

Tyme Management™

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Put Your Goals into Practice

Long-term projects are often swept aside in the mad rush of everyday life, unless you make time for them within your regular schedule. **To successfully accomplish your long-term goals and projects this year:**

- ◆ Make a list of the long-term projects you want to tackle.
- ◆ Break these projects down into small steps that you can accomplish one at a time.
- ◆ Determine how much time each step will require.
- ◆ Decide how much time you'll have each month to work on these projects.
- ◆ Schedule time to do your projects in specific time slots on your calendar.
- ◆ Write the task and the length of time that you'll work on it next to the date.
- ◆ When these dates come up, stick to them.
- ◆ Check your progress periodically, and revise your plan when necessary.
- ◆ Review your list of goals often to remind you of them.
- ◆ Enjoy the satisfaction of seeing your project realized!

Make New Resolutions This Year

When many people think of New Year's resolutions, they think of pledges to eat better or to exercise more. However, there are many other areas of your life to examine when setting goals for the new year. Rather than making your usual resolutions this year, take time to contemplate the things that you really do want to change in your life. **When setting your goals for the new year, consider the following six areas of life:**

- ▲ *Physical/Health* – What bad habits do you want to stop to better your health? Do you want to quit smoking or watch less TV? What good habits do you want to begin? Do you want to eat more fruits and vegetables, exercise regularly, or get more sleep each night?
- ▲ *Mental/Educational* – What steps will you take to continue learning more this year? Will you subscribe to a publication, read more books, or take a night class at a local college? What new subject areas will you explore to expand your range of knowledge?
- ▲ *Spiritual/Ethical* – How will you incorporate activities into your daily routine that will nurture your spirit? Will you make time to meditate, pray, or read each day? What internal areas or character issues do you want to work on? Do you want to be more honest, less critical, or less anxious?
- ▲ *Family/Home* – How healthy are your family relationships, and how can you



improve them? Do you need to work on your communication skills, make time with family more of a priority, or ask for someone's forgiveness? How can you organize your home so that it runs more efficiently?

- ▲ *Financial/Career* – What do you need to do to improve your financial standing in the new year? Do you need to pay off debt, save more, or spend less? How can you improve the quality and efficiency of your work, and what job skills should you develop to do so?
 - ▲ *Social/Cultural* – How can you find opportunities to meet new people and learn about different cultures and backgrounds? What's one way that you can get involved in making a difference in people's lives today?
- Once you've set your goals for the year, go after them with all of your heart, and *have a happy New Year!*

Improve Productivity

Yime management is a corporate issue. When one employee works inefficiently, it affects everyone else in the company. Likewise, when each employee knows how to work productively, the entire company becomes more productive. By teaching your employees good time-management skills, you can help them become more successful personally and promote the success of your company. **The following are methods for improving the time efficiency of your organization:**



- ◆ *Reevaluate standard procedures.* Many times, people do things the way they do simply out of habit. Stop and examine the routine processes and paperwork that you and your employees do each day. Brainstorm possible ways to do them faster and better, and implement these changes.
- ◆ *Discuss deadlines.* Inform employees about the upcoming deadlines on the projects affecting them. Ask them for their input on what's feasible, and together devise a schedule for completing these deadlines. When they understand the "why" behind a deadline, they'll be much more willing to work together to meet it.
- ◆ *Solicit timesaving feedback.* Create a suggestion box for ideas on how the company can improve its efficiency and productivity. Or, reserve 10 minutes at meetings for brainstorming timesaving ideas. Recognize employees for the ideas that are successfully implemented.
- ◆ *Circulate time-management resources.* Offer others the chance to borrow your books, tapes, or publications on time-management topics. Show videos about time management at staff meetings. Post flyers for upcoming workshops on how to improve job skills.
- ◆ *Include time use in performance reviews.* When evaluating your employees' performance, take time management into consideration. Praise them for the improvements that you've noticed, and talk to them about any areas that they may need to work on.
- ◆ *Help others manage their time better.* Look for ways to help others get their work done. If your assistant handles calls for you during your quiet hour, for example, arrange for someone else to answer the phone for an hour, so your assistant can work uninterrupted.

