Avoid Resolutions—Try Setting Step-By-Step Goals

Time after time, we do it, and then it becomes a forgotten memory—we make a resolution for the following year. This is especially true when it is a “big” resolution. This year, perhaps you might like to try something new and different—prior to “resolve it day,” consider something you really want to accomplish during the coming year (or even beyond). Look at this as a goal rather than a resolution. Break it into several steps—12, 6, 4, 3, which may coincide with the corresponding months—December, June, April, March. Once you have done this, mark your calendar. Each of the months you have chosen should display a step-building goal (a means to the end). You may even want to add check points in between the steps, and if you see the need, make refinements along the way.

A couple of years ago, I decided I really wanted to see my granddaughter graduate from college in 2020. She is attending school in Boston, and I have made it to all of the other grandchildren’s graduations, so I set a goal. Family and friends were concerned that this was an ambitious idea; however, I decided I was going to find a way. I got the idea that I would save all of my $1.00 bills, and put them in a designated savings account. I began the process in June, 2016. As of this point, I have put enough money in that account to pay for the plane ticket, and as of the first of the year, I should have all of the lodging accounted for as well. The final year and a half should produce adequate money to have a little fun while I am there. By making the commitment, and breaking down the process to small amounts each month, I was able to reach the point where I will be able to go to Boston, and I will also be able to take in sights and enjoy myself while I am there. It became a manageable goal rather than a wish or a burdensome resolution to save some money.

I suggest, therefore, that during the month of December, you consider something you really want to accomplish. Write that down. In the following weeks, break apart the goal. At that time, set an end date, and make an outline to advance toward the final goal. A little at a time is much less burdensome than trying to see the whole thing at one time. Refine your calendar. Review it regularly. You will be surprised at how you move toward the end. Remember, if you don’t reach the end of the goal in the time limit you have given yourself, be ready to extend the time and perhaps adjust the route you are taking to reach it.

Happiness, wealth, and success are by-products of goal setting; they cannot be the goal themselves. Denis Waitley
Small Projects Can Help Ease the Winter Blues

With the holidays nearing an end, it is easy to get into a slump. Spring will raise from the ice and snow before you know it, and the cycle of life will bring joy and promise to you. Before that slump rears up and tries to take over, look at some options you can accomplish in short periods of time.

➢ Did you make some purchases that you were sure you were going to use over the holidays only to find out you forgot all about them. This might be a good time to determine if they can be returned or saved for upcoming birthdays or stocking stuffers for next year. If they can’t for one reason or another, think about the appropriate distribution of them. Share with friends, return them to the store, or drop them off at a homeless shelter or a thrift store. Check the linens as you are putting away those special ones you had out for the holidays. Are some of them stained? If they are beyond restoration, consider putting them in the rag bag. You can pick up new ones during this time of year for a fraction of the amount you will have to pay when the holidays come around next year. You might check your tree ornaments and household decorations as well. Get rid of the damaged ones, and consider replacing them when you are able to find replacements for a savings up to 80% to even 90%.

➢ What about your “self” as we move forward into the spring? Is there a book you haven’t read which has been on the night table for months? Take some time to curl up and check that off your “to do” list. You may also have had an urge to take in one of the spiritual exercises available through your church or a small group. Consider giving yourself a much needed break and spend the day refreshing your spirit.

➢ Consider doing some volunteering alone or as a family during this post-season. Everyone is on board when the holidays are here, but after they are over, the need for help is still abundant, and volunteers become scarce.

➢ Is there a home project that will take little time and money that should be done? This activity can put new life into you and your home. Years ago my sister-in-law and I would often take this time to clean the closets. We could cull items that had been replaced by new ones gotten as gifts. That way, when spring cleaning came around, a lot of it was already taken care of. We would also take this time to do a fix-it project. Usually, we would choose something like a re-do of the bathroom. The room was small, so the cost was minimal. New paint and some new linens (often at the best prices of the year) would brighten up our outlook on the cold and dreary days of January. This would spark new life into the mundane things we had to do.

No matter what small projects or activities you take upon yourself, consider it active therapy. It can put your mind at ease and allow for some physical exercise and/or connecting with others. Enjoy the time; spring is on the way. By making these special projects and connections along the way, you will be ready, willing, and able to embrace the longer and warmer days as they come your way before you know it.

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