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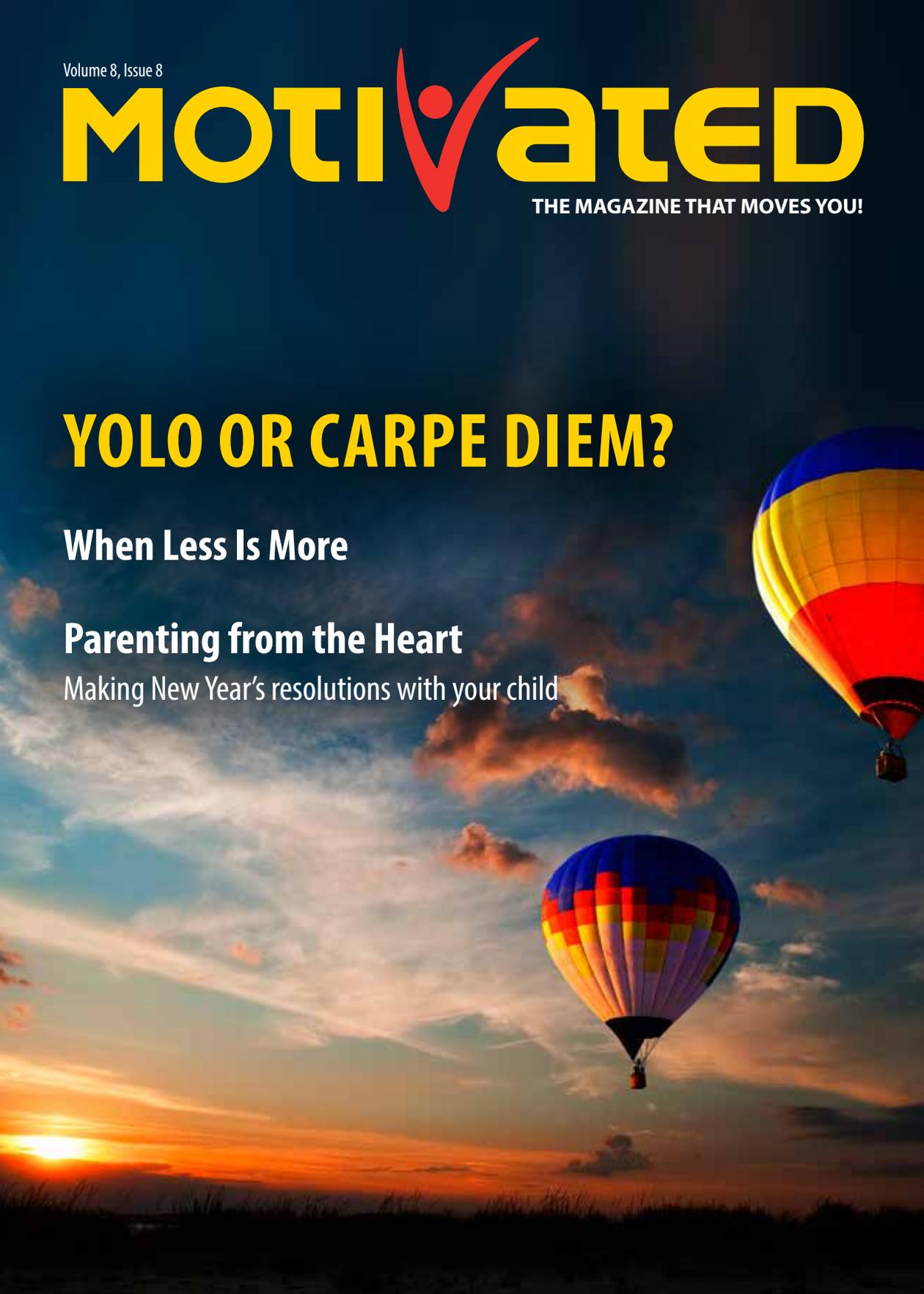
THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Typically, the New Year is a time for resolutions and fresh starts, for looking forward to the future, for reviewing what worked last year, and aiming to build on that.

