

December 2014 | lifehack.org | Lori Thayer | Lifestyle

5 Ways to Start the New Year Off Right

Don't let the new year sneak up on you. Now is the perfect time to follow these 5 ways to start the year off right, and take charge of what you are getting out of life.

#1 Do a yearly review

Take stock of where you've been and appreciate all of the accomplishments you've made in the last year. In a typical yearly review, you should answer these types of questions:

- What went well for me last year?
- What accomplishments did I have?
- How did I improve my life?
- How did I improve my relationships?
- What did I remove from my life that is now making me happier?
- What do I wish I had taken more time for?

Keep track of these questions and your responses in a journal that you can refer back to in the future: your answers year over year will be very enlightening.

Ask these types of questions about all the important areas of your life, such as family, relationships, financial, career, home, etc. These questions will help you appreciate all you've accomplished in the previous year, and you can use this information to start the new year off right, and set better goals for the next year.



#2 Finish what you started

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#2 Finish what you started

Which projects, errands, and general list of to-do items do you have left over from the previous year that you can complete in 2 hours or less? Do them now to clear your mind of the old items.

Keeping projects around like pets doesn't do us any good—they just weigh on our minds, and people will spend hours thinking about something that will only take 10 minutes to take care of. Cross those things off your list and give yourself a fresh start.

#3 Be realistic

Dreaming is fabulous and highly recommended, but if you want to accomplish some improvements in your life, you need to be realistic. As much as you may want something, it's very likely you don't



really believe you can have it. (If you did you would already have achieved it.) We have to turn a dream into something we can picture accomplishing before it can become a reality.

Take your dream and start breaking it down into milestones: if you want to work from home, what are the steps you need to take? Break those steps down further so you can create a game-plan and start working towards accomplishing that dream.

#4 Focus on what you really want

Speaking of dreaming, ask yourself what your dream looks like. What are you doing in the dream? How are you living? Who is in the dream with you? What does a typical day entail?

These questions will help you define what lifestyle you really want, and give you ideas about how you can achieve that lifestyle. For example, if you see yourself relaxing by the fire with a good book and a cup of tea, ask yourself why you aren't spending more time that way now. What things are in your way and how can you re-arrange your priorities in order to have the lifestyle you really want?

If you think that what you want is more money, keep digging at that response. What would you do if you had endless amounts of money? Would you travel, volunteer, or live simply and quietly away from it all?

We often think that money is an end goal, when really we are just stuck in a rut, and we think we can't do or have what we really want unless we have more money. Challenge that idea and dig to find those things that you really want, and aim to pursue them now.

#5 Put yourself at the top of the list

Using the information you gained above by determining what you really want, put yourself at the top of the list this year. The old adage is true; we really can't help others until we help ourselves. Taking care of yourself and striving to reach your own goals will make you a better spouse, friend, child, and parent.

Our examples have a far greater impact on those around us than anything we might say, and taking care of your own health and well-being means you'll be around longer for your loved ones too! Be sure to make time for yourself each day to work toward your goals, or to attain the lifestyle you want.

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