Mrykalo & Blagys, 2002) found that 75% kept their resolution after one week, but only **46% at six months**. More than half of resolution-makers fall short within the first half of the year.

44%

Annual Resolution Participation

Share of U.S. adults likely to set New Year's resolutions as a vehicle for personal improvement.

Source: Marist Poll Survey

75% → 46%

Six-Month Retention Erosion

Share keeping up with resolutions falls from 75% after Week 1 to 64% at Month 1 and 46% by Month 6.

Source: University of Scranton (Norcross et al., 2002)

54%

Lapsed Within Six Months

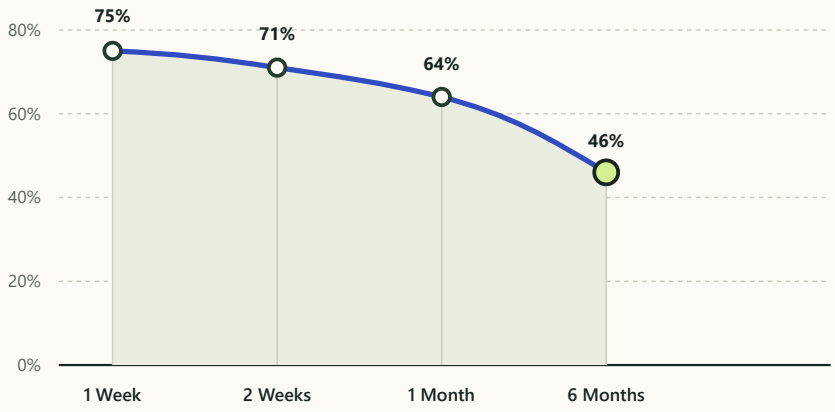
More than half of resolvers were no longer keeping their resolution six months in (100% − 46%; derived).

Source: derived from Norcross et al. (2002)

FIGURE 01 · ATTRITION CURVE

Percentage of People Successfully Keeping Up With Their Resolutions Over Time

75% → 46% IN SIX MONTHS



UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON
RESEARCH BENCHMARK

46%

were still keeping their resolution six months in, down from 75% after the first week (Norcross et al., 2002).

Adherence at 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month and 6 months; the study did not follow participants beyond six months.

Source: University of Scranton (Norcross, Mrykalo & Blagys, 2002)

The Human & Psychological Cost of Chronic Non-Completion

What does that attrition actually mean in lived human terms? Far from being a harmless January tradition, repeated failure to follow through translates into substantial personal, relational, and organizational loss: **frustrated and overwhelmed individuals, broken hearts and strained bonds, failed commercial commitments and lost career growth, hollow spiritual connection, stressed bodies, and burnt-out minds.**

As human beings, we are fundamentally wired for progress and growth. When year after year our earnestly declared goals collapse within weeks, people stop experiencing meaningful forward movement and can slide into a state of **hopelessness**.

Diagnostic Verdict: Conventional New Year Resolutions Simply Do Not Work

Repeating the same calendar ritual each January while expecting a different December outcome compounds self-doubt. Escaping the yearly vicious cycle requires examining why the resolution format itself is structurally incomplete.

03 / AN INCOMPLETE SYSTEM

Why Failing at Resolutions Is *Not Entirely Your Fault*

Twenty-one years of training and coaching thousands of participants show that resolutions lack the architecture needed to formulate, manage, and sustain change.

Witnessing capable, sincere people struggle year after year led us to investigate the underlying science of behavior change—combining formal research in **goal attainment, goal formulation, human motivation, and well-being** with **21 years of hands-on training and coaching experience** working alongside thousands of individuals. That work produced an empathetic and liberating realization for everyone who has tried resolutions and fallen short: **it is not entirely their fault.**

New Year's resolutions fail at scale because they are an **incomplete system**—a cultural prompt that asks people to declare outcomes while omitting the essential steps required to formulate, manage, and sustain daily behavioral change. Specifically, resolutions break down across three structural flaws:

01

Resolutions Are Not Personal

Most New Year's resolutions are popular, ritualized, and borrowed from external social influences and seasonal trends rather than anchored in solid foundational reasons rooted in personal **Purpose** and core **Values**.

