

Counselor's Corner

What Is the Game Plan?

Last year, I received a great New Year idea that involved getting an empty jar and various colors of paper, cut into strips. Each day the owner of the jar was directed to use one slip to write down one good thing that happened within a 24 hour period. Then, the slip was to be deposited in the jar. At the end of the year, the plan was to empty the filled jar and read each piece of paper to keep us grateful and aware of the good things that do come our way

If you watch *The Middle*, the father (who generally has little to say), spoke a simple but profound phrase, "Every day may not be good, but a good thing happens every day". The slips of paper reinforce his theory. Those who followed this suggestion in 2017 felt truly blessed on December 31. An alternate use of the jar occurred to me that might help us achieve more.

Many of us make New Year resolutions that have been broken or not even started. Some of us may feel overwhelmed and want to give up. Instead of looking at the over 300 days we have left to make a difference, we focus on the two weeks or so that have gone by without any noticeable accomplishment. If we won \$365 with the stipulation that we must spend one dollar each day, would we throw away the whole plan and the rest of the money, if we somehow got side-tracked and forgot to spend the first \$20? Would we think who cares about a buck, or would we list all the things we could do with that dollar, like buying something from a fast food value menu, a grocery store, or The Dollar Tree? We could buy a lotto ticket. If we opted to donate the dollars, our favorite church or charity would be over \$300 richer. I would choose the list, because it would be a game for me, and there would be a small prize each day. Applying this example to our goals might help us keep our resolutions.

As soon as possible, we need to clarify what we wish to accomplish. Perhaps we want an organized home. Let us simplify and select one area or one part of an area. Then everything we do toward that goal gets written on pieces of paper that go in the jar. Maybe we decide we need to reorganize the kitchen. Start small with the silverware drawer. Move on to the next small project. Sometimes we will have more than one slip a day, so we should not chastise ourselves when we have to take an occasional break. If we can't see our accomplishments by looking around, we can see them in the jar and know we are headed in the right direction. All students want better grades, but many don't realize that it is the tiny steps that will get them there. Students could benefit by putting slips of papers in their jars when a homework assignment is done more thoroughly than usual or more time was spent studying for a test. Fill out those colored slips for completed planners and good behavior, too, as well as other things that are taking you toward your goal.

This plan can and will work if we just devote a little time each day to one small task. All things add up. The jar will applaud our work, and whether we are home owners or students, we will score big by 2019.

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