

6 Easy Ways to Transform Your Year

Every year I think I'm going to do better and be different—about to-do lists, cleaning, cooking and spiritual pursuits. I see where I'm falling short, but my efforts only last so long. That's usually because I try to do too much. Can you relate?

My solution is to incorporate easy habits that make a big difference. None of the things on this list will take a lot of work ... but each will reap big rewards!

1. Some weeks it seems as though I'm constantly busy, but I never get the important things done. Can you relate? Solution: **Come up with the ONE important thing you need to do that day, and do it.** It might be to make a phone call, to make a shopping list for the grocery store, or to spend an hour finishing a work project or cleaning out your closet. Making a long list is overwhelming. Also, we often get so busy doing the easy/urgent things that we don't get the important things done. When you focus on the one important thing, you'll be amazed by how much you'll get done.
2. Are you ever embarrassed when you need to give someone a ride? "Please excuse the drink cups and junk mail!" The solution? **Clean out the car every time you get out of it.** You have to start with a clean car (of course). But it only takes an extra minute to clean out the car when you exit. We train our kids to do this too. Yes, crumbs and dust build up, but this one-minute habit will make you not be embarrassed when you have to give someone a ride, and you'll feel good about it too!
3. There's nothing worse than trying to figure out what to make at 5:00 p.m. Want to do better? **Plan what you're having for dinner while you make your breakfast.** We try

to have dinner together most nights. I'd love to be one of those people who has weekly menu plans, but I've never been able to be that organized for more than a week. Yet when I think of what I'm making for dinner, I have time to thaw and prep.

4. Do you ever feel as if you're a spiritual drop-out? **Read a few chapters of the Bible every day.** Share a meaningful message from the passage with a family member or friend. I've read through the Bible seven times. Sitting down with God's Word has transformed my life. I love doing One Year Bible plans. Last year I invited my Facebook friends to join me, and 300+ did! **Here are some great Bible-reading plans.** Choose one! And sharing what you learned helps you to ponder what you learned and remember it better!
5. Wish you could trust God more and understand the way He works? **Read a Christian biography every month.** Reading about real people with real challenges who allowed God to use them in amazing ways has really grown my faith. Stories about George Mueller, Amy Carmichael, Jim Elliot and others have really grown my faith! (I'm excited to be sharing some of my favorite prayer stories this July in *Prayers that Changed History!*)
6. Sometimes do you wonder if prayer even works? **Write down prayer requests just between you and God.** When we write down our requests, we can keep a better record of how God has moved and worked. I love looking back over old prayer journals and seeing the lists of answered prayers. I'm also so excited when a prayer is answered that was just between me and God. It truly has built intimacy in my relationship with Him!

Try these six things, and I know you'll see *huge* transformation in your life. "A little goes a long way" has never been truer!

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novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.