

A 7-Point Plan to Make 2018 Your Best Year Yet

There is something universally exciting about a new year.

Hopes and dreams, a clean slate, taking new territory and big plans are greatly anticipated.

New Year's resolutions and wishful thinking rarely help you achieve what you desire. Realizing the 2018 you dream about requires preparation, discipline and focus.

You will encounter setbacks, speed bumps and surprises you didn't see coming. But the size and clarity of your vision for the year will help provide the grit you need to keep going.

There is a direct correlation between your purpose, plan and preparation, and the year you will actually experience. Execution without preparation is just busyness.

When you include significant amounts of prayer, you are setting yourself up for a great year.

A 7-Point Game Plan To Set You Up for A Great 2018:

1) Restore Key Relationships

Restoration is one of the great themes of Scripture. It's a primary responsibility for all Christ followers. On a practical level, it's nearly impossible to function at your peak potential if you are distracted by broken, hurting or dysfunctional relationships.

From the proverbial elephant in the room at work to a significant family breakdown, do whatever it takes to restore

any relationship that is core in your life. From your boss to your spouse, make it right.

2) Forgive those who have hurt you

Jesus modeled forgiveness for us. It's not always easy, but it's not an option. You may or may not be in a key relationship with someone you need to forgive, but either way, forgiving those who have hurt or wronged you is essential.

Lack of forgiveness is like a cancer that eats at you from the inside. It's often unseen, but the results can be devastating if not dealt with.

Forgiving someone doesn't always happen fast, but it always begins in a moment. I've counseled with many people who say, "I just can't quite get there." That is understandable, but you can start.

Forgiving is a decision that is made in your mind and is connected to how you feel. God will then give you the grace to complete the process.

3) Evaluate your results from 2017

Set aside a minimum of one hour. Have your calendar handy. Write clear notes on your major accomplishments and major mistakes or failures.

Think through what caused the successes and what caused the breakdowns.

- What did you learn?
- How did you grow?
- What will you do differently?

This doesn't have to be a super long "dissertation" kind of arduous process, but it does need to be an honest process. My experience is that this piece can be done in less than two

hours.

4) Finish what you started

It's better to officially admit you are not going to finish (if that is an option) than to leave something dangling.

Large and small unfinished projects carry a similar drain on emotion and energy. The little ones nag you, and the big ones drag you, but they feel similar.

Make a list of what is not finished in three groups. Group one is high priority. Group two is low priority. (The lack of a "mid" priority forces tougher decisions.) Group three is "jettison," you just say no and shut it down. Or, say not now, but officially take it off the list.

Then dig in and knock them out in order of priority. Note, several of the low priority should move to jettison.

5) Write out your game plan for 2018

Talk with God first.

1. Who does God want you to be, but you have not yet become?
2. What does He want you to accomplish?
3. What are the big themes that God seems to have for you?
4. What are the needs of the Kingdom that God designed for you next year?

The shorter the list and the more specific, the better.

The answer to these questions can be a word or two, or a sentence or two. Keep it simple. A friend of mine and colleague on staff, Scott Mawdesley says, "Write One Line." You could literally write one line for each of the four questions above and set your 2018 to a great start!

6) Write Your “I’m Grateful” list

Those of us who like to learn, grow and make progress can be our own worst critics. It’s also easy to look at what you don’t have or didn’t accomplish. The best way to avoid this is to focus on what you are grateful for.

You can do this over a cup of coffee! Write all the things you are grateful for in general and in particular from 2017.

This is an easy exercise that sets your heart and mind right for best results in 2018.

7) Clear the clutter

Not everyone cares about the environment they live and work in. But I do. I don’t need perfection, but I am not at peace in clutter and chaos. So I eliminate as much as I can. This may help you more than you know.

How much time do you spend looking for things that are lost? Yes, even computer files can be cluttered. Many of mine are. Who likes to file? Not me! But I have hundreds of folders and files on my Mac, and if I take some time to clean them up, I can find stuff, which makes me faster and more productive.

Another example, I still have hundreds of books, and I’ve spent the last two months going through all of them purging nearly 50 percent. I will be done by December 31. I just don’t need all of them, and they are distracting and everywhere!

How about you? Time to clear the clutter? {eoa}

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