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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



Building a Life

Start with yourself

Choices

That shape your career and life

Parenting from the Heart

Every day a learning experience

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Issue
Editors

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Christina Lane
Souad Abuhalm
Jon Archer

Design

Contact Us:
Email
Website

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com
www.motivatedmagazine.com

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I'm quite excited about my New Year's resolution, and I think it's going to work. No, I *know* it's going to work. It's got to, because my future hinges on it. "Think small!"

That may seem like a contradiction of the usual New Year's refrain "think big," but actually it complements it. I hit on "think small" after a friend pointed me to an online article by Jim Rohn, "The Formula". Here are a few excerpts from that article that sum up the "think small" strategy:

Failure is not a single, cataclysmic event. We do not fail overnight. Failure is the inevitable result of an accumulation of poor thinking and poor choices. To put it more simply, failure is nothing more than a few errors in judgment repeated every day.

On their own, our daily acts do not seem that important. A minor oversight, a poor decision, or a wasted hour generally doesn't result in an instant and measurable impact.

Failure's most dangerous attribute is its subtlety. In the short term those little errors don't seem to make any difference. Since there are no instant consequences to capture our attention, we simply drift from one day to the next, repeating the errors, thinking the wrong thoughts, listening to the wrong voices, and making the wrong choices.

Now, here is the great news: Just like the formula for failure, the formula for success is easy to follow. It's a few simple disciplines practiced every day. As we voluntarily change daily errors into daily disciplines, we experience positive results.

What better way to further our major life goals than by determining to make better "small" choices, and what better time to start than the New Year!

"Think small!"

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

BUILDING a Life



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 in time it was easy to see that his heart was not 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. "It is 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.

Like a carpenter, we build our lives. Each day we hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Our attitudes and the choices we make today build our "house" for tomorrow. ■

— Author unknown

Start with yourself



When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world.

As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country.—But it too seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it.

And now as I near the end of life's road, I suddenly realized: If I had only changed myself first, then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world. ■

— Author unknown



Climbing the New Year

By Curtis Peter Van Gorder

EVEN THE BEST CLIMBERS NEED GUIDES WHEN THEY CLIMB UNFAMILIAR MOUNTAINS. In fact, only a foolhardy novice would try to go without one — a novice like me.

Years ago I was on vacation in the Alps of Switzerland, and on the last day a friend and I decided to climb a nearby mountain.

It was late afternoon by the time we got started, and we hadn't gone far before we passed a rugged shepherd on his way down with his sheep, after a day of grazing them further up the mountain.

"Darkness comes early and suddenly in the mountains," he warned us. "Wait until tomorrow and hire a guide."

But tomorrow would be too late. By the next afternoon we'd be on a train home, having missed a unique opportunity. Impetuously, we trekked on.

As sure as night follows day, we were soon in near total darkness. Because it was overcast, there wasn't even any moonlight or starlight. We could barely make out the rocky path right at our feet, let alone see the trail ahead. One misstep and we would go tumbling down the mountain.

It was clear that we would have to spend the night on the mountain.

We had one sleeping bag with us, so we decided to take turns sleeping in it. Then it started to rain heavily. We were not only cold but also drenched, and so was our sleeping bag.

We managed to take refuge under an outcropping of rock. After a long ordeal dawn broke, the rain stopped, and we were able to make our descent.

On our way down the trail, we met the same shepherd we had talked to the previous afternoon. Seeing our sorry condition, he nodded and gave us a look that was a mix of amusement and relief. Had it gotten much colder that night, we could have died of exposure.

Taking on the challenges of the New Year is often likened to climbing a mountain. Although it's a lot of hard work and potentially dangerous, it holds special rewards for those who rise to the challenge and don't quit till they reach the summit.

But sometimes we may become too self-confident and feel that we can go it alone. If we're smart, we'll realize that we need help and the advice of others. When we listen to those who have gone before us, who know the pitfalls and where the dangers lie, it can help us better reach our goals for the coming year, conquer the summit, and experience the thrill of victory. ■

UPHILL *Gains*

Life can be a struggle at times. It takes faith and courage and a lot of fight. The trouble with some people is that they stop trying in trying times.



It's amazing what faith can accomplish, especially if we've got not only faith, but a lot of gumption and get-up-and-go. We've got to put some gumption into it. We've got to put some real "umph" into it! It's been said that triumph is 10% "try" and 90% "umph!"



The will is powerful. As the proverb says, "The spirit of a man will sustain him ... but who can bear a broken spirit?"



Strong faith and a strong will have many times overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and handicaps.



Don't give up too soon. Don't quit just before the victory. Anything wonderful can happen in that little margin of time when we don't give up but keep on believing.



It's thrilling to look back and see our progress—to look back down that rugged mountain road we've just come over and to see that we're really getting somewhere—but it's even more exciting to look forward and up to heights we're soon to attain and views we're soon to thrill to if we keep climbing and don't quit!

By David Fontaine

This Year...

