



Making a List to Live By...

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The speediness of time in my life has become a source of wonder. I've days that seem to last forever and then there are such times as this past November; I turned my computer on and I suddenly realized that December begins tomorrow! Where did November go? It was extraordinary; an entire month flew by as if it was a week.

So it's December. I've made my lists and have strove to achieve the goals on my list. Time management experts advise us that mastering the use of lists increases efficiency and productivity. I'm positing that making a list can be a tool for assessing performance and creating change. I find lists not only organize, they inspire and motivate: I desire to provide extraordinary work for my employer. I desire to become an exceptional leader. I desire to retire to a healthy and financially secure life. And I desire to be grateful and joyful.

As humans, we all have our inherent weaknesses, but leadership-development research points to the conclusion that it's the presence of a few areas of strength that distinguishes exceptional leadership. Improving on weaknesses seems to be an intuitive and straightforward

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**KEEP
CALM
AND
MAKE A
LIST**

Tip of the Month



Five Tips to Avoid Conflict During the Holidays

The holidays can be a great time to reconnect with friends and family, it can also be a time of arguments and hurt feelings. Most arguments are created from a miscommunication. The following tips can help avoid arguments and create a drama free holiday for you and your family.

1). Be aware of your body language. A common cause of miscommunications often occurs through body language. Be mindful of facial expres-

sions and posture when engaging in social events.

2). Use "I" statements. When presenting your opinions or feelings remember to use I statements. This ensures that statements are clear and accurately communicate your thoughts and feelings.

3). No interrupting. Allow for each person to share his or her thoughts and ideas on the subject. Being polite and curious to one another is not only showing respect it also engages your active listening skills and keeps you

engaged in the conversation.

4). Agree to disagree. Let's face it, not everyone is ever going to agree with you and that's ok.

5). Don't win the battle and lose the war. Decide how important the potential conflict might be to your relationship with this individual. If the relationship is more important follow tip #4. Preserving and maintaining relationships can often time eliminate the conflict.



Average leaders say, "Good enough."

Extraordinary leaders say, "How can we be better?"

plan to grow personally and professionally. If I am wanting to display greater honesty or integrity, for instance, I may need to be better at following through on commitments, or not committing in the first place; or demonstrating ethical resolve in circumstances where taking the low road is expedient.

Scott Edinger, founder of the Edinger Consulting Group, suggested in his digital article in Harvard Business Review that exceptional leaders develop their strengths. People can improve their leadership strengths by focusing on developing strongly correlated companion skills and behaviors to their identified strengths. For example, extraordinary leaders with strong technical skills are frequently also good at developing others, building relationships, and communicating effectively. Extraordinary leaders known for exceptional integrity also tend to be decisive, assertive, and optimistic. While assertiveness doesn't make one more honest, it can magnify the trait of integrity. This is called an interaction effect.

Lists offered by others help me to better develop my personal lists. The following lists were created to inspire one to become extraordinary:

12 ways to become extraordinary, as offered by Dan Rockwell on his Leadershipfreak blog.

1. Invest inordinate amounts of time and energy into *self-development*.
2. Endure ridicule from the mediocre. "I can't believe you put that much time into your presentation." "Why don't you just relax?"
3. Despise mediocrity.
4. Enjoy constructive criticism, instruction, and practice.
5. Reject the idea you can excel at many things. Being a jack of all trades and master of none is unacceptable to extraordinary leaders.
6. Understand that falling short is normal when you're reaching higher.
7. Deal quickly and aggressively with failure. Extraordinary leaders investigate their failures with a fine tooth comb.
8. Look for opportunity, not excuses.
9. Get uncomfortable when you feel comfortable.
10. Pressure yourself.
11. Become fanatical about details.
12. Fear failure.



How to be extraordinary. A list I adapted from one I found on Wikipedia.

1. Picture yourself. Create a picture of yourself in five years. Start acting as you picture yourself in that picture.
2. Pick out what you like and don't like. Pick what personality traits you like and don't like. This is your new personality that you are choosing, so choose wisely.
3. Dream big. What goals do you want to accomplish in the next five years?
4. Think small. Now, how will you accomplish your big dream? Drill down on the how, ask it several times. How, How, How.... To get to steps you'll take.
5. Smile. It is a proven fact that anyone with a smile on looks beautiful.
6. Take care of you. Be you.
7. Be a friend to yourself.

David Horsager, the author of The Trust *Edge*, was the capstone speaker at UW Extension's recent annual conference. David asked us to create a list of how we wanted to live our lives. In that exercise I listed-- being grateful.

I've been studying what I need to do to make how I want to live my life list become a reality. Gratitude means thankfulness, counting one's blessings, and being aware of the continuous flow of gifts that come our way. Dan Rockwell says, "*The way to enlarge gratitude is to express it.*"

Two psychologists, Michael McCollough of Southern Methodist University and Robert Emmons of the University of California at Davis, wrote in an article about an experiment they conducted on gratitude and its impact on well-being. The study split several hundred people into three different groups and all of the participants were asked to keep daily diaries. The first group kept a diary of the events that occurred during the day without being told specifically to write about either good or bad things; the second group was told to record their unpleasant experiences; and the last group was instructed to make a daily list of the things for which they were grateful. The results of the study, counting blessings versus burdens, indicated that daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, and energy. In addition, those in the gratitude group experienced less depression and stress, were more likely to help others, exercised more regularly and made greater progress toward achieving their personal goals.

In this season of making lists and checking them twice, take time to make a list of how you want to live your life and grow your enterprise.

We at UW Extension are grateful to you for following this newsletter and extend to you our wishes for a Happy and Successful New Year.