Give a "Spirit Raise"

You highly value your hardworking employees and would like to reward them, but the current budget won't allow any more money for salaries. What can you do to reward your stellar employees? Give them a "spirit raise"! **Consider these ideas for raising people's spirits:**

- *Listen to new ideas.* When employees approach you with new ideas, encourage them to pursue them, and say that you like what you've heard so far.
- *Keep equipment updated and in good working condition.* Employees take pride in their work and will enjoy receiving the best tools, equipment, and resources. Also be sure to have plenty of additional office supplies available.
- *Further your good employees' education.* Send them to continuing education courses, or give them additional training in specialized duties. The opportunity to gain marketable skills will be greatly appreciated.



Pat Answers

Dear Pat: I share a very small office with a coworker who's a good friend. We are separated only by a partition. She has a very loud voice, and when I'm on the phone, my callers can hear her. We've talked about it, and she is always sorry and says she'll try to do better. But it keeps happening. What can I do?

Pat Answers: Good for you for talking to her about it instead of suffering in silence, so to speak. Looks like you'll need to do it again. Acknowledge that you know she's sorry and that she's trying, but tell her that her best efforts aren't solving this very real business problem. Get her on your problem-solving team. Ask her to help you brainstorm practical solutions to minimize the sound of her voice to you and your callers. Don't let it end with her promise to try. She did. It didn't work. Maybe you could rearrange the desks in your workspaces so noise is directed outward. Depending on office policy, maybe you could place attractive – and sound-absorbing – wall hangings on either side of your partition. If all else fails, develop a friendly signal between you when you're on the phone. Toss a paper streamer or a piece of (soft) candy over the partition so she knows when she really needs to keep it down.



Are co-workers driving you crazy? Is your boss out of touch? Complex personnel problems demand Pat Answers! Send questions to: pat@patgrigadean.com.

Pat Grigadean is a professional mediator, trainer, and employee-relations specialist. She writes Pat Answers in consultation with Haven Street-Allen, SPHR. © 2007 Pat Grigadean.

Make Family Time a Priority

Whether your children are toddlers or teenagers, spending time together as a family is important. Family time is more than just sitting in front of the TV together or coexisting in the same house. It involves sharing, interacting and making the effort to be involved in each other's lives.

The following are ideas for spending time with your family:

- *Share a meal together.* Choose one new recipe to try cooking together each week. If schedule conflicts make it impossible to eat dinner together, get up early to have breakfast with each other instead. Reserve one night a week to go out for dinner, or have a one-on-one lunch date with your kids once a week.
- *Work on a home improvement project.* Find something to do around the house that the whole family can pitch in on. Paint the bedrooms, plant a garden, redecorate the family room, or build furniture. Or, create a family scrapbook for each family member to collect memories in.
- *Get some exercise.* Take a walk with each other at least once a week to talk and catch up. Or, find a sport that the entire family can play together. Play on the playground, toss the Frisbee around, or go rollerblading.
- *Have a fun night.* Have a slumber party at your home for your family. Play board games, watch movies, bake cookies and stay up late telling jokes and stories. Put shaving cream on the



first person who falls asleep, and be sure to take plenty of pictures!

- *Learn a new hobby.* Pick something that you and another family member want to learn to do, such as fly-fishing, quilting, woodworking, painting, or photography. Then, shop together to buy the items you need, and sign up for a class or check out how-to books from the library.
- *Do some research.* Ask your children what topic they would like to learn more about, and spend time together learning about it. Go to the library, visit a museum, or look on the Internet to find out more about it. Then make a book, craft, or poster that displays what you learned.
- *Go on a mini vacation.* Spend an evening or an entire weekend together away from your usual routine. Take a road trip to a historic sight, or go camping at a state park or in your back yard. Stay at a hotel or a bed-and-breakfast out of town for a night, and enjoy time away.

Home Checklist

The beginning of a new year is a great time to give your home a checkup. By keeping a checklist of what needs maintenance, you can plan ahead to ensure that your home is taken care of properly. **Things to maintain in your home include:**

- ◆ *Heating* – Have fireplaces, furnaces and wood-burning stoves inspected each year.
- ◆ *Smoke alarms* – Replace batteries at least once a year, and test your alarms once a month.
- ◆ *Yard* – Keep grass, trees and bushes trimmed, and plan what you want to grow this year.
- ◆ *Appliances* – Consult owner's manuals for any maintenance required on major appliances and other equipment.
- ◆ *Cars* – Check your service record for routine maintenance needed, and change the oil regularly.



- ◆ *Bikes* – Have tires, brakes and gears checked for safety, and buy helmets if you don't have them.
- ◆ *Sports equipment* – Make sure that your winter and summer gear is still in good condition.
- ◆ *Exterior repairs* – Note any roof, gutter, or fence work needed, and decide whether it's time for a new paint job.
- ◆ *Interior repairs* – Consider any wall, flooring, plumbing, or fixture repairs that need to be done.
- ◆ *Improvement projects* – Plan the remodeling and redecorating projects you want to do this year.