By Ian Bach

*I'll take more time to laugh and smile,
To feel the wind upon my face,
To learn true wisdom from a child,
Give my soul the needed space,
To live life pure and clear...
...this year.*

*I'll learn to turn off my computer,
Interact with human beings,
Spend less time in online stupor,
More time learning, breathing, seeing
All that life holds dear...
...this year.*

*I will resolve to write that letter
That I have too long neglected,
Make an aching heart feel better,
Cheer a friend who feels dejected,
Bring someone some cheer...
...this year.*

*I'll not be hijacked by my deadlines,
Or imprisoned by ambitions.
Or let dismal, gloomy headlines
Dictate my heart's disposition.
I'll choose faith, not fear...
...this year.*

*I'll see the struggling flower beneath
The hard, frosty exterior
Of one who lets frustration seethe
Because they feel inferior.
I'll try to draw them near...
...this year.*

*No high and mighty resolutions
Fit for presidents and kings.
I'll start a quiet revolution,
Seek these simple loving things
Above wealth or career...
...this year.*

Choices

That **shape** your career and life

Adapted from an article by Dave Anderson

WHEREVER WE ARE AT IN LIFE OR BUSINESS IS A RESULT OF CHOICES WE'VE MADE. While there are outside forces that create setbacks, it is still our choice as to how we will respond to those incidents that determine whether we move forward or fall behind.

Following are seven choices that can help shape our career and our life; for better or worse. Obviously, there are far more than seven choices, but the points that follow can have profound impact on whether we shape our life or are shaped *by* life.

The choice to grow. Growth is not automatic. We must choose to remain teachable, to work hard on ourselves. When we choose not to grow, we become stale, proud, and will plateau.

The choice to give. Giving of our time, expertise, and resources without expecting anything in return is an unselfish choice. The world needs more givers. Amazingly enough, when we focus more on the wants and needs of others, more of our own wants and needs are met. When we choose to hoard what we have rather than give, we become the center of our own lonely universe. As a result, we repel both people and potential blessings.

The choice to listen. One of the best ways to build a connection with others is to listen to them.—Taking the focus off ourselves and putting it on the other person. This draws others to us because we place importance on others. When we choose to do all the talking, we rarely build strong or sustainable relationships. We are a turn-off and people will avoid us.

The choice to make a difference. Making a difference by adding value to others is a choice. Similar to its cousin, giving, making a difference goes a step further by causing us to leave others and the world better than we found it. It goes beyond crossing the finish line by ourselves and causes us to bring others across the line with us. On the other hand, when we choose to live in a selfish world, absorbed only with our own problems, it will be as though we never lived. We added value to nothing and impacted no one.

The choice to do what is right. Doing what is right rather than what is easy, cheap, popular, or convenient is not always pleasant. However, it is what builds character and maintains self-respect. Doing what is right is a sleeping aid. It creates inner peace and makes our decisions easier since we've already decided up front what we stand for. Taking the easy way out renders us unreliable, someone who will one day end up without friends.

The choice to take care of our health. On the way to get more and more, many sell out one key thing that money can't buy: physical well-being. Make no mistake about it, exercising or not is a choice. Putting the donut in our mouth or not is a choice. The same goes for smoking. The earlier in life we decide to develop the discipline to live a healthy lifestyle, the better. In the search for greater material success, perhaps it's time to consider what we may be losing with all of our gaining.

The choice to connect with a Higher Power. Living a spiritual life adds a wonderful dimension to each day. It gives hope where others see defeat, energy when others are exhausted, wisdom when others are confused, and courage when others are fearful. Living without spiritual connectivity leaves us feeling empty and as if our life lacks a greater purpose. Living with it is the better route to take.

There are other key choices that shape our life, like accepting responsibility, the choice to make each day a masterpiece, and more. However, these seven choices give us plenty to ponder. But just in case they're not, here are four final questions concerning these seven choices that we can ask ourselves:

What are we doing well?

Where are we off track?

What corrections should we make?

What are we waiting for?



Every Day a Learning Experience

By Sharmini, South Africa

BEING A NEW MOTHER, I wasn't sure what to do with my baby girl, Arwen, for the whole day. She is an alert child, and was quite active even as a small baby.

For a couple of months I would put her on my hip and take her around the house with me throughout the day, but before long that had me bored, and unfulfilled in my care of her.

I was determined to ensure that my daughter would be smart and not behaviorally challenged. I read a few books on teaching children during what they call the "window of opportunity," from ages 0-5. I was amazed to learn how parents can teach their children so many things, provided that they are consistent and use appealing methods.

I began looking for materials with which to teach Arwen—flashcards, books, and other educational materials—and some materials I personally made. I started teaching Arwen when she was three months old.

After my initial fervor died, and I wasn't seeing much progress as a result of what I was teaching her, I found myself discouraged. It seemed that she wasn't reacting to the "schooling" I was giving her. I figured that perhaps she was too young to be learning words, numbers, and other things that I was trying to teach her. However,



I continued, and after a few months, I started noticing that she was responding positively to aspects of my teaching that she recognized, which I had repeated to her many times over.

Then one day just before she was seven months, after having shown her flashcards for quite some time with no apparent results, I showed her the word "clap" and without me saying anything she clapped her hands. I was completely stunned. I had hoped my efforts would pay off, but actually witnessing her response was incredible, especially at such a young age.

