

Senior Advice: This year's resolutions aren't promising

by Doug_Mayberry

Q: Our magazines and newspapers always focus on New Year's resolutions at this time of year. My family is bugging me about my list. We share each other's lists and choose a winner as to who did the best job. I didn't win for 2007. This year I want to win.

How can I?

A: There is no magic, but here's a suggestion that I hope will make you the winner. Instead of making new resolutions plan to do better by adjusting last year's list.

I'm certain you didn't totally fail. The key is not to set your expectations too high. For example, instead of eating your dish of ice cream every night, make it every other night. Commit to walking four times a week instead of three. If you don't want to spend time shopping for holiday and birthday gifts, plan to buy a small one, and include a check or gift card. This holiday I got a kick out of a gift that served both purposes, a \$99.99 gift certificate from one of my treasure hunt stores, the local 99 cents store.

Also, consider creating your list in November or February to avoid the holiday stress. Celebrating, gift giving and entertaining create more than enough stress in December and January.

Another "feel-good" bonus to your list is planning to give unneeded items to charity. Scheduling yourself to do so will be a winner. Many forget to also schedule 30 minutes a day for their private time, without interruptions.

Hopefully these thoughts will be of value in making you the 2008 winner!

Q: Last month we counted the number of marriages that were terminated or going through the divorce process in our family and friends circles. We are stunned by the numbers. One partnership had lasted nearly 23 years. My husband and I are long married, but we have never considered divorce. I occasionally think about the devastation that would be caused if it ever happened to us. Is divorce becoming more of a concern for the elderly?

A: Statistics are a matter of conjecture, and speculation on the divorce numbers are difficult to quantify because of multiple marriages, unreported separations, singles living together, and our living longer. Although the overall divorce rate is considered to be about 50 percent, this number is based on many variables.

I believe for us elderly, the major issue between couples is communication, or the lack of it. Changes are inevitable. Love, happiness, finances, health, family issues, and other factors impact all relationships. The same people we married aren't who we are now. Keeping in touch with our "now" is extremely important.

In healthy relationships with your partner, keep in touch.

No one likes surprises. Let each other know what you're thinking and discuss your feelings and issues. I have learned of situations when one of the partners is totally surprised when the divorce papers are presented. I believe it's not always the big issues which separates us, but the lack of little things like saying "I love you" every day, touching and hugging regularly, and verbally telling each other the difference he or she makes in your lives. Your best friend should be your partner, let him/her know it!

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