Keeping in Touch with Your Grandchildren

Here are ways grandparents can keep in touch with grandchildren who live far away: • write a letter • send an E-mail • call on the telephone • mail a surprise package • send pictures of you and where you live • record a message on tape and send it • plan a special trip to visit them or invite them to come visit you.



PERSONAL TIME

Make Yourself an Appointment

You make appointments with clients, coworkers, doctors, friends and loved ones all the time. But in the rush of places to go, people to see and things to do, have you ever thought to make an appointment with yourself?

Scheduling personal time each week is an important component to a healthy, balanced life. By taking time out to do something you like, you have a chance to recharge, reflect and enjoy life. After you resume work and daily demands, you'll actually be *more* productive because you'll feel refreshed and ready to handle what comes your way. **Here's how to make personal time a regular part of your life:**

- *Decide how much time you need.* You may need one or more hours to yourself each day or one afternoon to yourself once a week.
- *Decide what you want to do in this time.* You're free to choose whatever activity you'd like, as long as it's fun, relaxing and not work related.
- *Schedule personal time in your planner.* Write your appointment with yourself on your calendar along with your other appointments and commitments.
- *Keep your appointment.* Just as you would honor your appointments with others, consider yourself important enough to make time for.



Using Cell Phones Safely

Cell phones are a fast and convenient way to communicate. However, they can be dangerously distracting if used when driving. According to one study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, people who talk on the phone while driving are four times more likely to have an accident. In fact, they drive at a capacity similar to those who are mildly intoxicated. **When using your cell phone, practice these simple safety precautions to keep you and others safe:**



- ☞ *Make safety your number-one priority.* Your first responsibility is to keep your eyes on the road. Always wear your seat belt, and keep both hands on the wheel.
- ☞ *Always try to make your calls before you begin driving.* If you must make a call on the road, do so when stopped at a light, sign, or otherwise. Never call when pulling out into traffic or when driving in a busy or unknown area.
- ☞ *Postpone emotionally intense calls.* Never allow yourself to get involved in a stressful, frustrating, or emotionally involved call while driving. You'll be too caught up in what you're saying to drive safely.
- ☞ *Keep your phone accessible.* Place it where you can see and get to it easily, and fasten portable phones securely. Get accustomed to using your phone so that you won't have to fumble with it.
- ☞ *Stop or pull over to dial.* Or, have a passenger dial. If you must, dial a few numbers first, and then check the traffic and your mirrors before dialing the rest. Program the numbers you call often, so you'll only have to push a few buttons.
- ☞ *Avoid answering your phone when driving.* Let voice mail take the call if it's unsafe or inconvenient to answer. If you must answer, tell the person that you're driving, and wait until you pull over to finish the call.
- ☞ *Never write while you drive.* If you need to make a note about something, pull over to the side of the road, or use an electronic scratchpad to enter numbers while you talk.
- ☞ *End calls immediately when driving conditions change.* If traffic gets heavy or the weather gets bad, for example, say something like, "Sorry! Bad weather! Gotta go!" and hang up. Then, call back when conditions improve.

Source: *The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.*

Working on the Weekends

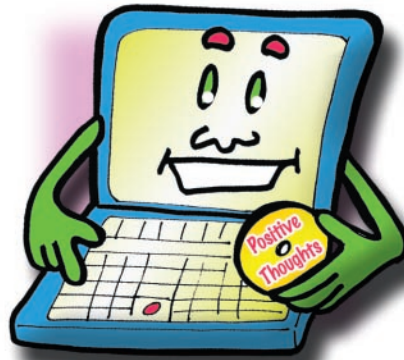
Sometimes you have no other choice but to work on a weekend. **To make marathon work sessions more manageable:**

- ☞ *Change the scenery.* Work in a different, more relaxed setting outside the office.
- ☞ *Alter your routine.* Have an extra long breakfast or lunch break. Go home early.
- ☞ *Take a break.* Give yourself an hour of free time no matter how busy you are.
- ☞ *Give your brain downtime.* Try to alternate mentally tasking jobs with more physical ones.
- ☞ *Adjust your position occasionally.* Take stretch breaks, and try standing up for some periods of time.
- ☞ *Keep the end in view.* Stay motivated by realizing that it won't last forever.

