

It's Time for Those End-of-Year Lists



By Ruth Kava — December 29, 2017



Happy New Year! ^[1]

Yes, it's time for those end of the year inquiries into people's thoughts and plans, and the [Marist Poll](#), ^[2] run by the ^[2]Marist College Institute for Public Opinion, never disappoints. This year the Poll has put out recent investigations into what Americans found to be the most [annoying word](#) ^[3] or phrase as well as what we hoped to accomplish via our [New Year's Resolutions](#) ^[4].

The Marist polls sample the opinions and characteristics of about 1100 adults (18 years and older), using live interviews by telephone. Random selections of mobile phone numbers were made in proportion to the population of different areas of the country, and some landline phones were also included.

Although I'm sure most folks have their own 'most irritating' list (full disclosure, my own most annoying is 'like'), according to the poll, 'whatever' tops Americans' lists. No surprise there really — it has garnered the most votes for the last nine years. The degree to which people are bothered by 'whatever' seems to be age-related, with those under 45 being less irritated than older folks. This year, 33 percent have put 'whatever' at the top of their lists, 23 percent cited 'fake news', and 'no offense but' (guess that's before one says something offensive) garnered the most offensive votes from 20 percent of those polled.

There have been shifts over time — in 2016 'whatever' annoyed 38 percent the most, while 'Ya know, right' and 'I can't even' made the list with 14 percent each. These opinions shifts likely reflect the entry of new generations into the polling data. The use of 'whatever' stems from its use in the movie "Clueless" over 20 years ago, according to Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, director of the Marist Institute. Could it be that its decline has occurred because fewer of the currently polled individuals have seen that movie? Or is it that younger folks just accept its use because they've always heard it?

Enough of 2017; what do Americans want to do in 2018? There's a Marist poll for that too. Not everyone wants to make a New Year's resolution , but among the approximately 44 percent who do, weight loss (a perennial favorite) and being a better person both were cited by 12 percent. Nine percent said they planned to exercise more, eat a more healthy diet, and get a better job. Six percent resolve to quit smoking. It may be that the concerns about the health risks associated with obesity are having an impact, since in 2016 the number resolving to lose weight was a little lower — 10 percent.

Losing weight topped the list of older (over 45) respondents at 16 percent, while 13 percent of younger folks pledged to be a better person. The genders differed in their goals too. Weight loss topped women's list at 15 percent, while 17 percent of men listed being a better person as their top goal.

Do people keep their resolutions? Of those who said they made a plan last year, 68 percent said they did make at least some of their planned changes. Of course, all this is self-reported — but it sounds good.

So there you have it — in 2017 'whatever' still irritated the most Americans, and for 2018 being a better person and losing weight (not mutually exclusive, one would think) topped the list of New Year's resolution.

And our resolution for all our readers is to provide you all the best science-based health news that 2018 brings. Happy New Year!

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Links

[1] <http://www.freegreatpicture.com>

[2] <http://maristpoll.marist.edu>

[3] <http://maristpoll.marist.edu/1218-whatever-loses-ground-but-retains-annoying-word-title/>

[4] <http://maristpoll.marist.edu/1220-being-a-better-person-weight-loss-top-2018-new-years-resolutions/>