02

An Ineffective Goal-Formulation Tool

Conventional resolutions are typically vague and ambiguous, set too far into the future, and structured poorly. Because they describe distant wishes rather than clear daily actions, they fail to serve as concrete **behavioral guides**.

03

Mere Intentions Without Execution

Most resolutions remain unanchored *intentions*—and intentions alone, stripped of implementation structure and feedback loops, do not translate into sustained action.

Is There Still Hope?

Our conclusion: New Year's resolutions are an incomplete system, structurally unsuitable for achieving transformative breakthroughs in life. Yet there is every reason for hope—provided we remain open-minded enough to replace an annual wish list with a complete behavioral system.

04 / THE MISSING PIECES

Marlatt & Kaplan (1972) list five reasons resolutions collapse; the authors group each under either

Five Failure Modes, *Two Root Deficits*

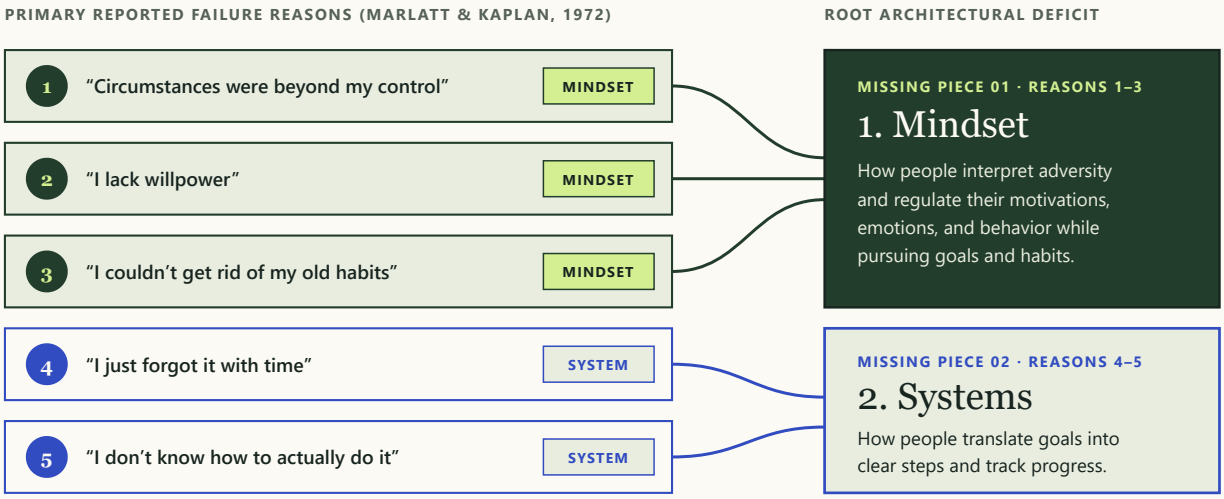
Mindset or Systems.

Marlatt & Kaplan (1972) list five significant reasons people fail to follow through on their New Year's resolutions. The authors group these self-reported breakdowns by underlying mechanism, and all five fall under just two missing pieces: **Mindset** and **Systems**.

FIGURE 02 · DIAGNOSTIC CLASSIFICATION MAP

Mapping the Five Primary Follow-Through Failures to Mindset vs. Systems

MARLATT & KAPLAN (1972)



Self-reported failure reasons (Marlatt & Kaplan, 1972), grouped by the authors under Mindset or Systems.

Source: Marlatt & Kaplan (1972)

#	REPORTED FAILURE REASON (MARLATT & KAPLAN, 1972)	MISSING PIECE	UNDERLYING BREAKDOWN MECHANISM
01	**"Circumstances were beyond my control"**	MINDSET	Externalizing agency when unexpected stress or environmental disruption tests initial commitment.
02	**"I lack willpower"**	MINDSET	Relying on raw momentary willpower instead of purpose-anchored motivation and emotional self-regulation.
03	**"I couldn't get rid of my old habits"**	MINDSET	Interpreting early habit relapses as permanent personal failure rather than feedback inside a learning curve.
04	**"I just forgot it with time"**	SYSTEM	Absence of recurring review cadences, environmental cues, and visible progress tracking after January fades.

