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**Looking Ahead to 2009:  
New Year's Resolutions & Expectations**

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This Marist Poll reports:

- **New Year, But Not a New Start:** While a notable number of Americans plan to make a New Year's resolution this year, a majority -- 60% -- say it is *not likely at all* that they will pledge to change in 2009. That's compared with 40% who report it's very likely or somewhat likely they will turn over a new leaf. Those results are mostly unchanged from last year. Slightly more women than men are likely to adjust their way of life. 44% of women versus 37% of men say there's a good chance they will make a New Year's resolution this year. Compared with last year, though, the number of women wanting to revamp an aspect of their life drops from 49%. Older residents are more set in their ways. Just 29% of Americans forty-five or older report they will try to change their lifestyle compared with 55% of those younger than forty-five years old.

**Question Wording:** This year, are you very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely at all to make a New Year's resolution?

Residents	Very or Somewhat Likely	Not Likely at All
<b>2008</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	37%	63%
Women	44%	56%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 45	55%	45%
45 or older	29%	71%

Residents	Very or Somewhat Likely	Not Likely at All
<b>2007</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	37%	63%
Women	49%	51%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 45	52%	48%
45 or older	36%	64%
<b>2006</b>	44%	56%
<b>2004</b>	35%	65%
<b>2003</b>	34%	66%
<b>2002</b>	39%	61%
<b>2001</b>	44%	56%
<b>2000</b>	40%	60%
<b>1999</b>	37%	63%
<b>1998</b>	38%	62%
<b>1997</b>	37%	63%

- Battle of the Bulge and Bad Habits on Americans' Minds:** 20% of Americans who say they will likely make a New Year's resolution are vowing to lose weight, and another 16% want to shed a bad habit and stop smoking. For the second consecutive year, these resolutions top the list of responses. However, a new pledge has made the "Top 3." 12% report they are going to spend less money in 2009 bumping the resolution to be a better person to lower on the list. Women and men are on the same resolution wavelength this year. The desire to lose weight tops the "to do" list for women. 22% are making that promise this year. 16% of women want to stop smoking, and 14% want to spend less money. Men mirror these results. 17% of men would like to lose weight, and an additional 15% vow to quit smoking. 9% say they will try to cut their spending.

**\*Question Wording:** What is it that you will resolve to do or not do in the New Year?

<b>Americans Making Resolutions</b>			
<b>2008</b>		<b>2007</b>	
Lose weight	20%	Lose weight	17%
Stop smoking	16%	Stop smoking	17%
Spend less/save more	12%	Be a better person	14%

\*Results shown for top three responses. For complete question results, go to: [www.maristpoll@marist.edu](mailto:www.maristpoll@marist.edu)

<b>Americans Making Resolutions for the New Year</b>			
<b>Women</b>		<b>Men</b>	
Lose weight	22%	Lose weight	17%
Stop smoking	16%	Stop smoking	15%
Spend less/save more	14%	Spend less/save more	9%

\*Results shown for top three responses. For complete question results, go to: [www.maristpoll@marist.edu](mailto:www.maristpoll@marist.edu)

- Tried and True?** 60% of Americans who *did* make a resolution last year kept their promise for at least part of the year. 40%, however, admit they fell off the wagon and did not keep their resolutions. Age doesn't make much difference when it comes to success rate. A majority of those under 45 years old -- 61% -- were steely in their resolve and carried out their resolutions. A similar proportion of those 45 and older -- 60% -- fulfilled their pledges. Men and women are also on equal footing here. 58% of men and 62% of women said they kept their word. Last year, 63% of men and 56% of women said they stayed true to their resolutions.

**Question Wording:** Did you keep your resolution?

Americans Who Made Resolutions Last Year	Yes	No
<b>2008</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	58%	42%
Women	62%	38%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 45	61%	39%
45 or older	60%	40%
<b>2007</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	63%	37%
Women	56%	44%

- Better Days Ahead? A Majority Thinks So:** 56% of Americans are more optimistic about what the future holds in 2009 while 40% are more pessimistic. Women and younger residents have a more positive outlook compared with men and those 45 or older. 62% of women and 50% of men think good things are going to happen next year. Looking at age, 64% of Americans under the age of 45 think the world will be a better place. 52% of those 45 or older feel the same way.

**Question Wording:** Thinking about what is ahead for the world in 2009, are you generally more optimistic or more pessimistic?

	More Optimistic	More Pessimistic	Unsure
Residents	56%	40%	4%
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	50%	44%	6%
Women	62%	35%	3%
<b>Age</b>			
Under 45	64%	33%	3%
45 or older	52%	43%	5%

**Nature of the Sample: 1,003 Americans**

This survey was conducted on December 9<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008. 1,003 adults 18 years of age or older within the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. The results of the entire survey are statistically significant at  $\pm 3\%$ . There are 397 Americans who are likely to make a New Year's resolution this year. The results for this subsample are statistically significant at  $\pm 5\%$ . The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations. For complete poll results, log onto [www.maristpoll@marist.edu](mailto:www.maristpoll@marist.edu).