



Resolutions That Help Us Renew and Reconnect

By Sarah Jacobs, BS, RT(R)(M)(CT)

As the calendar has turned to a new year, we are provided with an opportunity for reflection and renewal and a chance to create a path for fulfillment in the new year. For many of us working in breast imaging, our daily efforts consistently focus on the well-being of our patients, and we often forget to focus on our own well-being. The demanding nature of providing care to our patients in breast imaging can limit time for self-care and result in feelings of burnout. Setting New Year's resolutions can serve as a tool to renew our professional passion and support healthier work-life integration. Resolutions that focus on strengthening workplace connections, prioritizing self-care, and improving work-life integration can contribute to a higher level of professional and personal fulfillment. Resolutions centered around renewing our sense of purpose and spending more time on activities that promote self-care and collaboration with our team can help us reconnect with one another and with our patients.

Strengthen Workplace Connections

The health care environment thrives on collaboration and teamwork. Building stronger connections with colleagues can transform the workplace into a more supportive and resilient community. The following resolutions can strengthen a team's resilience and build stronger connections.

- Practice gratitude: A simple yet impactful resolution is to express appreciation for your coworkers. Verbal acknowledgment, thank-you notes, or informal celebrations of team successes can foster a culture of gratitude, strengthen morale, and create resilient teams.
- Provide routine peer support: Make it a priority to check in with your colleagues regularly. Participate in team huddles or rounds opportunities. Consider volunteering to organize or participate in initiatives such as employee engagement or team-building activities.
- Provide in-person communication: In an environment where working remotely or communicating virtually is commonplace, more frequent face-to-face communication is helpful to promote collaboration and teamwork with colleagues and patients.
- Promote inclusion and collaboration: Resolutions that improve teamwork may include inviting less vocal team members to share input during discussions. Providing a safe, supportive environment for team members to share thoughts and actively address conflicts in a constructive manner can promote a more cohesive, productive, and resilient working environment.
- Participate in social events: Workplaces that offer opportunities for social connection such as holiday gatherings and other team-building exercises can promote mutual trust. Attending and organizing such events can strengthen relationships among coworkers.

Prioritizing Self-Care

Members of a busy breast imaging team are often so focused on caring for others that they may neglect their own physical and emotional well-being. A commitment to self-care is not only essential for personal health but also crucial for sustaining the energy and focus needed to care for patients effectively. Resolutions that promote a higher level of self-care may include the following:

- Set boundaries: A key resolution for self-care is learning to establish boundaries that protect your time and energy. Whether it's declining extra shifts or disconnecting from work communication during days off or at the end of the workday, boundaries can help create a better work-life balance. It's important to embrace a mindful transition between work and home.
- Adopt a mindfulness practice: Mindfulness has been shown to reduce stress and improve focus. Commit to a daily mindfulness practice such as meditation, yoga, or even three minutes of deep breathing exercises in between tasks, patient examinations, or procedures. There are multiple free applications that you can download in addition to online resources that provide guidance for mindfulness exercises. Employee assistance or employee health programs can also be valuable resources to assist in implementing mindfulness practice in the workplace.
- Prioritize physical health: Another essential resolution is to maintain your physical health through regular exercise, nutritious eating, and adequate sleep. Scheduling time for exercise, meal prepping, and even a specific time each night to disconnect from technology can help improve physical health and energy levels. These activities can be scheduled as you would any other appointment, making them nonnegotiable parts of your daily or weekly routine.
- Indulge in hobbies and passions: Dedicate time to activities outside work that bring joy and relaxation. Moments of leisure such as reading, spending time in nature, devoting time to the arts and music, or spending time with loved ones can recharge your spirit and improve your mental health.

Embrace Work-Life Integration

For many of us, the concept of a balance between work and personal life can be challenging due to the unpredictable nature of our schedules. Instead of striving for balance, embracing work-life integration may be a more practical resolution.



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- Blend work with personal goals: Identify opportunities to align work responsibilities with personal values or passions. For example, if fitness is a personal priority, consider forming a workplace walking group during lunch breaks or advocating for more ergonomic workplace improvements that benefit everyone.
- Set flexible routines: Develop routines that adapt to your work schedule. This might involve planning family time or personal activities during your days off, ensuring you have dedicated moments for relaxation and connection despite a demanding workload. Creating a plan to minimize distractions and interruptions during image interpretation and reporting time to maximize your focus, flow, and efficiency is also beneficial.
- Leverage technology for efficiency: Use digital tools and apps to streamline work and personal tasks. Calendar apps, reminders, and task managers can help you stay organized and carve out time for what matters most. Consider adding scheduled moments for gratitude into your calendar or a reminder application on your phone.
- Find meaning in small moments: Instead of waiting for long vacations or extended breaks, focus on finding joy in smaller, everyday moments. Embracing the quick coffee break with a coworker, a heartfelt thank you from a patient, or even a quiet evening with loved ones can contribute to a sense of fulfillment.

Incorporating New Year's Resolutions Into Daily Life

For resolutions to have lasting impact, it's important to make them actionable and sustainable. We should start small by dissecting our larger goals into smaller, manageable steps. For example, if the resolution is to prioritize physical health, start by carving out 10 minutes each day for a walk rather than committing to an hour-long workout from the start. Accountability is critical in achieving resolutions. Sharing your goals with a trusted colleague, friend, or family member who offers encouragement and motivation can help keep you accountable. Any progress toward your resolution, even small milestones, should be celebrated! Celebrating progress helps sustain motivation and reinforce positive habits.

Setting New Year's resolutions that help reconnect you to your purpose, improve workplace relationships, and increase personal well-being are great ways to create a path for fulfillment in the new year. Focusing on strengthening workplace connections, prioritizing self-care, and embracing work-life integration can help breast imaging professionals enhance their personal lives and the lives of their colleagues and patients. As the new year unfolds, let these resolutions serve as a guide to a more fulfilling and balanced journey in breast imaging.

Special thanks to Dr. Jay Parikh for his contributions to this column.

Highlights of the EUSOBI Annual Scientific Meeting 2024 (continued from page 6)

Passing the Torch

The meeting marked a transition in leadership as Prof. Dr. Ruud Pijnappel completed his term as president of the Executive Board, reflecting on the society's achievements in recent years. He passed the role to Prof. Dr. Michael Fuchsjaeger, who will continue to lead EUSOBI in its mission to support research and education within the European breast radiology community and beyond.

Looking Ahead to EUSOBI 2025

The EUSOBI Annual Scientific Meeting 2024 was a remarkable experience of knowledge exchange, bringing together nearly 2000 participants from 78 countries with a diversity of clinical practices and unique insights. We look forward to gathering again at the next meeting, scheduled for September 25 to 27, 2025, in Aberdeen, Scotland. Mark your calendars and join us for another inspiring event! All EUSOBI events are held in the English language!



Prof. Dr. Michael Fuchsjaeger, EUSOBI president, with the EUSOBI Young Club Committee at the EUSOBI Annual Scientific Meeting 2024 in Lisbon.