#	REPORTED FAILURE REASON (MARLATT & KAPLAN, 1972)	MISSING PIECE	UNDERLYING BREAKDOWN MECHANISM
05	**"I don't know how to actually do it"**	SYSTEM	Distant outcome aspirations never decomposed into intermediate milestones, priorities, and daily behavioral guides.

Missing Piece 01

Mindset

Mindset is about how people manage and regulate their motivations, emotions, and behavior while trying to reach their goals and build enduring habits—especially when circumstances shift, energy dips, or old patterns pull them backward.

Missing Piece 02

Systems

Systems are about how people operationalize what must be done day by day and help themselves keep track of progress toward their goals—ensuring priorities stay visible, conflicts are resolved, and execution is sustained over time.

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05 / READINESS TO CHANGE

It Is About *Believing*

The authors' reading of goal-attainment research is that "readiness to change"—rooted in self-belief and trust in a structured system—is the strongest predictor of breakthrough.

Before introducing any framework or diagnostic tool, intellectual honesty requires naming the non-negotiable prerequisite of personal transformation. **If you believe in yourself—even slightly—and believe that with the right system you can transform yourself by reaching your most important goals and building empowering habits, then a structured methodology can genuinely help you.**

On the contrary, if a person neither believes in their own capacity to grow nor trusts the power of a structured system to guide and sustain a transformative journey, then no external advisor, workshop, or manual can manufacture change on their behalf. The authors' reading of goal-attainment research is that **the number one predictor of goal attainment is "readiness to change."** Without genuine readiness, even the finest system remains inert.

PREDICTOR #1 · BREAKTHROUGH GATE OPEN

Ready to Change (Self-Belief + System Trust)

- Holds even a modest spark of belief that personal growth is possible.
- Willing to trust and apply a structured system rather than improvising on mood.
- Treats friction and early mistakes as signals to calibrate, not proof of inadequacy.

CLOSED GATE · WHY EXTERNAL HELP STALLS

Unready to Change (Cynicism or Resignation)

- Dismisses personal agency ("nothing works for me") before testing a complete system.
- Rejects structured tracking and prioritization while expecting spontaneous breakthroughs.
- Remains trapped in passive wishing—where no external intervention can substitute for willingness.

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06 / THE TRANSFORMATIVE BREAKTHROUGH FRAMEWORK

Three Pillars & Six Dimensions for *Life-Transforming Outcomes*

Built from goal-attainment research and the authors' thousands of hours training and coaching clients from 80+ nationalities.

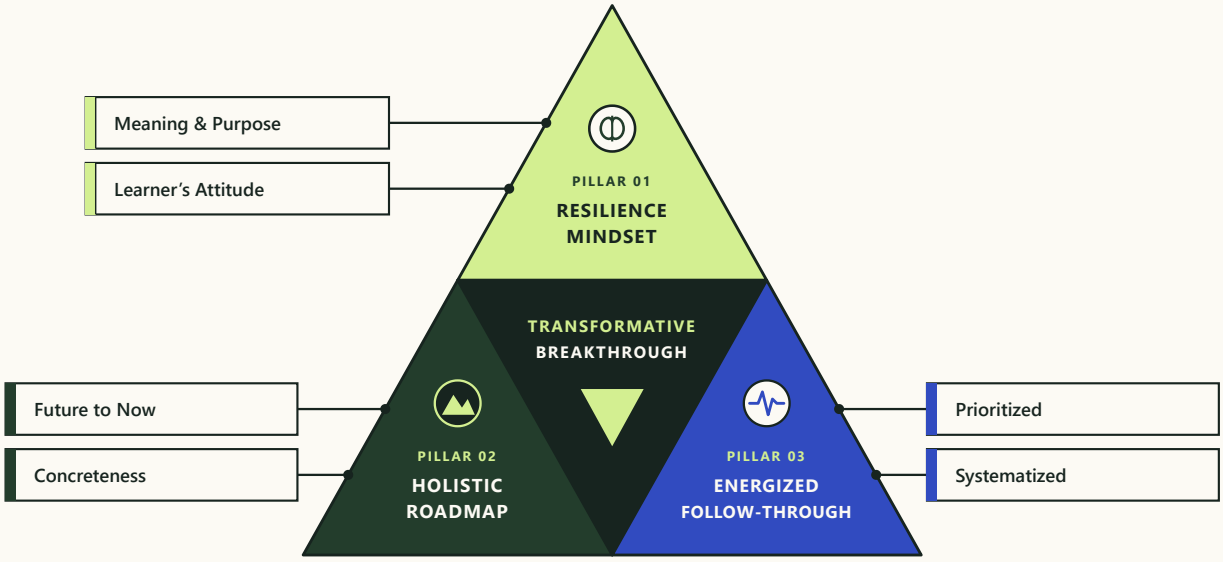
We built the **Transformative Breakthrough Framework** explicitly around life-transforming outcomes rather than short-lived January enthusiasm. It synthesizes formal behavioral research with practical field evidence gathered across **thousands of hours training and coaching clients from more than 80 nationalities**.

