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Fun & Easy Ways to Help Your Family Set Goals For the New Year

By Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes

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Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes

A New Year - A New Beginning

Here's something for January besides the usual diet promises. The start of the calendar year is a wonderful time to celebrate life and new beginnings. It is no wonder so many of us choose this time to set goals for ourselves.

Most of us define goals as objectives that are within our control to obtain. Wishes, on the other hand, are our hopes and our dreams. It might seem impractical, but we still throw pennies into fountains and long for our wishes to come true. Here, we offer a different take on the standard New Year's resolutions. Introduce your family to goal setting in a fun, child-friendly way.

Begin at dinner by discussing your own wishes and asking other family members to do the same. Give everyone a day or two to organize their thoughts, then gather in the room where your family feels most comfortable and begin to write. Let each person write as much (or as little) as they want. Leave a piece of paper on the breakfast table or in the car in case someone is suddenly inspired.

Remember that dreams are very personal. Encourage everyone to share ideas without adding the slightest criticism or suggestion. Let your enthusiasm motivate you. By writing and sharing your dreams you make them real. Often, the greatest reward is not the destination but the journey itself. This New Year commit to building your own family traditions.

Here are three ways to help families visualize their goals:

1. Create a wishing tree. Have family members inscribe thoughts on colorful ribbons. Tie the ribbons to a barren winter tree. Listen to the ribbons whisper their messages as they flutter in the wind.
2. Cast your wishes to the wind. Using a permanent marker, write your goals on Mylar pinwheels. Place them in a bank of snow and declare your goals to the world.

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3. Greet New Year's guests with good wishes for the coming year. Write your resolutions or greetings on small slips of paper and package them in empty walnut shells along with small chocolates. Place a bowl of these diminutive gifts near the front door or at the end of a buffet line for a surprise treat.

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About the Authors: Rondi Hillstrom Davis and Janell Sewall Oakes are the co-authors of the award winning book Together: Creating Family Traditions. To check out their website that's jam packed with family ideas, visit www.togetherparenting.com

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Motivation Is The First Step To Success

By Dana Goldberg

You will undoubtedly have dreams. Whether you dream of having the perfect house with the perfect car, or you dream of settling down to have a family, even if you dream of retiring by the time you're 40, the one key to success is doing something about it. It may sound obvious but if you dream of retiring before you reach 40 and yet you aimlessly skip from job to job with no hope of progressing a career, it is very unlikely you will achieve your goal.

Set goals and ambitions and write them down on a piece of paper. Make sure that you are always striving to reach those goals. Sometimes it can be difficult to get the motivation you require in order to succeed at your goals but you can use the goals themselves as the motivation you require. Keep your piece of paper on you and if you are beginning to feel downbeat or skeptical about your goals then look at your piece of paper and remember why you are pushing yourself.

Structuring your life in this way, may seem like it loses its spontaneity but that doesn't have to be the case. Find a career you like, set up a business, and have fun doing it but always remember that if a good opportunity crops up you should take it with both hands. It is worse not to try something and not know whether it would have been successful than it is to never try anything.

Presuming you have set reasonable goals you should always be able to see a way to fulfill them. If you set goals that are too difficult you will find it incredibly difficult if not completely impossible to meet your goals. You should try not to alter them if possible, however, we don't know what's around the corner so we can't always plan for it. Don't see this as a failure but take the opportunity to reassess your goals and keep going.

Dana Goldberg is the owner of Improve Life Tips. Find out how to live a healthier and happier life. Get positive thinking and life improvement tips.

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