Reprogramming Negative Thoughts

Just like a computer, the human mind runs on the thought patterns that have been programmed into it over the years. Many of these patterns are negative and self-defeating in nature, affecting how you see yourself and the world around you. **Here are positive steps that you can take to reprogram your negative thought patterns:**

- ▲ *Catch yourself when your thoughts turn negative.* When your mood changes for the worse, stop and ask yourself what just happened. What thought crossed your mind that discouraged you? What feeling did you suddenly experience? Did a particular situation trigger these feelings?
- ▲ *Question your negative thoughts.* Most of your negative thoughts about yourself aren't true. What evidence do you have to prove that these thoughts aren't true? Could you be exaggerating or jumping to conclusions? What alternative explanations are there for the situation?
- ▲ *Separate fact from fiction.* Differentiate the facts of the situation from your perceptions about it. For example, the thought, "This is my third rejection letter. I'll never get a job. I'm no good," can be separated into the fact, "I received my third rejection letter," and your perception, "I can't get a job; I'm no good."
- ▲ *Make a true/false list.* In one column, write down your negative thoughts and feelings. In the column beside it, write the truth about yourself and your situation. For example, the first



column may say, "I won't ever get a job," while the column beside it may say, "I'm a competent person. If I keep trying, I'll find the right job."

- ▲ *Practice replacing negative thoughts with the truth.* Make a list of your goals and the positive truths about yourself. Post this list where you can refer to it often, and repeat it to yourself daily, especially when you're plagued with negative thoughts.
- ▲ *Act on your positive assertions.* One of the best ways of challenging the reality of your negative assumptions is to take action and do something positive. Instead of moping that you'll always be jobless, rewrite your resumé to make it even better. Keep going to interviews until you prove your negative thoughts wrong.
- ▲ *Give yourself time.* Your mind can't be reprogrammed overnight, so don't give up when you get temporarily sidetracked with negative thoughts and feelings. Be patient and keep working at it, and use your defeats to learn more about yourself.

Did You Know...?

Did you know that it takes five hours for the brain to process a new motor skill? If one motor skill is learned immediately after another, the first one will tend to become lost while the brain is trying to process the second.

So, the next time you're learning a new motor skill – whether it be using new computer equipment or playing the guitar – give yourself a five-hour break before you move on to learning something new.

Writing Tips

The following are tips for writing more effectively:

- ◆ *Define the purpose of your document.* Be specific. Everything you do in the writing process should keep this goal in mind. Once you know what the end goal is, outline the information your readers will need to reach it.
- ◆ *Determine your audience.* Tailor your document to the people who will read it. Include the information that they will need to know. Leave out what they already know and the extra information that they don't really need to know.



- ◆ *Include pertinent information.* List all of the topics that you want to include, and divide them into categories. Look for the areas you left out and for anything that you'll need to research further.
- ◆ *Organize your material.* Know what you want to say before you start writing. Highlight the main points in your notes, and transfer them to main categories on separate pieces of paper. Add or change categories to accommodate all the information necessary.
- ◆ *Consider your layout.* Arrange your material in a logical order, dividing it into sections according to topic. Keep paragraphs manageable, and use the first sentence of each paragraph to summarize its content. Use titles and white space to help clarify the order.

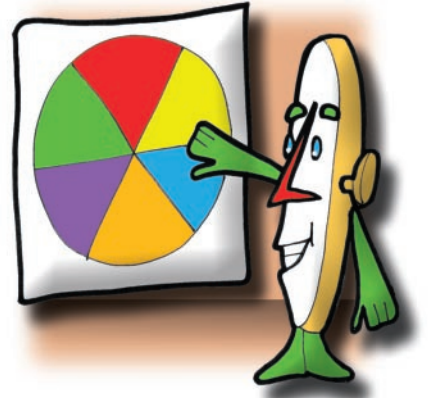
Hearing Bad News

There's nothing you can do ahead of time to anticipate the shock of bad news. However, you can be more prepared **to handle bad news if you know what reactions to expect:**

- ❖ *Shock* – People are generally speechless when they first hear bad news. They don't know what to think and need more time to absorb the information.
- ❖ *Denial* – People's initial reaction after hearing bad news is disbelief. They just can't believe it's happening. Some people continue to stay in denial, preferring to pretend that it never happened.
- ❖ *Guilt* – Often, people blame themselves for everything even when they aren't responsible. For some people, it can be very difficult to overcome guilty feelings.
- ❖ *Anger* – Intense feelings of injustice, frustration, or disappointment are typical responses to upsetting news. People may also feel guilty for having these feelings if they believe that anger is an unacceptable emotion.
- ❖ *Blame* – In order to understand the situation, many people will attempt to blame other people or events for it. This can be so reassuring that they'll remain convinced that they're right.
- ❖ *Depression* – Some people may feel hopeless and despair of anything good happening again. They want to give up completely.
- ❖ *Rationalization* – Once people begin to accept reality, they then attempt to explain their part in it. Often, this version of events is slightly skewed or inaccurate.
- ❖ *Acceptance* – With time, people accept the situation for what it is, and they move on with life.