As we enter this New Year, news of political instability, wars, famine, climate change, and disasters may seem to indicate that the world has never been in worse shape, or more divided. The future may seem bleak, and the challenges ahead seem daunting, but we can do something to contribute to a positive change.

With 2017 officially here, let's all resolve to make our lives, and the lives of those around us, better. Let's be a little more caring, a little more unselfish, and a little more courteous. Let's work smarter instead of longer. Let's spend time with those we care about instead of with our latest app. Let's give a little more to those who aren't as fortunate as we are. Let's forget past slights, and let's build bridges of friendship around us. Let's learn from past mistakes, and try to do things better.

God can guide us in knowing what changes will be most beneficial, and give us the strength, patience, determination, and whatever else we need to succeed each day.

Christina Lane
For Motivated

THE BUS RIDE

An aerial photograph of a roundabout. The central island is landscaped with low-lying green plants and a brick-paved border. The surrounding road is paved and has white lane markings. The background shows a blurred green landscape under a bright sky.

By Mag Rayne, adapted

One typical rainy spring evening in Rijeka, I was sitting on bus number 18 going home after a long day—at least, I thought it was bus 18. There were about 30 other passengers on the bus, equally tired and impatient to get home.

As we reached a crossroads, instead of turning right as usual, the bus took a left. Did I get on the wrong bus? I was about to ask when other passengers started shouting to the bus driver, “Where are you going?” So at least I was on the right bus after all.

However, now the bus driver was getting panicky. The bus was over 30 meters long, making course corrections tricky, and the fact that he was being screamed at wasn’t helping matters. I knew of situations like this where the passengers screamed, yelled, and even threatened to beat up the driver.

Fortunately that’s not what happened

this evening. The complainers went quiet when a few other passengers called out in encouraging tones, “Don’t worry about it, we all make mistakes. There’s a roundabout ahead where we can turn around.” Sure enough, two minutes later the bus was back on its way in the right direction.

How many times in life do we make a wrong turn on the way to reaching our goals? It wouldn’t help the situation if each time we made a mistake we started yelling, protesting, and complaining, or blaming and judging somebody for the difficult place we find ourselves in. Neither would lamenting get us moving any sooner.

On the other hand, once we recognize we’re off track, we can encourage ourselves that not all is lost—like those good-natured people on the bus that evening. Then we can turn around and get going back in the right direction. ■

YOLO OR CARPE DIEM?

By Tina Kapp, adapted

Most people have heard the acronym “YOLO” thrown around for the past couple of years. It stands for “you only live once.” Pop stars and celebrities have made it a catchphrase to promote doing crazy things or taking risks because, hey, “You only live once!”

It’s an attractive thought. Why worry about the future? Why subscribe to having to answer for decisions we make when we can pretend it all doesn’t matter anyway? Why can’t we only be concerned about what makes us happy right now?

Well, when you get older, you realize that life doesn’t work like that, and you start having to pay for the decisions you made earlier. In most cases, those who live life with that motto begin wishing they had thought about the long term a bit sooner.

I remember struggling with my weight as a teenager. I hated feeling overweight. I didn’t get chosen for local school dance teams and often felt insecure. I thought about it constantly. Did that stop me from overeating unhealthy food when I had the opportunity? Not a chance! At that moment, all I cared about was that it tasted good and I wanted it! When confronted with some delectable delight, all thoughts of being healthy magically disappeared ... until later when I’d get depressed that I couldn’t lose weight. That was me living strictly in the moment with no thought for the long term.

Since we only have one life, what do we want to do with it? What do we want to be remembered for? What would be a life that we can look back at and be proud of? The well-known saying “Carpe Diem” (Latin for “seize



the day”), in contrast to YOLO, has a positive feel to it. It’s the same rationale that you only live once, but rather than taking it as a reason to do crazy things, ignore consequences, and live for the now, it means to go further, to do more, and to not waste time.

