

5 Things

Newsletter



Corley Caregiver Consulting, LLC

Hello Friends and Happy New Year!

You're receiving this on the last day of 2022. The official end of one year and the beginning of a new one is in sight. I always get excited and filled with anticipation this time of year. I'm looking forward to a fresh start and excited to see what the New Year holds. I know it might not all be positive and easy, but what I do know, which previous years have taught me, is that I will continue to move forward in spite of what comes.

As caregivers, or expectant caregivers, it's important for us to not get lost in the weeds of our lives. There will always be frustrations, worries, and stress, but there will also be laughter, happiness and hope.

This month we're talking about 5 Things bringing me.....

1. Reflection
2. Growth
3. A Sense of Accomplishment
4. Neat Ideas
5. A Gentle Reminder about Gratitude

1. Reflection = An Annual Review

Full disclosure about me - I'm a Review and Goal Planning nerd. There I said it!

Several years ago, I started taking the last part of December to reflect on the year as a whole. Up until that point, I really only thought about annual reviews and goal planning as it related to work. Since then, I find I really enjoy sitting down and thinking back over the year. Here's how I do it.

I always sit down when I have a moment of quiet. I like the mornings because I'm fresh, and an early riser, so the house is still quiet. I grab my favorite warm beverage and am typically still in my PJs. Along with a favorite notebook and pen, I have a calendar in front of me because it helps me channel my memories based on the month, season, etc. Next, I just relax into remembering; scanning memories from the year and jotting them down.

I like to think of it not only as reflection, but also as a way of honoring the year that was and acknowledging what I've survived, navigated and accomplished. Big or small, all the details matter and I make sure to count them all.

The other part of this I find important is that I write them all down. Memories, accomplishments, events, fun memories; it becomes a time capsule of sorts.

The great part about this is it doesn't have to be done all at one time or all in one sitting. I enjoy it so much I typically do it a few times before the end of the year. It's such a fun and rewarding activity I get excited to do it. Plus, as an active caregiver myself, it helps me carve out time for myself and has become part of my self care routine.

Since you'll be reading this near the end of 2022, I hope you'll take a moment to reflect over the past year and how much you've accomplished, survived, endured, and conquered. Big or small, all of those are important.

As caregivers, we live day to day, moment to moment focusing on the needs of our caree, worrying about the future, managing all the madness each day can bring. If you're like me, you don't often take time to reflect and really look at how far you've come. What you've come through this year has brought you to this moment.

You've managed A LOT.

You've worried A LOT.

You've prepared for the future A LOT.

You've been in motion A LOT.

You've been in thought A LOT.

You've cared A LOT.

You've given A LOT.

And you've accomplished, overcome and conquered A LOT.

It's important for your own mental well-being and confidence to honor all of it. Just look at what your managing, preparing, being in motion, thinking and caring has accomplished this year. In case no one else has told you lately, you did an amazing job this year and I'm very proud of you.

2. Growth = One Word Theme for the New Year

A few years ago, I heard of the idea of picking a one word theme for your New Year. I was incredibly curious about it so I tried it. It was such a fun and enlightening experiment I've kept doing it every year. I'm sure there are many ways to think about it, but here's how I did it.

First, I start with a little self reflection. Where do I see shortcomings within my personality, my way of managing things, etc? If I could improve on myself, how would I do it?

In 2018, in my reflection, I realized I didn't find myself to be particularly brave. It was not a word I would have used to describe myself because I felt anxiety about a lot of small things. So I decided to challenge myself in the New Year and chose the phrase "be brave".

At the end of 2019, I noticed I was in motion all the time and never took time to be still. My New Year theme became "be still".

Both of those phrases can take on many meanings, but I chose to focus on what I wanted each to mean for me.

For me, "be brave" didn't mean I was suddenly going to jump out of airplanes or climb mountains. I was, however, going to consciously step into moments of anxiety with bravery and courage. When I'd feel my anxiety rising, I'd simply say to myself "be brave". In those moments, I could feel myself settle into the words and move forward with a bit more power. It actually helped me catch myself before I got anxious. By the end of that year, I was stepping into the unknown with more confidence and much less anxiety.

