

10 WAYS TO REBOOT YOUR LIFE IN 2015 AND BEYOND...

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Are you living your life in the present? Loving, connecting and enjoying every minute of it?

Seneca, a Roman Philosopher and Statesman, said *“It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested. But when it is wasted in heedless luxury and spent on no good activity, we are forced at last by death’s final constraint to realize that it has passed away before we knew it was passing. So it is: we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it... Life is long if you know how to use it.”*

Here are ten ways to help you live, love, connect and enjoy happiness and success throughout the year!

- 1) **Accept change** – This is the first step to a more fulfilled life. We are resistant to change because of fear of the unknown fear of failure or what others might think. We cling to what we know, even if it is unhealthy. Declare 2015 the year you will embrace change, face your fears and boldly move forward. How? Make a plan and take small steps towards change. For example, one of the top ten New Year’s resolutions is “spending more time with family.” If this is one of your goals, let others know of your goal; start your day earlier; be mindful and focused in order to avoid distractions (think of how much you can accomplish the day before going on vacation because you are focused); and keep in mind the reward – spending time with your love ones. Now, take action one step at a time!
- 2) **Embrace grit** – Success is generally not the result of unique ability or talent, but of grit. Psychologist Angela Duckworth defines grit as “an abiding commitment to work hard toward long-range goals and to persevere through the setbacks that come along the way.” Another top ten New Year’s resolution is to “lose weight and get fit.” Here are some ideas to conquer this goal with grit: select a small challenge to start building your confidence (what about a 5K walk, jog or run in early 2015?); build from your small wins (what about participating in the River Run in March - a 15K?); and if you think you failed at your attempts don’t beat yourself up. Be kind to yourself and try a different approach until you succeed.
- 3) **Create white space in your day** – White (free) space is a term designers use to achieve flexibility and balance. This concept can also be used to create more balance, clarity and peace in our lives. If you typically run from thing to the next and have no free time in your day, remove a few small non-essential tasks and create moments of white space. For example: take a few minutes between phone calls or meetings, or when you get to the office

or home to sit and focus on your breath. This small action will leave you refreshed and recharged and ready to conquer your goals.

- 4) ***Practice the Pomodoro Technique*** – This technique complements the white space concept and consists of breaking down your tasks in blocks of time, and after accomplishing each task taking a five minute break. The practice is widely used by productivity hackers to make the best out of the 675,450 hours in the average human life. It works because it forces us to focus on one task at a time and avoid spending unlimited and unnecessary amounts of time on a project. How does it work? Choose a task and a block of time; set a timer to work on it (Pomodoro recommends blocks of 25 minutes and breaks of 5 minutes, but more or less also works but try not to go more than 45 min without a break); focus and work on the designated task until the timer goes off; take a five minute break for renewal; and start another Pomodoro. This technique is simple, but very effective. You will see remarkable improvements in your productivity using it.
- 5) ***Be generous and grateful*** – Sharing your time, appreciation and gratitude can transform your entire experience and outcomes on life. Gratitude shifts our focus from what our life lacks to the amazing opportunities that we already have. Research has shown that practicing gratitude improves our health, mood, career satisfaction and relationships. In my immigration practice, I have clients with little or no options to change their status, who are grateful and happy for the opportunities they do have. I also meet many who have significant options and opportunities, but only focus on the shortcomings of their current situation. If you want to feel inspired, energized and upbeat, give generously and be grateful every day. The results of this practice will amaze you.
- 6) ***Limit your sugar intake*** – You are probably already consuming far more sugar than you think. Many breakfast cereals, yogurts and juices contain over 20 grams of sugar per serving - the equivalent of a candy bar. It is important to watch out for products labeled “low-fat,” because to make them more palatable, manufacturers add sugar. Sugar promotes fat storage, damages brain cells and leads to weight gain. It is very difficult to conquer sugar cravings, because sugar is all around us and has been found to be more addictive than cocaine. To overcome this challenge consider: including movement throughout your day - movement suppresses cravings; eating a high protein meal with healthy fats in the morning instead of something sweet; and keeping healthy snacks with you such as nuts, veggies and fruits, and reach for these rather than a sugary snack.
- 7) ***Exercise daily*** – Exercise balances brain neurotransmitters leading to a better mood, attention, learning, motivation and arousal. Have you noticed that you are more calm and able to focus after exercise? Additionally, exercise increases insulin sensitivity so our bodies can use up sugar more readily. Make it a priority to exercise at least 30 minutes every day. First thing in the morning or during lunch time tend to work best for many.
- 8) ***Meditate*** – Research has shown that meditation and other “mindfulness exercises” produce measurable changes in the brain, which lead to less anxiety, more focus and productivity. There are various forms of mindfulness exercises. If you want to start to experience its benefits, I recommend you choose a consistent time; commit to the practice; and find a place where you can sit quietly for five minutes and close your eyes. Relax and focus your attention on your breath. Your mind will wander and when it does, just bring it back and

focus on inhaling and exhaling your breath. I started meditating five minutes at a time and I am currently working toward fifteen minutes sessions. Try it today for five minutes and then again tomorrow. After a few sessions you will start experiencing the positive benefits of this practice.

9) ***Reprogram your bio computer*** – Program out negative thoughts and information intake and take in an abundance of positive news, information and entertainment. Become a self-actualizer and gradually work at positively transforming yourself and the world around you. Build a library of resources that will keep you motivated and inspired. One of my top productivity, learning and motivational hacks is to listen to audiobooks. Reading or listening to books and podcasts will aid you in improving your performance. They exist to educate and inspire you; promote self-development; and allow you to be in control of your influences. To find a list of some favorites go to the Jacksonville Bar Association website under attorney resources.

10) ***Respect your sleep time*** – A good night sleep sets you up for being more productive, mentally sharp and emotionally refreshed. The National Institute of Health suggests that adults need 7-9 hours per night of sleep. Most adults sleep less than 6 hours a night. To improve your sleep consider: keeping a regular sleeping schedule; exposing yourself to plenty of natural light during the day to stimulate cortisol production; making your bedroom dark and relaxing at night to stimulate melatonin production; and staying away from a big meal, significant alcohol or caffeine in the evenings. Be proud of your ability to get plenty of sleep time, not of getting by on little sleep.

I hope that these tips allow you to unleash your best self, expand your mind and perspectives and help you to reach new levels of success and happiness in 2015 and beyond. I look forward to hearing about your experiences and successes. Remember, this is your life! Design it, take action and live it!

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