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NEW Year's resolutions: most of us make them; most of us fail to keep them. Why do we fail?

Usually, we resolve to do something so big, so difficult, so time-consuming – we reach so high that the simple act of reaching gets tiresome. And so we quit.

Fortunately, there's a better way. Here are 17 simple things to do sometime in 2018.

They're all one-time events (although you can certainly repeat them as many times as you like).

And each is a lot easier to accomplish than some hopefully-life-changing-but-in-the-end-never-accomplished New Year's resolution.

See the following as a to-do list you can check off as you go along:

1 DO ONE THING YOU'VE BEEN AFRAID TO DO

The most paralyzing fear is fear of the unknown. (At least it is for me.)

However, nothing ever turns out to be as hard or as scary as you think.

Plus, it's incredibly exciting to overcome a fear. You'll get that "Oh my, I can't believe I just did that!" rush.

That's an amazing feeling you probably haven't experienced for a long time.

2 APOLOGISE

People make mistakes. So we blame them for our problems. But we are almost always to blame as well.

Maybe we didn't provide enough training. Maybe we didn't foresee a potential problem.

Maybe we asked too much, too soon. We did not do something we could or should have done.

Take responsibility instead – not in a masochistic, woe-is-me way, but in an empowering way.

Take responsibility, and then focus on being smarter or better or faster or more creative next time.

3 START SOMETHING

You have plans. You have goals. You have ideas. Who cares? You have nothing until you actually do something.

Every day, we let hesitation and uncertainty stop us from acting on our ideas.

Fear of the unknown and fear of failure often stops me and may be what stops you, too.

Pick one plan, one goal, or one idea. And get started. Do something. Do anything. Just take one small step.

The first step is by far the hardest. Every successive step will be a lot easier.

4 TELL ONE PERSON THEY'RE AWESOME

No one receives enough praise. No one. Pick someone who did something well and tell them.

Surprise praise is a gift that costs the giver nothing but is priceless to the recipient.

5 PROVE ONE PERSON WRONG

I'm ashamed to admit it, but one of the best ways to motivate me is to insult me.

Or for me to manufacture a way to feel insulted, regardless of whether I'm justified in feeling that way or not.

See, whether I'm justified in feeling slighted or angry is not the point.

I use rejection to fuel my motivation to do whatever it takes to prove that person wrong and, more importantly, achieve what I want to achieve.

Call it manufactured anger. Call it artificial competition. Call it childish and immature. I don't care – it works for me. And it can work for you.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

THE 17 PROMISES THAT SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE MAKE TO THEMSELVES



So don't turn the other mental cheek.

Get pissed off, even if your anger is unjustified and imaginary – in fact, especially if your anger is unjustified or imaginary – because that will help shake you out of your *same thing, different day* rut.

6 ASK ONE PERSON FOR HELP

Asking someone for help instantly recognises the person's skills and values and conveys your respect and admiration.

That's reason enough to ask someone to help you. The fact you will get the help you need is icing on the achievement cake.

7 OFFER TO HELP ONE PERSON

Then flip it around. Many people see asking for help as a sign of weakness, so they hesitate. Yet we can all use help.

But don't just say: "Is there anything I can help you with?"

Most people will automatically say: "No, I'm all right."

Be specific. Say: "I've got a few minutes; can I help you finish that?"

Offer in a way that feels collaborative, not patronising or gratuitous.

And then actually help. You'll make a real difference in someone's life – and you'll take a solid step toward creating a connection with that person.

8 DO THE ONE THING THAT NO ONE ELSE IS WILLING TO DO

Pick one thing other people aren't willing to do. Pick something simple. Pick something small.

Whatever it is, do it.

Instantly, you're a little different from the rest of the pack.

Then keep going. Every day, do one thing no one else is willing to do.

After a week, you'll be uncommon.

After a month, you'll be special.

After a year, you'll be incredible, and you won't be like anyone else.

9 REFUSE TO CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK

Most of the time, you should worry about what other people think – but not if it stands in the way of living the life you really want to live.

Pick one thing you haven't tried simply because you're worried about what other people think – and just go do it. It's your life. Live it.

10 TELL ONE PERSON YES

You're busy. Your plate is full. There are plenty of reasons to sit tight, stay safe, keep things as they are.

But that also means tomorrow will be just like today.

Say yes to something different. Say yes to something scary. Say yes to the opportunity you're most afraid of.

When you say yes, you're really saying: "I trust myself."

11 TELL ONE PERSON NO

Still, you can't do everything. You can't help everyone. You may want to, but you can't.

Sometimes you just need to say no: to a favour, to a request, to a family member. Sometimes you really need to be able to focus on what is important to you. Say no at least once before the end of January – the harder to say, the better.

And don't worry if you feel selfish. When your heart is in the right place, what you accomplish by spending more time on your goals will eventually benefit other people too.

12 "FIRE" ONE PERSON

Maybe there's an employee you really need to let go but haven't. Or maybe there's a customer, or a vendor, or even just a friend.

Sometimes the best addition starts with subtraction. Pick someone who is dragging you down or holding you back, and let them go.

13 JUST LET IT FLY

Yes, you only get one chance to make a first impression. Yes, perfection is the only acceptable outcome.

Unfortunately, no product or service is ever perfect, and no project or initiative is perfectly planned.

Work hard, do great work, and let it fly. Your customers will tell you what needs to be improved – which means you'll get to make improvements that actually matter.

You can't find out until you let go. You can't really do anything until you let go.

14 DO ONE THING THAT'S NOT YOUR JOB

Job descriptions are fine until they get in the way of getting things done. No matter what your role or what you've accomplished, you're never too good to roll up your sleeves, get dirty, and do a little grunt work.

No job is ever too menial, no task too unskilled or boring.

The next time you see something that needs to be done, do it.

15 EMBRACE ONE THING ANOTHER PERSON DOES

Sure, we're all individuals. We should set our own courses and follow our own paths – most of the time.

But, sometimes, the best thing to do is copy what made someone else successful.

Pick someone who has accomplished what you would like to accomplish, and follow that path. One time, don't try to reinvent a perfectly good wheel.

16 DO SOMETHING FOOLISH

Sometimes the dumbest things result in our fondest memories – the time you and two employees stayed up all night loading trucks and listening to every Led Zeppelin album in order; the time you and another employee drove all night so you could arrive at the customer's warehouse first thing the next morning to sort a defective product; the time you and a crew stayed in the plant all weekend during a snowstorm, sleeping on cots and eating vending machine food and cranking out orders.

Each happened more than 20 years ago, but my memories are vivid.

Do something seemingly stupid or outrageous or crazy – the harder, the better.

You probably won't love it while it's happening, but the result will be doing something cool and creating a memory that will always make you smile.

17 CALL YOUR PARENTS

Your parents love you. They want the best for you. They will always be there for you. They won't be around forever. Call them.

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