Arwen is my first child, so every new venture in her progress is a wonderful experience for me. Perhaps I won't be in such a perpetual state of elation with my next children, but for me this sign of progress was an encouragement to keep teaching her new things.

Now I try to turn everything into a learning experience. I've read that the best way to teach children, besides making learning fun, is to make their life a rich



learning environment. And she expects me to! Every time I pass a poster or word that I have posted for her, she gets so excited and expects me to make a big deal out of it and explain it to her. Sometimes I worry that I can't keep up with her learning capacity, but I'm willing to keep trying to the best of my ability.

I've experimented with ways to teach her things and have started to write them down in my notebook, so as to remember them for when she's older. Here are some teaching opportunities I've been taking with her daily:



★ *I tell her the exact time every time we see a clock, after making the "tick-tock" sound.*

★ *I let her explore the trees and flower bushes while I say what type it is, and explain a fact or two about it. I've also made a scrapbook with the leaves of the trees and bushes we learn about so she can study them when she is older.*

★ *I introduce a new, meaningful song each week.*

★ *Since Arwen is from a multi-racial background, several family members talk to her in different languages.*

★ *I try to provide her with educational toys as much as possible.*

★ *I made a mobile out of old CDs and hung this "mobile" near the window so that the CDs catch the sunlight. I glued colors, planets, and shapes to some of them for her to watch while they spin around. The possibilities are endless.*

★ *I stuck flashcards of the words she's been learning in different places so I can review them with her when I walk around.*

With the things I teach Arwen, I try to make learning fun, so that in the future she'll look forward to her schooling as opposed to dreading it. Sometimes, however, she is not in the mood to learn, and wants to play by herself, which is also a part of her development, so I'm cautious to not overdo, and make sure I give her times when I'm not teaching her, too.

I hope these ideas can be helpful to other new moms who are maybe looking for ways to pour into their little ones while they're still babies. ■



Have you ever read something and had it get stuck in your head? That happened to me recently with a magazine article titled, “Murder of the Impossible.”

As soon as my eyes fell on it, I was intrigued. (The word “murder” does have a way of capturing your attention!)

I quickly skimmed the text. It told of a man who had climbed most of the highest mountains in the world.

Defy the IMPOSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE

In fact, he had dedicated his entire life to his dream of becoming one of the most skilled and accomplished mountain climbers ever. His passion was not without its price, though. Taking on the elements often cost him his health, and on one such occasion frostbite claimed seven of his toes. Undeterred, he continued to search for new ways to defy the impossible.

After I put the magazine down, I reflected on what it means to defy the impossible. First of all, what is impossible?

From the most innocent child to the wisest elder, we all encounter things that at

first seem impossible to us. But unlike those who have been persuaded by experience that it doesn't pay to try to tackle the “impossible,” babies expect to overcome. That's because they have a quality that the doubters lost as they grew up—childlike faith and trust. They have faith in their parents and trust them to be there to catch them if they fall. And their faith pays off; they learn to overcome an amazing assortment of obstacles, one step at a time.

That, I was reminded in my moment of reflection, is the key to vanquishing the impossible—faith.

Throughout history great men and women have confronted the impossible and have come out victorious, and that is why they are still remembered. The road to victory was long and treacherous, but they went the distance, one step at a time. They defeated the impossible because they held on, and when that victory was theirs they looked ahead to the next challenge and moved on.

When the impossibilities of life loom large, believe, and take it one step at a time. Faith makes the impossible possible. ■





Start Anew, Start Today



Life is all about the little decisions we make every day. Decisions of the past have had their effect, but every new day can be a new start. No matter what has happened up till now, we have a chance to make the right decisions today.

Let's not waste time reliving the pain of past mistakes and wrong decisions. That only saps our power to do what we can do today. We can't change the past, but the future is what we make it, starting right now, so let's take full advantage of the present.

Let's learn from past mistakes and put them behind us today. Let's forgive those who have wronged us and ask forgiveness from those we have wronged. That probably won't be easy, but let's not put it off; let's do it today.

Let's dream new dreams today, and set new goals today. Let's spend our time on things that truly count today. — Love our family today, be a friend today. Do things better, starting today.

The future can be filled with wonderful accomplishment and fulfillment that will more than make up for past disappointments — and it all starts today. ■

“Remember today, for it is the beginning of always. Today marks the start of a brave new future filled with all your dreams can hold. Think truly to the future and make those dreams come true.”

— Author Unknown



Trust in dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

– Khalil Gibran

Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.

– Hal Borland

Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream.

– Khalil Gibran

What the New Year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you are bringing to the New Year.

– Author Unknown

New Year's Day is every man's birthday.

– Charles Lamb

We spend the first of January walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives not looking for flaws, but for potential.

– Ellen Goodman

An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

– Bill Vaughan

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

– Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1850

One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: To rise above the little things.

– John Burroughs

Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way you look at what happens.

– Khalil Gibran

A happy New Year! Grant that I
May bring no tear to any eye.
When this New Year in time shall end
Let it be said I've played the friend,
Have lived and loved and labored here,
And made of it a happy year.

– Edgar Guest

Happy New Year