Life is made up of lots of days. Some will be fun and chilled, while others will be hard work. Think of Olympic gold medalists. The day that they compete and win will go down in history, and I bet it will remain as one of the best days of their lives. But to get there, it takes years of training, hard work, and focus. Think of your favorite musician playing to a massive audience. Again, they only got there through countless days of faithful practice, rehearsals, and playing for anyone who would listen until they got their big break.

All our favorite historical characters experienced something similar. The good days didn’t come from them sitting around only doing what they felt like doing, and enjoying the YOLO days. It took hard work and planning so that when the time came, their single life would save many more and leave its mark on the world.

All of the choices we make have consequences—from little things like eating vegetables, to studying and working hard toward a goal, to living a good life. Understanding that now can help you make wise decisions and have something wonderful to show for it at the end of your days.

Don’t let life pass you by. Make the most of it so that you can look back and be encouraged by what you have accomplished. ■

WHEN LESS IS MORE

By Jessie Richards

It's a clichéd résumé line, but I'm a goal-oriented person. For as long as I can remember, I've set goals, and in particular New Year's goals, and then worked to achieve them. A lot of New Year's resolutions fail because they're just things people say while caught up in a moment of passion (or guilt), only to soon forget or ignore. That isn't the case for me. However, I *have* learned that I tend to be overly ambitious. I reach some goals, but still end up discouraged, or sometimes reach goals that were semi-important, but not the most important ones. It isn't because I don't keep my goals in mind and work toward them consistently, but because I fail to plan realistically, factoring in my own limitations, or building in enough time for "just living life."

I recently reviewed my past eight years' worth of resolutions, which were a

combination of work accomplishments, fitness achievements, places I wanted to go, and things I wanted to learn or become more proficient at.

Year One: I set ten goals and only fully fulfilled two of them. Then there were several that I worked toward and got pretty close—for example, I planned to run 1,000 kilometers during the year, and I ran 850. Something interesting I noticed when reviewing my goals at the end of the year was that I had told a lot of people about the two I fulfilled, which of course then spurred me to follow through. Something else that stood out was that there were at least two items on my list where I realized later that *I don't really want to do that anymore*, or wondered, *How did that get on the list?* Whims, not goals.

Year Two: In an attempt to learn from the previous year, I told myself I

would “only set one or two goals per category.” But I somehow ended up with six categories and eight goals. And those were all personal, so a few months into the year, I added seven work goals. So my total of 15 goals was even more than the year before. I made a very specific rule for my goals this time, though, which was: If it’s not specific and measurable, it can’t go on the list. That must have helped, because I hit 11 of the 15.

Year Three: In another attempt to improve my methods, I decided to focus on one big overarching goal. There were, of course, sub-goals under that (16 of them); but they were all connected and organized in a step-by-step style, and it mostly worked. Well, I hit nine. But the progress was valid and I was happy with it.

Year Four: I set six goals. Hit five. I did a few things differently from previous years:

- I took time every quarter to review my goals and progress.
- I kept an ongoing list of all my accomplishments, both work and personal.
- I made a “stop doing” list—this was a revelation! I read it somewhere and it made so much sense. In order to give myself more time for the things I wanted to do, I realized I had to free up time from somewhere, and I’m happy to say I was successful in discontinuing the three things I decided to stop doing.

Year Five: The realities of life made my goals fairly easy that year—there were two biggies that weren’t optional—get a new job and get a new apartment—and I achieved both. Then, of course, I had to go and set myself some optional

ones. There were six. I hit three.

Year Six: I changed the name of my list, from “New Year’s goals” to “What I want this year.” (I also spelled out “the means” of how to get them, whenever possible.) I wanted nine things. I got six of them.

Year Seven: Again I went with the “what I want” list. I kept to two primary goals; but to fulfill them would take seven of what I called “support system” goals. Three of the seven went well, and they were the ones most important to me. But I didn’t fully realize either of the top two. I bit off more than I could chew, even with two—they were too big.