Improving Your Job Satisfaction

Has your job left you worn out and unmotivated? You may not need to change your job, but simply your approach to your present one. **Here are suggestions on how to find long-term job satisfaction:**



- *Focus on doing your best.* Thinking that you must work longer and harder hours to be successful will only lead to workaholicism. Instead, focus on meeting attainable goals at a realistic pace.
- *Learn your limits.* Avoid taking on more work than your job really calls for. Assess the time and energy level that you have to work with before saying "Yes" to additional projects and opportunities.
- *Pass it on.* Take advantage of the talents and skills of those around you by delegating some of your tasks. If you attempt to do everything on your own, the quality and timeliness of your work will suffer.
- *Give yourself a break.* Take vacations to recharge and avoid burnout. If you believe that you're the only one who can do your job, you'll fool yourself into thinking that you can't ever leave to take the breaks you need.
- *Seek support.* Stable personal relationships can be a much-needed refuge when work life is stressful. Spend meaningful time with family members and close friends who will listen to you and support you.
- *Keep a balanced perspective.* Remember that there's much more to life than work. When you pursue the physical, mental, spiritual and social areas of your life as well, you'll be able to handle work in stride.

Do the Job from Start to Finish

Most people have a hard time either starting or finishing a project. To accomplish your goals, you must start what you plan and finish what you start. **Here's how:**

- ▲ Set deadlines for each step.
- ▲ Plan how you'll carry out each step.
- ▲ Consider your deadlines as absolutes.
- ▲ Begin at the earliest possible date.
- ▲ Quit listening to your own excuses.
- ▲ Know that you won't have the time you need to do your best if you wait until the last minute. Allow yourself enough time to get the job done right.
- ▲ Stop telling yourself and others that you've done it until it's complete.
- ▲ Work with the end goal in mind, and celebrate when you reach it!



"The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

– Victor Frankl

Stop Being the “Go-To” that Everyone Else Goes to!

Controlling your incoming paperwork isn't as difficult as it may appear. The key to cutting down in this area is ruthlessness. Take a cold, hard look at your paperwork, and ignore, throw away, or delegate anything you personally don't need to spend time on. **Here are five tips to help you get mean so that your in-basket gets lean:**

1 *Ignore responses that can be directed elsewhere.* Are you the office “go-to” person that everyone goes to for help? Do you wind up doing other people's work for them just because you're so nice?

You can make yourself less convenient to others without appearing rude, uncooperative, or unhelpful.

Just present some alternatives for people. Do they want the information from you if you can only get to it in a few weeks? Or, would they prefer to call Ted, who has the same information at his fingertips? When your helpfulness is presented in that framework, the other person will usually opt for the quicker alternative.

On other occasions, you don't have to respond at all. If the request requires time-consuming, time-wasting paperwork, simply stall until the requester seeks the information elsewhere.

2 *Use an assistant to preread.* Keep your assistant informed about your priorities, projects and plans so that he or she can preread your mail, take action on your behalf and discard time wasters before they even reach your desk.

Your assistant can preread reports, highlighting key facts and ideas of interest, and can preview the table of contents of magazines and journals to highlight articles of interest. He or she can also read and highlight key ideas in these articles – articles that you may miss in your own hurried skimming.

Let your assistant know that certain things always require highlighting, such as advertisements by competitors, key industry news, or dates for major events. He or she should read all incoming requests and jot explanations to you in the margin. For instance, if the request involves your attending a luncheon, your assistant could circle the date and write, “*You have a sales meeting to attend that day. Unless you tell me otherwise, I'll telephone your regrets.*”

Even junk mail, which you don't have time to read in detail, if at all, can be a source of valuable information. Instruct your assistant to preread it, discarding what's not of interest, and to pass along what may have educational value.

3 *Read faster and with purpose.* Be choosy about what you read. You shouldn't let those who mail to you impose on your time any more than you let those who phone you waste your time.

