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Not too late for new year resolutions; even a small goal worth pursuing

The new year celebration does not have to end once the band stops playing, the fireworks end or the last of the champagne is gone. Having the opportunity to focus on yourself, try something new, or simply start fresh can be a celebration in and of itself that can last all of 2018.

Whether it is a big resolution that takes all year to fulfill, or a small promise you make to yourself to accomplish each day, a few simple goals can lead to lasting personal and professional success in the new year.

Better time management

Making your time more useful and productive is impossible without some sort of plan or action. Before you leave work or go to sleep every night resolve to make a list of all the things you need to accomplish the next day. This helps eliminate time you spend trying to gather your thoughts figuring out what to work on and adds time you spend being productive and beneficial to your firm. If you are tied to your phone, put it into your notes and delete each task when accomplished.

Expect the unexpected

Start allotting time in your day for any emergency situations that could potentially arise. We often think we have all day to finish a project that is due, but more often than not, that is not realistic when emergency petitions, motions or other projects come up.

If possible, try leaving at least an hour of your day open to tend to emergency situations that must be taken care of, in addition to completing your previously assigned list of tasks.

Don't procrastinate

Everybody has projects they dread starting or lack the motivation to begin. Procrastinating is one of the biggest obstacles that stop people from finishing their

work on time and stress-free. Try spending the first 20 minutes of your workday, before diving into anything else, on those projects you keep putting off. You will soon realize you waste more time avoiding certain tasks than completing them. Sometimes getting started is the hardest part.

Prime time for productivity

Think about what time of day your brain functions at its best and when your productivity is at its highest. Whether you are an early bird or a night owl, make productive use of this time and get your work done efficiently. This can help you create useful routines which eventually return to mindless habits for your personal and professional benefit.

Delegate work

Tackling every single project by yourself and refusing to delegate work to others is selfless and admirable, but it can also be counterproductive and debilitating. The work environment functions best as a team. Take advantage of the resources and support available at your firm to help reduce some of your stress and workload. Mentoring someone can be one of the most rewarding part of your day.

Take better care of yourself

Resolve to take better care of yourself in the new year. The physical and mental exhaustion resulting from overworking yourself

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can push you further down the burnout continuum. Start the new year fresh and relaxed by taking some time to physically and mentally remove yourself from work or anything else in your life that is causing you stress. Doing this will lead to better overall personal and

COLLABORATIVE CONCEPTS



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professional success long term.

Plan a trip

If time allows, plan a trip or spend time with family and friends. It does not have to be a trip to Europe or a fancy resort; short weekend trips and "staycations" can have the same effect. This might just mean getting a few more hours of sleep than you normally would or taking time to refuel your energy tank for a year of productivity.

Discover an avocation

Try exploring three new hobbies, "one to make you money, one to keep you in shape and one to be creative." Unknown

A new year's resolution is a great way to force yourself to step out of your comfort zone and try something new. Find a new way to

An inclusive work environment helps employees feel more comfortable and welcome in the office. In return, this can lead to higher job satisfaction, increased motivation and higher productivity. The overall quality of life in the office will thrive and clients are more likely to be satisfied with their legal representation.

Connect with co-workers

You see your co-workers every day in the office, but try getting to know them on a nonprofessional level. Leave your assumptions at the door and talk about something other than work. You may learn something new and realize a lifelong friendship was sitting just a few desks away from you while you were focused solely on work.

Pay it forward

With the demand of meeting your billable hours and reining in clients, refusing or forgetting to undertake clients unable to pay is easy to do. Try volunteering or doing some pro bono work in the new year.

Working on a case knowing the client cannot give you much in return can be rewarding and beneficial to the entire community as well help you develop new skills as an attorney. Becoming a mentor for a younger attorney or law student is another great way to give back and share your knowledge of the legal field.

Best of luck and happy new year

If these new year's resolutions are a bit overwhelming, try focusing on a small daily intention, such as being a better lawyer; co-worker, friend, family member or person than you were the day before. I hope every year is more rewarding and satisfying, both personally and professionally, than the last.

— *The author would like to acknowledge the substantial contributions to this article by law clerk Erin Ruth.*