By integrating both missing pieces—**Mindset** and **Systems**—into three mutually reinforcing pillars and six operational sub-dimensions, the framework supplies every ingredient needed to make the coming year a genuine turning point *in'sha'Allah*, provided you bring sincere readiness and sustained effort.

FIGURE 03 · CORE SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The Transformative Breakthrough Triangle: 3 Pillars & 6 Operational Sub-Dimensions

80+ NATIONALITIES COACHED



3 REINFORCING PILLARS · 6 OPERATIONAL SUB-DIMENSIONS · DEVELOPED THROUGH SEVEN YEARS OF WORKSHOPS

Each pillar pairs two operational sub-dimensions designed to address the Mindset and Systems deficits described above.

Architecture: Hassan Adnan

Pillar 01

Resilience Mindset

Resilience develops the right perspective on the situations we face, enables clear assessment of challenges, and builds the courage to confront adversity as we progress toward better versions of ourselves.

- **Meaning & Purpose:** Anchoring habits and goals in an authentic life vision rather than social fashion.
- **Learner's Attitude:** Pairing the humility to own mistakes when setbacks happen with the firm belief that capability improves through iteration.

Pillar 02

Holistic Roadmap

The Holistic Roadmap establishes a balanced approach to committing to goals and habits that are **holistic rather than isolated, empowering rather than limiting, and additive rather than one-off**.

- **Future to Now:** Bridging long-term aspirations into intermediate milestones and immediate daily goals.
- **Concreteness:** Formulating goals as explicit behavioral guides and clear priority indicators.

Pillar 03

Energized Follow-Through

Follow-through converts roadmap clarity into real momentum—ensuring you always know **what to do, where you stand, and what effort is required to close the gap**, while keeping motivation alive.

- **Prioritized:** Systematically assessing priorities to prevent destructive conflict across life responsibilities.
- **Systematized:** Operating a reliable rhythm to track, monitor, and maintain goal and habit progress and motivation.

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07 / ASSESS YOURSELF

6-Dimension *Diagnostic Rubric*

Reflect on where your current goal and habit architecture stands across all six sub-dimensions using the 5-point scale below.

RATING KEY · 5-POINT LIKERT SELF-ASSESSMENT

1 = Strongly Disagree · 2 = Disagree · 3 = Neutral · 4 = Agree · 5 = Strongly Agree. Print and circle one score per row, based on your actual current practice—not your aspirational intent.