After your assistant has preread your incoming mail and passed along what you “must” read, schedule uninterrupted reading time. Reading everything put before you shouldn't be a compulsive habit. Read only what you really want and need to read.

4 *Get off others' distribution lists.* Information may be power, but don't mistake information and power with paper. Informa-

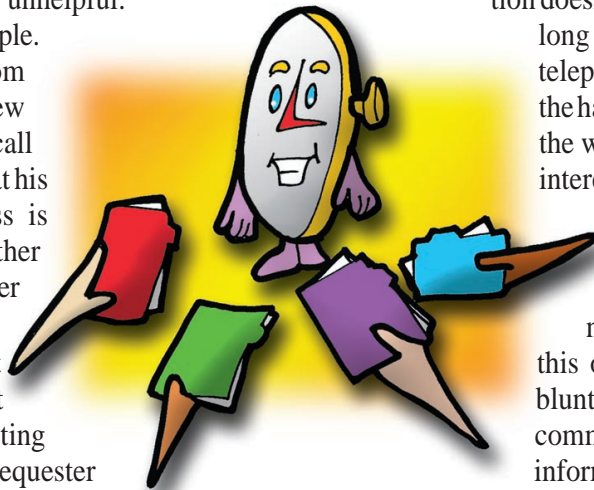
tion doesn't have to come in hard copy 20 pages long and single spaced. Instead, pick up the telephone, attend a meeting, or walk down the hallway. Let someone else wade through the written details – someone who's not as interested in being productive.

When you get a copy of something you don't need, let the sender know. Return the document with a note saying you no longer have use for this or that report. You don't have to be blunt; just jot a “*Thanks, but no thanks*” comment about why you no longer need the information. Attach the slip to the report, and return it to the sender, asking for your

name to be permanently removed from that distribution list.

5 *File research by use or event, not by subject.* Instead of filing by subjects too broad to be of any real use, file information by the event or the use that prompted you to save the information in the first place. For example, if you think you might use certain statistics in a client proposal, file them in that client's file rather than by the subject of the statistics. If you intend to use the information in an upcoming seminar speech, file it “*Speech – NBP convention, May 2006.*”

An exception: If, like writers or speakers, you collect general information on many topics, break down your files as specifically as possible in your research section by subject: “*Human Resources: Insurance,*” “*Human Resources: 401K Plans,*” or “*Human Resources: Salary Surveys.*” Before you decide to file, remember that retrievable info is the only usable info. Think retrieval.



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TIMESAVERS

Multiply Your Time

When the tasks at hand don't require deep thought or concentration, you can do two or three of them at the same time and get more done in less time. **Here are examples of things you can do at the same time:**

- ◆ Listen to instructional tapes while you get dressed for work.
- ◆ Sign letters while you talk on the telephone.
- ◆ Read mail, file papers, or type an E-mail while you're on hold.
- ◆ Pack lunches while you're cooking dinner.
- ◆ Clean the bathroom while you're doing laundry.
- ◆ Walk the dog, and get some exercise for yourself, too.

"We grow great by dreams. All big men are dreamers. They see things in the soft haze of a spring day or in the red fire of a long winter's evening. Some of us let these great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them; nurse them through bad days till they bring them to the sunshine and light which comes always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true."

— Woodrow T. Wilson

Do You Have the Winter Blues?

For many people, the time *after* the holidays is more sad and stressful than the holidays themselves. The fun and excitement of the season is over, and the uneventful routine of everyday life resumes. Even the weather can seem depressing and dreary at this time of year. But just because the holidays are over, doesn't mean that you have to stop celebrating! **Here are some positive ways to combat the post-holiday blues:**

- ▲ Read a joke book.
- ▲ Listen to inspiring music.
- ▲ Work on a home improvement project.
- ▲ Plan your upcoming vacation.
- ▲ Watch a funny TV show or movie.
- ▲ Do volunteer work.
- ▲ Read an engrossing book or novel.
- ▲ Take a long walk.
- ▲ Make a list of all the things that you're thankful for.
- ▲ Visit some loved ones *after* the holidays instead.
- ▲ Learn a new skill or hobby.



Keeping Your Goals in View

It can be easy to lose sight of your goals and to get sidetracked with unimportant tasks that don't advance you toward your goals. To prevent this, keep your goals in view by posting them where you can see them often. Write your long-term goals on your calendar each month, and note the short-term goals you have for each week in your planner. Then, use this visual reminder to track your progress and to help you stay motivated until you reach your goals.