

## Try a Change in Your Morning Routine

Morning routines can set the tone for the day improving productivity. Some of these suggestions may help you.

- 1. Exercise and Energy** Get your body moving before eating breakfast, checking your phone, emails or watching TV. Exercise improves alertness and mental functioning.
- 2. Meditation and Stillness.** Alternately, start your day with meditation. Try sitting in a position that requires enough muscle tension so as not to fall asleep. This promotes calm and focus. Quiet moments can be very useful if you expect to have a stressful day. Use a Bible study calendar to keep you on track.
- 3. Get to Work!** Select a job that can be accomplished as the first priority. Your first break can include breakfast or a shower and then the normal routine you'd do in the morning.
- 4. Learning First** Establish a goal to read books, watch lectures, practice skills or study first. Avoid procrastination.
- 5. Plan Your Day** Mentally rehearsing the day is imagining each movement vividly so you can perform better under pressure when the big event comes. By knowing what to focus on you prime your day for success. This is especially good for a hectic, busy schedule.
- 6. Make Your Bed** and routinely doing numerous little tasks can put you in good form for the rest of your day. By putting your house and appearance in order, you put your mind in order as well.

The overall goal is to sync up one of these activities with two other ones. Say fifteen minutes for some key preparation activities followed by exercise, work or study. May the New Year bring success, productivity, health and happiness.

Resource: Young S., The six morning routines that will make you happier, healthier and more productive, Pocket Worthy retrieved on 11/20/20 at [https://getpocket.com/explore/item/the-six-morning-routines-that-will-make-you-happier-healthier-and-more-productive?utm\\_source=pocket-newtab](https://getpocket.com/explore/item/the-six-morning-routines-that-will-make-you-happier-healthier-and-more-productive?utm_source=pocket-newtab)

## Turning Resolutions into Realities

Many resolutions are not kept into February. Here are a few steps to begin the New Year with hope and some scriptures to encourage you.

- 1. Make Smart Goals** Don't be vague. Instead of wanting to 'get into shape' change it to "I will exercise 5 days a week". Goals should be SMART: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Trackable
- 2. Write Down Goals** and look at your goals often. The real power is in reviewing them at least once a week. This assists turning them into reality by staying on task!
- 3. Schedule Goals** Setting priorities is the key. So if you are reading through the Bible, schedule 15 minutes a day to read. Treat that time as seriously as you would going to a doctor's appointment. Pray about the goal. *Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."*(NIV)
- 4. Create Smaller Goals** Break up a goal into manageable steps. For example, check a budget project each week instead of waiting until the end of the month. *Philippians 3:16 -17 Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it. Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal.* (MSG)
- 5. Stick With Goals** If you are struggling, try connecting with someone working on a similar goal. *2 Chronicles 15:7 states "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."*(NIV) Record progress regularly, possibly on a chart.
- 6. Stay Accountable** Share your commitment, your progress and success. Find an encourager to help you to persevere. *Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 Two people are better than one because together they have a good reward for their hard work. If one falls, the other can help his friend get up.* (NIV)
- 7. Find a Mentor** A mentor can counsel you so that you won't have to learn lessons the hard way. *Proverbs 11:14 puts it this way: "Without good direction, people lose their way; the more wise counsel you follow, the better your chances,"* (MSG).

Reference: 6 Steps to Turning Resolutions Into Realities, Life Recovery,; New life Ministries. Retrieved at <http://liferecoverygroups.com/6-steps-to-turning-resolutions-into-realities/?SOURCE=EBLRN> on September 25, 2019

## Mental Health First Aid

Similar to First Aid, Mental Health First Aid teaches individuals how to help those experiencing mental health challenges or crisis. Locally, a 8-hour course is available *free* to teach you to recognize symptoms and to help you guide a person to the appropriate treatments and supportive help. Classes include hands on interactive activities and discussions. More info can be found at [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)

### You will learn about the ALGEE Action Plan

A: Assess for risk of suicide or harm.

L: Listen non-judgmentally.

G: Give reassurance and information.

E: Encourage appropriate professional help

E. Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Certified trainers can teach it in one 8 hour session, two four hours sessions or four two hour sessions. Register by calling Jennifer Thorn at 330-424-0195 ext 102. This is sponsored by the Columbiana Mental Health and Recovery Services Board.

### Realistic Resolutions for Your Mental Health

- 1. Make time for self-care.** Make a list of activities that make you happy. Schedule them as part of your daily routine. This could be daily exercise or simply an outdoor walk or time with loved ones.
- 2. Be kind to yourself.** Change often takes time. If you fail, forgive yourself for mistakes and start again. Strive to do your best.
- 3. Make sleep a priority.** Studies confirm that sleep and mental health are connected. This year, try to go to sleep a little bit earlier every night and give your body the rest it needs.
- 4. Limit your screen time.** Too much time on your phone or computer can impact quality of sleep, your relationships and even lead to feelings of depression and anxiety. Write down how much time you're spending online. Judge the way it effects you. Check if use of social media is a positive or negative influence.
- 5. Learn more about mental health.** Gaining understanding is the key. Use online resources or you talk to a medical professional to learn more about your specific situation.

Resource: Kapil, R., *Realistic New Year's Resolutions for Your Mental Health* retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2020/01/realistic-new-years-resolutions-for-your-mental-health/> on January 13, 2020

## Does Someone Steal Your Joy?

So what is a joy thief? At the risk of sounding negative, a joy thief is a person who is perpetually pessimistic, unhelpful and usually critical. Most times you need to be "prayed up" to spend time with them. Here are four practical things that you can do to deal with a joy thief.

**Get to know them.** Perhaps the person is a genuine disciple of Jesus that struggles with hope. They may have a negative lens because they've experienced great suffering and haven't learned how to "*count it all joy*". That is not an easy thing to do. Spending time with them may allow you to be more compassionate. Biblically, put up your shield of faith, and give knowing them your best shot.

**Pray for them.** Joyless people are usually miserable. Maybe they haven't tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Nehemiah 8:5 says that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

- Pray that the Lord would rescue them and give them hope.
- Pray they accept Jesus as Savior and Lord and grow in faith
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you patience *and* wisdom *and* grace.

**Share biblical joy with them.** Church is the one place in the world where people should be able to come together and experience the joy of the Lord. Joy thieves can hinder God's people from *rejoicing in the Lord always*. List ways to: Count it all joy; Rejoice always. Augustine once said, "When large numbers of people share their joy in common, the happiness of each is greater because each adds fuel to the other's flame." Look for areas of common joys. Check out "laughter therapy" or Christian comedians. Write joyful notes of encouragement.

**We are all called to be joyful.** Maybe your goal should be to be the most joyful person in your congregation. Realize that sometimes we're our own "*joy thief*" because we're too hard on ourselves and set unrealistic expectations. A gospel song says, "This joy I have, the world didn't give it to me, and the world can't take it away." Let's not let anyone steal our joy, especially ourselves.

Resource: Williams, J., 2020, How to Deal With a Joy Thief, retrieved January 21, 2020 at <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/church/how-to-deal-with-a-joy-thief/>