Take stock in you this New Year

Happy 2017! What were you saying to yourself at this time last year? If your goals went back on the shelf by January 31, you deserve a better approach. Before saying, “This will be the year...” yet again, take a moment to reflect. What will you gain by reaching your goal? A healthier body, bigger salary, improved relationship? Go a step further... What need does meeting your goal help fulfill?

That may seem like a big question. Needs are complex, but you will find that six basic themes of human need emerge. We all need certain feelings!

- **Certainty**  
The perception of safety & security
- **Growth**  
Stretching our limits toward improvement
- **Variety**  
New and exciting experiences
- **Love & Connection**  
Part of an accepting group
- **Significance**  
A sense of importance and meaning
- **Contribution**  
Serving, protecting and giving to a cause larger than ourselves

Which two needs drive much of what you do every day? How will the process of working toward your goal help meet your top two needs? Know your needs, enjoy the change process and 2017 can be your year to shine!

Is a healthy work/life balance on your goal list? If so, this month’s book club selection, *The Three Marriages*, can open up a whole new world of possibilities!
Give it a try

MEDITATION

Feeling overwhelmed by the thought of a New Year? Relieve stress and give yourself the gift of time by practicing meditation. A calmer, more focused mind can help you to create peace and balance in your life.

1. Find a quiet place at work or home and start with five minutes of meditation time, working up to 10 or 15 minutes.

2. Utilize an app or a video with calming music to help you to block out noise.

3. Focus on your breathing, inhale calm and exhale your stressors. Try not to think about anything other than your breathing or repeating a favorite saying or mantra. This is not a time to think about your daily tasks.

4. When finished, reflect upon how your body feels—relaxed, renewed, calm or focused?

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Frozen fitness

Winter may mean hibernating for animals, but we don’t have to do the same. Staying active in the winter is easiest when we do something we enjoy. Exercise indoors at your local gym, fitness studio or your very own living room. Building physical activity into work or play can make it more fun. Put physical activity on your schedule like you would a meeting. Make it a priority, make it fun and find something you enjoy.

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<th>Monday</th>
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<td>Take the stairs at work 3 times today</td>
<td>Stand up for 5 minutes every hour you sit at your desk or in front of the TV</td>
<td>Hold a walking meeting</td>
<td>Try a dance, fitness, or yoga class or video</td>
<td>Bundle up and go for a 10 minute walk</td>
<td>Game night with games that get you moving</td>
<td>Sled, snowshoe, ski or snowboard</td>
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Your kitchen can help you eat healthier

Our surroundings shape the decisions we make, especially when it comes to food choices we have on a daily basis. Thankfully, there are a number of nutritional nudges that we can incorporate into our homes to set us up for success. Take a look at how your kitchen is set up.

- Store treats in hard to reach places. If you have food on the counter, make it an attractive bowl of fresh fruit.
- When you look in your refrigerator or cupboards, you’re most likely to choose what you spot first. Keep healthy items at the forefront and in clear containers. Unhealthy items should be less visible and in opaque containers.
- A visible cutting board will increase use of fresh produce.
- Chop up produce and store it in clear containers in the refrigerator for healthy snacking.
- Keep a pitcher of water in your refrigerator.

And finally, use smaller plates when you sit down to eat, don’t multitask, and slow down to savor your meal.

Easy black bean soup

Serves: 6 | Serving size: 1 cup
Total time: 30 min | Prep: 10 min | Cook: 20 min
Calories: 170 | Total Fat: 3 g | Sodium: 347 mg | Total Carbohydrates: 28 g
Dietary Fiber: 9 g | Total Protein: 9 g

Ingredients:
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup bottled salsa
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 cup [2] carrots, chopped
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tsp vegetable broth powder or bouillon (low sodium)
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 cups no added salt black beans, undrained
- 4 cups water

Directions:
Sauté onion in oil. Add carrots, bell pepper and garlic and sauté a minute or two more. Add water, salsa, cumin, oregano, vegetable broth powder and black beans. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until veggies are tender, about 15 minutes. Puree soup in a blender in batches or use a handheld blender and puree it right in the pot. Return to pot and adjust seasonings.

Source: Food and Health Communications, foodandhealth.com