PILLAR	DIMENSION	DIAGNOSTIC STATEMENT	SELF-RATING (1 → 5)
01 · RESILIENCE MINDSET	**Meaning & Purpose**	I am pursuing habits and goals in life that are aligned with my vision in life.	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

PILLAR	DIMENSION	DIAGNOSTIC STATEMENT	SELF-RATING (1 → 5)
01 · RESILIENCE MINDSET	**Learner's Attitude**	I have the humility to accept my mistakes when I fail and the belief that I can improve.	1 2 3 4 5
02 · HOLISTIC ROADMAP	**Future to Now**	I am pursuing long-term goals that are broken down into intermediate and daily goals.	1 2 3 4 5
02 · HOLISTIC ROADMAP	**Concrete**	My goals are formulated as behavioral guides and priority indicators.	1 2 3 4 5
03 · FOLLOW-THROUGH	**Prioritized**	I have a system to assess my priorities to prevent any conflict between my other responsibilities.	1 2 3 4 5
03 · FOLLOW-THROUGH	**Systematized**	I have a system to track, monitor, and maintain my goal and habit progress and motivation.	1 2 3 4 5

Scoring & Reflection Note

Illustrative self-reflection bands added in this edition; not a validated instrument.

6 – 14 pts

Intention-Only Mode

Goals currently operate like conventional New Year's resolutions—vulnerable to immediate drop-off when stress rises. Begin by anchoring **Meaning & Purpose** and selecting no more than 2–3 keystone commitments.

15 – 22 pts

Partial Architecture

Strong conviction in one or two pillars is being undermined by a missing link—commonly distant aspirations lacking daily breakdown (**Future to Now**) or absent progress tracking (**Systematized**).

23 – 30 pts

Breakthrough-Ready System

Mindset, roadmap, and follow-through reinforce one another. Focus on protecting priority boundaries (any single dimension rated ≤ 3 identifies your highest-leverage upgrade for the year ahead).

See where you stand: Honest baseline reflection is the turning point between repeating another cycle of wishful resolutions and designing a genuine transformative breakthrough in the year ahead.

Why achieving even 2–3 aligned goals builds self-confidence—in the authors' reading, the #2

Compounding Confidence & *Positive Habit Spillovers*

predictor of goal attainment—and can unlock whole-life spillover effects.

Pause for a moment and acknowledge the quiet pain that accumulates simply from finding it difficult to transform your life—knowing what matters deeply, yet watching months pass without durable traction.

Now invert that picture. **Imagine how your life would look a year from today if you achieved even 2–3 truly aligned goals or anchored 2–3 empowering keystone habits.** Consider how differently every core domain of life begins to function: your spiritual grounding and connection with Allah *(swt)*, the depth of your family and professional relationships, your craft and skillset, your continuous learning, and your wealth and livelihood.

Above all, completing those 2–3 aligned commitments builds an unmistakable internal asset: **confidence in yourself—which the authors regard as the second most important predictor of success in goal attainment** (second only to *readiness to change*).

In the authors' experience, good habits have **spillover effects**: traction in a few keystone commitments can carry over into adjacent areas of life.

FIGURE 04 · BEHAVIORAL FLYWHEEL

From Readiness (#1 Predictor) to Compounding Self-Confidence (#2 Predictor) & Life Spillovers

2–3 KEYSTONE GOALS THRESHOLD



Focused completion of 2–3 aligned commitments converts readiness (#1 predictor) into earned self-confidence (#2 predictor) and cross-domain habit spillovers.

Refined across 7+ years of New Year Breakthrough workshop cohorts

Sequence

The Two Primary Predictors Working Together

Readiness to change (#1 predictor) opens the door to disciplined experimentation; completing 2–3 concrete commitments then builds **self-confidence (#2 predictor)**, turning fragile early effort into a self-reinforcing upward spiral.

Workshop Lineage

Developed Through Seven Years of Workshops

Developed through seven years of annual workshops and the authors' combined 21 years of training and coaching clients from 80+ nationalities, this system treats lasting personal transformation as an architectural choice—not a calendar wish.

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Turn tacit judgement into a *visible body of work.*

Publication Provenance: First issued in 2025 as *Transformative Breakthrough*, researched and written by **Hassan Adnan**; redesigned 2026. Draws on the Marist Poll, Gallup (2022), Norcross et al. (2002) and Marlatt & Kaplan (1972), and on the authors' New Year Breakthrough workshops. Scoring bands are an illustrative addition in this edition.

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