

It's Not Too Late!

# Making 2009 Happy, Healthy, and Productive



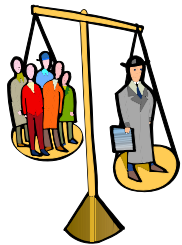
January has come and gone. If you didn't commit to a New Year's resolution, it's likely that you still look forward to a better year. Follow these tips to make this year one of your best ever. It's never too late for positive changes.



**1 STOP PROCRASTINATING.** Everyone procrastinates. Reducing procrastination is an acquired skill. You aren't lazy if you procrastinate. Procrastination is avoidance of work *paid for with time*—the most precious resource. To defeat procrastination, change your view of the task. Break it down into smaller pieces, inflate its importance, assign more value to its completion, and increase your feeling of urgency.



**6 EAT RIGHT AND EXERCISE.** These are two of the toughest resolutions. Keep your goals reasonable, set small achievable milestones to build morale, and, most importantly, don't allow one small setback like a missed workout snowball into a dead end. Don't beat yourself up mentally when you get off track. Make firm plans that will prevent you from straying from your diet and workout plans. Line up powerful interventions in case you do.



**2 BALANCE COMPETING PRIORITIES.** Excessive focus on one or two areas of your life is detrimental to your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Make balance the top priority in your life, with all others stemming from it. No time for balance? Examine your day, and you may find that you have more time on your hands than you thought. Spend it on an activity that you have been putting on hold.



**7 MAKE YOUR HEALTH A PRIORITY.** Be proactive to head off health problems. Schedule regular checkups with your doctor. Don't allow fear to keep you from getting physical exams that can discover cancer or other illnesses early. Schedule your health checkups at the beginning of the year. Pap smears, colonoscopies, prostate exams, and mammograms are all preventative health measures many people tend to avoid.



**3 REDUCE CATASTROPHIC THINKING.** Recognize that relentlessly chewing over worst-case scenarios is a drain on your mental and emotional energy. Intervene by considering solutions or contingencies to deal with the worst-case scenario. If no solutions are forthcoming, give your worries a mental time limit. Revisit possible solutions later. Remember this: You have probably faced fearful events before but they all came to pass. This one probably will too.



**8 NURTURE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.** Many experts believe humans are hardwired to look outside themselves for what controls them or influences their lives. This isn't necessarily "religious" thinking. It's spiritual thinking. Our daily struggles can seem futile and meaningless without some sense of hope, guidance, and connectedness to something greater than ourselves. If you feel this need, find what works for you.



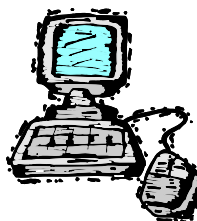
**4 CONTROL YOUR TEMPER.** Unresolved anger always finds an outlet. Vow to positively address that which makes you angry as soon as you are calm enough to do so. If it isn't worth taking action on, it isn't worth stewing over. Act on some things, and let others go.



**9 PREVENT DEBT STRESS.** One of the greatest and most debilitating stressors is personal debt. If you grew up after the Depression, you may not be as frugal as you want to be. Create a cushion between earnings and expenses. Learn how to live within a budget to reduce this stress. Sound hard to do? Try cutting frivolous expenses for 90 days and see how this simple act can improve your finances.



**5 RECOGNIZE AND ELIMINATE NEGATIVE THOUGHT PATTERNS.** Negative thinking can become a habit that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Break this harmful pattern by determining the triggers that set it off. Establish mental roadblocks that nip it in the bud. Reciting a list of things *audibly* that you are grateful for is an effective way to direct your thoughts back into positive territory. Do this exercise to stop the old pattern.



**10 DEVELOP YOUR TECHNOLOGY SKILLS.** The world is moving fast. Don't let technology turn you into a dinosaur. It can greatly improve your skills and help you develop into a more valuable worker, both for your current and future employer. Chances are that you are resistant because it all seems so overwhelming. Start anywhere, and know this: You will increase your knowledge each day that goes by. And it might even be fun! Where to start: Increase your proficiency with Microsoft Office and learn how to create a Web site.