Year Eight—the Present: A quick recap shows me clearly that as much as I try to be realistic, I always overreach. If I set 10 goals, I’ll perhaps meet seven. If I set six, I’ll probably meet three. If I set three, I’ll meet one or two. So this year I’m going with what I think is a brilliant plan: Just. One. Goal. There will be no way around it—it will be reached. With only one objective in sight, I am certain to focus, be intentional, and achieve it.

I still have my “bucket list,” which I regularly add to, and there’s no limit on entries for that (currently over 40!). They don’t have an expiry date of the end of the year, though—and anyway, desiring and dreaming are free. Achieving goals, on the other hand, takes clarity, focus, time, effort, and a healthy dose of realism.

So take time to reflect on your goals, and be compassionate to yourself when you don’t meet them all. It will leave you something to strive for in the year to come. ■

Making New Year's resolutions with your child

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



By Laura Lewis Brown, adapted

For many of us, the New Year means it's time to take stock of our lives and fix what we don't like. Whether it's our diet, exercise routine, or tendency to procrastinate, there is always room for improvement in the coming year. We not only benefit from New Year's resolutions; our children can also learn a lot about self-discipline and the value of making goals. Here are some tips on how to help your kids benefit from making resolutions.

Make it a family activity.

The best way to teach your children the importance of New Year's resolutions is by making it part of the family tradition. Sit down each December and reflect on the past year, discussing your accomplishments and goals, as

individuals and as a family. In your resolution conversation you can each talk about what worked this year and what didn't.

Each family member gets a turn sharing something they are proud of and something they want to improve. It may help for parents to go first, to model this for their children. If your child is old enough to write, they could write down their accomplishments and goals, and you can help a younger child by writing theirs down.

Resolutions for the entire family might include taking a monthly hike, playing board games twice a month, or committing to more volunteering activities. Try to limit the number of resolutions, so they are more doable and more meaningful.

You can make a master list to hang in a public spot, like a bulletin board in the kitchen, or make a resolution box, into which each family member can drop his or her resolutions, then pull them out at a later date to review them.

Different resolutions for different ages.

What your child needs to work on depends on your child. If you are concerned about his diet, then encourage healthier eating habits for him as well as for the whole family. If your daughter needs to improve in social skills, encourage her to join you on a regular short walk with an elderly neighbor. As your child ages, he can be more active in coming up with goals, which will mean more to him when he achieves them.

Preschoolers can be encouraged to work on listening and learning skills. A resolution could be, “I will be a better listener when Mommy or Daddy asks me to do something” or “I will do my best to learn my ABCs and numbers.” If you keep it simple, your child is more likely to understand the concept as well as succeed.

As a child reaches age five and up to age 12, they are better able to comprehend a resolution and participate more in the process of picking one. This age group could commit to wearing a seat belt, learning a new language, playing an instrument, or being friendly and accepting of other children. What your child needs to work on is very personal, so work with your child to come up with areas for improvement. Is she having trouble with a certain subject at school that needs more attention? Is he oversleeping and nearly missing the bus most mornings?

When your child gets into adolescence they may want to focus more on taking more responsibility, dealing with stress in a healthy way, talking through conflict, resisting drugs and alcohol, and helping others through community service.

Serve as a role model.

No matter how old your child is, they are more likely to understand the value of goal setting if you take the lead. Just as with everything else you do, your child is watching.

Think of how you can include your child in your resolution. “I’m going to drink more water this year, because water is good for me. Do you want to join me?” If you are finding yourself checking your e-mail when you should be spending time as a family, consider incorporating that into a goal. “I’m going to turn off my phone when I get home. Can you remind me, please?”

Rewards are long-lasting.

We all know the feeling of meeting a goal, whether it be losing five pounds, quitting smoking, or putting in extra hours to earn a promotion. Children also relish that thrill of accomplishment, especially when their parents are acknowledging it. As you go over the family list of resolutions each month or quarter, take time to acknowledge and praise the successes, along with reinforcing the resolutions that need more attention.

