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Let Go of Resolutions -- Pick a Word of the Year!

What's your one word for 2023? Your **"Word of the Year,"** that is.

Replace resolutions with one word and see how it changes the course of your year for the better. Sure, we have good intentions about resolutions. They can be ambitious, energizing, inspiring. But I find that my resolutions grow into a titanic to-do list. Doomed to fail.

I'm not alone. Studies show that a whopping 91 percent of us won't achieve our new year's resolutions. Our aspirations fizzle for many reasons -- among them, unrealistic goals, time constraints, fading motivation, and lack of resources. Too often, we set ourselves up to fail -- and fast. One study even led Strava, a popular cycling and running app, to dub January 19 as Quitter's Day.

Try a different life hack in 2023

The start of a new year is a time of renewal -- a fresh start. Endings spark new beginnings. Letting go of what's been invites what's next -- and, in my experience, something even better.

Forget resolutions. Try a different life hack: **Word of the Year.**

I shared the “one word” idea with my friend Frankie when we were on our weekly walk last January. Both of us had experienced some big changes, and we were optimistically anticipating a “new ‘22.” I told her about Word of the Year as a way to zero in on the “be” rather than the “do” – how I wanted to show up instead of a long to-do list. Think of your word as a theme for the year. There’s value in its simplicity, clarity – and perhaps mostly – what it means for you.

Frankie was intrigued. I shared some tips with her on how to discern her word. We agreed to help each other keep our word alive. ***Accountability to a partner matters.***

How to find your Word of the Year

First: *Ponder with purpose.*

Take quiet time to think about your word. Start with your “why.” Get clear on what matters to you in 2023. Ask yourself: If I were to live my word . . .

- What do I want to be different in my life one year from now?
- What will spark joy for me?
- What’s holding me back from what matters most now?
(Pick a word that’s the opposite.)

Make a short list of words that resonate for you. Some ideas, for starters: Joy, fearless, grace, abundance, accelerate, explore, hope, brave, simplify, nurture, adventure, peace, journey, strive, dream.

Next: *Let your word percolate.*

Narrow it down to one word. Yes, just one. Write it down. Set it aside. Come back to it. See if it still feels right. If not, go back to step one. Trust the process. When you land on your word, you’ll know it. Your gut will tell you so.

Finally: *Make it real. Keep it alive.*

Find ways to make your word visible. Write it on Post-Its and put them front and center – like the refrigerator door or on your mirror. Write it on your white board. Set it as your screen saver. Post it on your treadmill.

If you're more ambitious: Engrave it on a necklace. Do a daily affirmation with your word. Paint it on a board that you hang in your work space. Select a theme song that features your word. Create a reading list that reflects your word. I had my word etched into a leather bracelet that I wear regularly as a ready-made reminder.

Be open to new possibilities your word invites – and be bold to live into those opportunities.

So what was my word? ***Illuminate***. It inspired me to learn and grow – for myself and for my clients. For Frankie? Forward – a direction that inspired her decisions. On our walks, we'd occasionally check in with each other about progress and encourage the ways we were using our word to shape our choices.

Remember: You're living your story. This year, start that story with one word.

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