

FOUR TIPS TO ACHIEVE A BETTER YOU IN THE NEW YEAR

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It's that time of year where we set our New Year's resolutions and say to ourselves that we are going to follow through with them. We tell ourselves, "this is the year." But with the added stress we deal with daily, we realize that we've over extended ourselves, we start to burn out and this is when we give up. But no matter what time of year it is, the problem is the same: our daily to-do list is never-ending and the days seem to fly by.

How to conquer your daily to-do list along with the New Year's resolutions you have set for yourself:

1. **Examine the New Year's resolutions you set for yourself and make sure they're obtainable.** First, write down your "why." Make sure it's because you want to do it and not because you feel pressured into doing it. Once you figure out your "why", be specific about your goal: for example, how many pounds would you like to lose? When would you like to reach your goal by? How many times per week would you like to work on achieving this goal? To stay motivated, you can post a calendar on your refrigerator or mirror, but make sure it's some place you will see every day. Each day you complete your goal, put a mark on your calendar. I would also recommend setting mini-goals for yourself throughout the process to keep motivated. Every time you reach a mini-goal that you set, reward yourself. A great reward would be to schedule a massage!
2. **Use this time to realize where your energy is flowing.** When you realize that you're stressed, you are still in control of how you react to that stress. Instead of wanting to pull your hair out or crawl in a hole and never come out, take a minute or two, or however long it takes to be present with yourself. Notice how your body feels. Where are you holding tension? Are your shoulders up next to your ears? Are you clenching your teeth or fists? If so, start concentrating on your breath. Start to slow it down. Instead of breathing into your chest, start to expand your stomach. A wonderful thing I love to do is to place my hands onto my stomach and breathe into my hands. I love this because my hands are there as feedback to remind myself to breathe into them. During this time, you can also tune in to what is going on around you. What sounds are you hearing? How soft does your shirt feel? Does the air in the room feel hot or cold? These are all ways to help keep yourself present and not allow your emotions to take control. Remember you cannot control your emotions, but you can control how you react to them.
3. **Realize that you cannot do it all right now.** No matter how many tasks are on your to-do list, remember that you probably can't complete them all within the next hour. How many can you do right now? ONE! Write down the tasks that you would like to complete. Then go down the list and prioritize the tasks into what needs to get done now and what can wait. I like to pick the hardest tasks or the ones that I really don't want to do first, so they are out of the way. Once those are completed, I like to do the smaller tasks. One thing that I like to implement into my daily life is the one-minute rule. If a task takes me one minute or less to complete I like to tackle those first once the hardest tasks are completed so I won't have to revisit them later and it helps me feel like I was more productive.

4. **At the end of the day, don't beat yourself up if you didn't get everything done on your to-do list.** Show yourself gratitude for the things you did complete. Practice letting go with a smile. This is something I started to implement in my life back in 2016 when I was really sick. I still had my to-do list, but I was in no shape to tackle everything on it. Every morning I would say to myself, "if I could complete just one thing off my to-do list I would be happy." But, there were several days where nothing got done. I just reminded myself that I was working on healing. My body was trying to complete its own to-do list without me even realizing what it was doing for me. Big tasks take time! Let go of your ideal self and realize what you are capable of completing in a day. You'll always have several things to complete on your to-do list and not enough time to complete them all, but don't beat yourself up over it. Smile and be kind to yourself. Life is too short to stress about what didn't get completed. Instead, be happy about what you have completed.