In much the same way, in 2020 when I'd notice myself racing around and feeling overwhelmed, I'd quietly remind myself to "be still". For me, that meant being mentally, physically and spiritually still at times. I would focus on slowing my breathing and my thoughts. I would listen to classical music so I wasn't taking in the noise of lyrics. I would often just sit in silence and slow my breathing and calm myself. By the end of that year, I could feel a shift within and

had actively created space in my days for moments of stillness.

Over the course of both years, I made a point of jotting down the big moments when I put my theme into action. That helped me learn to recognize when I was successful and also helped me see my progress.

What I found so amazing about this, which I didn't notice until after I did it, was both of these themes continue to follow me today. They both became habits I continue to do even now, 5 years later.

To this day, I can see myself step into situations bravely that would have previously made me very anxious. I also feel confident in calling myself brave because I've seen proof!

I'm also still using my "be still" mantra on a near daily basis. It's helped me recognize that stillness is my best source of self care and fills my cup more than anything else I do for myself.

Taking a year to focus on one theme at a time really helped shift my way of being in every day life as a caregiver. It was the small mental shifts that helped me create a new way of being.

I'll warn you, based on the word you choose, it might not be an easy habit to create. For me, "be still" was a very big challenge for me because it was against my nature at the time. I'd encourage you to stick with it and push on. It does get easier. One day you'll just notice it working when the day before it might have seemed impossible.

I would encourage you to consider your own theme for the coming New Year. It can be anything you feel could benefit YOU as a caregiver. It can be something that reminds you to do something you've gotten out of the habit of doing (Create); or it can be a trait you'd like to embody (Spontaneity).

Once you have it narrowed down, post the phrase in places where you will see it every day (The bathroom mirror is a good one!). I personally had each made into a bracelet that wore so I'd always carry the phrase with me. At that time, I was always on the move and never in one place long enough so I needed something I could carry with me.



My Intent Bracelet

A physical reminder like this is called an environmental trigger because it's a visible reminder for you that triggers a shift in your thoughts. It doesn't have to be a bracelet. It can be a simple Post It note with the phrase on it.

For 2023, I've chosen the word "Cultivate" as my theme. My goal is to cultivate relationships, ideas, plants in my garden, new skills, and habits that keep me moving in a positive direction. You can see how one word can reach into several areas of your life. That's why I like choosing just 1 word and seeing where it takes me throughout the year.

Needs some ideas? I'll give you a few to get you thinking.

Intentional

Permission

Play

Purge

Delegate

Connection

Relax

Create space

Gratitude

If you decide to try this experiment for 2023, I'd love to hear what phrase you choose. If you'd like to talk it through, I'm happy to help you! Email me at hello@corleycaregiverconsulting.com and we can schedule a free, fun chat to help you start the New Year off right!

3. A Sense of Accomplishment = Bathroom cleaning hack

You may already do this, but on the outside chance that you don't, I just have to share it because since I made the change I am amazed it took me so long to see this.

Our house has 2 bathrooms - one downstairs and one upstairs. Until my recent epiphany, all the cleaning supplies were kept downstairs and bathrooms were cleaned at the same time, a process that could take an hour at least. I dreaded doing it because I felt like I had to have an hour set aside for it. That alone felt like more of a chore than the actual cleaning.

One day I had a revelation! Keep cleaning supplies in each bathroom! Now when I have a moment and notice the mirror needs to be cleaned, the supplies are right there and I can do it in a matter of seconds. I find spot cleaning to be more time-friendly than devoting a full hour to it.

What I also love about this idea is it falls in line with one of my favorite mantras....*even small steps forward are still progress.*

Again, I may be late to the party on this one and everyone might be doing it already, but I'm going to assume it's not just me. I can't tell you what a difference this small change has made for my cleaning routine and attitude about it in general.

4. Neat Ideas = A Podcast I'm Enjoying

As you can tell by the layout of this newsletter, I love small bites of information, ideas and resources. That's the main reason I fell in love with The Best Advice Show podcast.

Each episode is based on advice shared by listeners who call in and share their best advice. The episodes are short, on random topics and are so lighthearted and enjoyable I have to share this with anyone who will listen!

I have 2 favorite episodes so far. One was an interview with the host's 4 year old. Her best advice was to peel your grapes before you eat them. It was such a precious interview and genius because I'd never thought to peel a grape!



TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2022

Best of the Best Advice: Peeling Grapes with Noa

Noa eats fruit from her home in Detroit, MI.---Morning Zesting with Drew Philp---Leave Zak your advice by calling 844-935-BEST---IG: @bestadviceshowwho...

The Best Advice Show - Peeling Grapes with Noa

My other favorite episode was about making bookmarks out of cards or notes you've received that hold sentimental value for you. Quite often we take cards and notes like this and store them away, never looking at them again or at least not very often. I love this idea of using them as bookmarks because it not only puts them to good use, but it allows them the chance to insert a lovely moment and memory in our day when we see them and who couldn't use more of that, right!?



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2022

Making Sentimental Bookmarks with Maleny Martinez

"Use the cards you get from friends and family...as bookmarks."

The Best Advice Show - Sentimental Bookmarks

5. A Gentle Reminder About Gratitude

From time to time, life can feel heavy. We move forward from one moment to the next without stopping to take a breath.

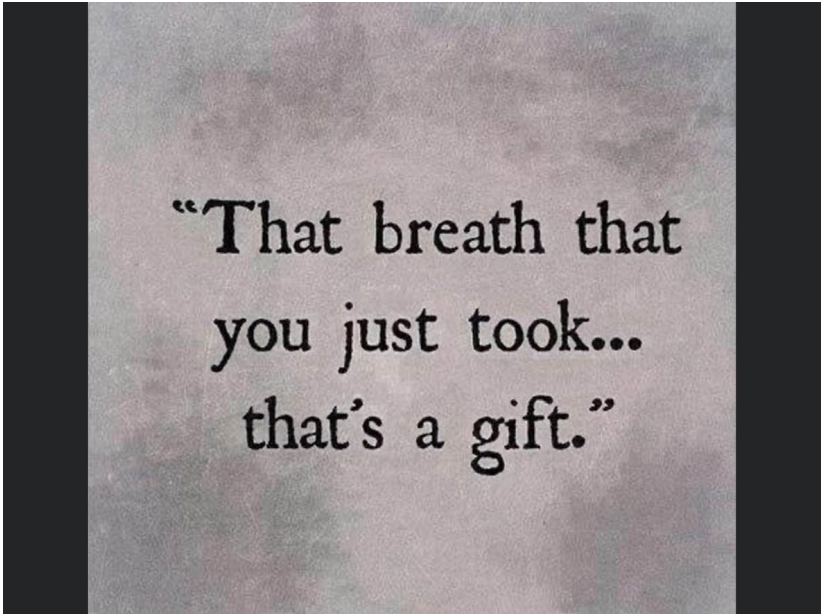
Gratitude is a practice we're encouraged to do on a regular basis, but when you're dancing as fast as you can, stopping to be grateful can feel hard or get lost in the shuffle.

On the other hand, you may be of the mindset that there are so many things to

be grateful for you don't know where to start. And you'd be right!

We have an infinite number of things to be grateful for, but on the rough days, it can be difficult to name something. You might feel lost and forgotten. You might have difficulty focusing and hearing through the noise in your head.

In those moments, I would encourage you to keep this phrase close. While I can't take credit for writing it, I can take credit for sharing it.



“That breath that
you just took...
that’s a gift.”

As we prepare to leave 2022 behind and step into a New Year, may you take this phrase and sentiment with you into 2023. Sit quietly, close your eyes, put your hand on your heart and feel each breath.

Each breath provides us an opportunity to:

- Continue moving forward
- Welcome change
- Recognize we are doing our best (even though we might not feel that way)
- See ourselves as the gift that we are to our friends, families, communities, planet, etc.
- Celebrate our wins
- Cherish our special moments

○ Be kind to ourselves

You've done amazing things this year. You should feel very proud of yourself.
You are a gift and I, for one, am so happy you're here.

Wishing you all the very best in the New Year!



That's a wrap for this month, and this year, friends. If one piece of information here supports and empowers you in your caregiving journey, I am beyond thrilled.

As you implement any of the ideas I share, please let me know how it works for you. I certainly don't have all the answers, but together we get stronger and smarter.

If I can support you in your journey in any way, please message me. I'm here for you.

You are not alone.
You can do difficult things.

Wishing you peace in all that is and strength to keep you moving forward.

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