However your family arrives at resolutions, the best part is that you’re doing it together, and are learning how to succeed not only as a family, but also in the larger world. ■

THE POSTMAN'S PALACE



By Joyce Suttin

It was a simple, mundane life, the life of Ferdinand Cheval. He was born in 1836 in a village southeast of Lyon, France, where he attended school for only six years until he was orphaned as a young teenager.

Throughout his life he worked as a farmer, a baker, and finally a postman. In 1869, he requested and obtained a route known as the *Tournée de Tersanne*, delivering and picking up mail in the villages around Hauterives. He remained there until retirement, walking the 33 km (20 mile) route daily over 10,000 times.

One day, at the age of 43, he stumbled over a uniquely shaped stone. In his words: “I was walking very fast when my foot caught on something that sent me stumbling a few meters away. I wanted to know the cause. In a dream I had built a palace, a castle or caves, I cannot express it well... I told no one about it for fear of being ridiculed and I felt ridiculous myself. Then fifteen years later, when I had almost forgotten my dream, when I wasn't thinking of it at all, my foot reminded me of it. My foot tripped on a stone that almost made me fall. I wanted to know what it was... It was a stone of such a strange shape that I put it in my pocket to admire it at my ease. The next day, I went back to the same place. I found more stones, even more beautiful. I gathered them together on the spot and

was overcome with delight.”[[Wikipedia page: “Ferdinand Cheval,” accessed June 16, 2016]]

From then on, each day while walking his route, Ferdinand set aside stones, which he collected on his way home, and with them, he began to construct his palace, which he called *Palais idéal*. Night after night, stone by stone, he worked to construct a marvelous building, complete with arches, turrets, and ornate columns.

In 1896, Ferdinand retired and was able to devote himself entirely to his passion. In 1912, after 33 years of labor, and at the age of 77, he completed the palace. But Ferdinand wasn't done. He began work on an elaborate mausoleum, which took him another eight years and was completed when he was 86.

If you feel your life is mundane as you slowly trek the long miles through your days, remember the postman's vision of a *Palais idéal* and the simple painstaking labor of building a dream pebble by pebble, stone by stone. You never know what amazing results might come from tripping over an odd stone along your way. If you use those stumbling blocks as stepping stones, you just might create something amazing. ■

<http://www.facteurcheval.com/en/history/palace.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Cheval

BUILDING A LIFE

Author Unknown

Reprinted from Motivated Volume 2, Issue 8

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire, and he told his boss of his plans to leave and live a more leisurely life with his wife. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see such a good worker go, and he asked the carpenter to build just one more house as a personal favor.

The carpenter said yes, but it was easy to see that his heart wasn't in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said. "My gift to you."

The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we realize we have to live in the house we have built.

If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter of your life. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Your attitudes and the choices you make today build your "house" for tomorrow. Build wisely! ■



Clean Slate

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Regardless of your past, your tomorrow is a clean slate.—**Zig Ziglar**

We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come.

—**Joseph Campbell**

You have a clean slate every day you wake up. You have a chance every single morning to make that change and be the person you want to be. You just have to decide to do it. Decide today's the day. Say it: this is going to be my day.

—**Brendon Burchard**

Sometimes I succeed, sometimes I fail, but every day is a clean slate and a fresh opportunity—**Gretchen Rubin**

If you have made mistakes, even serious ones, there is always another chance for you. What we call failure is not the falling down, but the staying down.—**Mary Pickford**

So yesterday you fell off the wagon? Or maybe you blew your diet? Or lost your temper and shot off your mouth? Well, that was yesterday. Today is a brand-new day with a clean slate, so forget yesterday!—**Abigail Van Buren**

I love the big fresh starts, the clean slates like birthdays and new years, but I also really like the idea that we can get up every morning and start over.

—**Kristin Armstrong**

There is something beautiful about a blank canvas, the nothingness of the beginning that is so simple and breathtakingly pure. It's the paint that changes its meaning and the hand that creates the story. Every piece begins the same, but in the end they are all uniquely different.—**Piper Payne**

Each new breath and moment is a gift. We can choose to start with a clean slate in the here and now.—**K.J. Kilton**

It's never too late to be who you might have been.—**George Eliot**

