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## The best New Year's resolution ever

By Jennifer Raftis



Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.efficiencymattersllc.com

much time and energy it will take to achieve this

goal. Do you want to invest a lot or a little?); Relevant - does this goal contribute to your overall core values or needs; and Time-based - the goal should have an end date. When do you realistically want this goal achieved?

Design a roadmap for how you will achieve your goals. An example would be the classic "I want to lose 15 pounds." If I make this a SMART goal it would look like this: You want to lose 15 pounds; you will know when this goal is achieved because you will have lost 15 pounds; this is a goal that you can achieve (if you said you wanted to lose 15 pounds by tomorrow, that wouldn't be attainable); this goal meets with my core values . taking care of my health; and, finally, you have set the deadline to lose 15 pounds by Aug. 1.

A well thought out and planned goal is achieved over time by changes in your frame of mind and daily habits, not by a declaration made on New Year's Eve.

I have found the secret to making the best New Year's resolution ever. Here it is: Do not ever make another New Year's resolution!

Why, you ask? Because lasting change rarely happens overnight - despite our dramatic proclamations (New Year's resolutions) that we are going to change right now. Rather than New Year's resolutions, I suggest New Year's reflections. Start by giving some thought to your core values and beliefs. Are you living a life that you are proud of? Each and every one of us only gets this one life. Is the way you are living it aligned with who you are and where you want to go? They say that hindsight is 20/20 and I find that to be true. As I look to the new year, I find it important to reflect on the previous year - what worked and what didn't, did my actions align with my values, what could I have done better?

What would you like to change in the new year?

As a professional organizer, I follow the rules of Project Management theory and the last rule is to write down lessons learned after completing a job. Even if the job appears to be perfect, there is always something that could be learned from the experience. You can apply this rule to the end of a year, too.

Look back and reflect on 2021. What did you learn? Think about how you can improve on your actions, so they match your values and what you would like to change in the new year. Use this insight to create your goals for 2022. When you set goals for yourself, it helps to break them down into smaller steps. I suggest to my clients that they create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) goals. By setting objectives and designing a clear roadmap for how you will reach your target, you can determine the time and energy it will take to make progress. Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare? Lasting change comes from making slow and steady changes in your daily habits.

Here is a quick overview of how to create a SMART goal: Specific - be clear and specific; Measurable - if it's not measurable, how do you know you have attained it? (Instead of saying, "I want to improve my golf skills" your measurable goal might be, "I want to improve my handicap from 15 to a 12"); Achievable - can your goal be reasonably accomplished within a certain timeframe that will keep you motivated and focused? (Decide how

I work with many clients on goal setting, and I always have them start with mentally preparing for the change in habits ahead of time. After they define their SMART goal, we begin. For example, I have a client who valued calmness and found that some of the disorganization in her home was frustrating her. We decided to start with her closet. Her SMART goal looked like this: I will only have clothes in my closet that will fit me now; I will know this goal has been achieved when I have discarded/donated items that no longer fit me so I can easily get dressed in the morning with confidence; I will set a time to work on this project for one hour each week; having a clean organized closet will streamline my morning routine (and my mornings will be less chaotic); and I will complete this project by March 30.

Another example would be the classic "I want to park my car in the garage." If I make this a SMART goal it would look like this: I will make room in my garage for my car; you will know when this goal is achieved because you will be able to park your car in the garage; I estimate this will take 30 hours and I have scheduled 2-hour blocks on 15 Saturday mornings; this goal meets with my core values . taking care of my car and belongings; and I will have this project completed by June 1.

So, I encourage you to do the following: 1) Look back at 2021 and reflect on what worked and what didn't; 2) Define your core values and write them down; 3) Create SMART goals for 2022; 4) Place your SMART goals and core values where you can see them every day.

I challenge you to make some SMART goals this year and would love to hear your success stories. Please email me your goals to [jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com](mailto:jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com) and the first five people will get a prize from me! Remember, live your life as if it's the only one you have . because it's the only one you have.

Happy New Year and Happy Organizing!!

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