

5 Steps to Make the Most of Yourself in the New Year

As we bid adieu to 2018 and look ahead to 2019, it's the ideal time to plan, set goals, make new commitments or reaffirm old ones, and take stock of where we are and where we want to go over the next 12 months.

One thing is for sure, we are always moving in some direction, whether it is consciously toward our goals, or unconsciously heading toward something else. While self-growth is very much a personal matter, it spills over into every aspect of our life because it has to do with making choices that feed our personal and professional goals. We need to take control of our thoughts and choices *now*, because the reality is that our thoughts and actions are the only things we *can* control in life. Here are five steps to making the most of your self-growth in 2019:

Step One: Look back at the year and determine what worked and what didn't work for you.

Remember the definition of insanity? Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. If you want different results, make different choices! Get rid of

everything in your life that didn't work. Check your thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. As my sister would say, "Get rid of all the *yuck*." Similarly, identify what did work in the past year and keep it, nurture it, build on it and repeat it. The reaffirmation of what is working absolutely attracts more energy in the direction you want to go.

Step Two: Work in your strengths.

Add to your skillset, but do it within the domain of your inborn talents. It is one thing to learn something new, but you will soar to higher levels and be happier when you apply yourself in areas that are easier for you. Whatever you do that gives you energy and doesn't feel like "work" is the place to build on. It is odd that we tend to mistrust progress if it is too easy, as if it were supposed to be difficult. Find out more about your natural abilities, whether they are in the areas of problem solving, public speaking, or verbal/written expression. Find out what works for you and surround yourself with people who complement these gifts. Create an environment where you can thrive. I highly recommend the book *StrengthsFinder 2.0* to help you discover your innate qualities. Loaded with hundreds of strategies for applying your strengths, this *Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, and *USA Today* bestseller will change the way you look at yourself—and the world around you—forever.

Step Three: Know what you know and know what you don't know (or find out)!

Assess your current strengths and determine what you want to focus on this year. Then seek out experiences to address your specific needs. [Check out continuing education opportunities](#), schedule more practice time, take regular classes or lessons, and seek out resources that can provide additional support. Plan out your year, budget for it, schedule it, and do it! Keep in mind that moments of confusion, frustration,

and even regression ignite the learning process. Errors are only struggles if we define them that way, so don't steal the learning from yourself, and instead, appreciate them as part of the process. Stretch yourself and take chances! Expose yourself to experiences that ask you to be bigger than you thought you were. Everything and anything is possible!

Step Four: Keep it fun!

Enter new experiences with a sense of wonder and discovery. Don't get hung up along the way, just take it all as a learning experience. Keep moving, breathing, and choosing your attitude and perspective. Find the magic and joy in the regular happenings of the day, and you will never have a "bad" day. This approach evokes energy, fluidity and awareness, which bring out the joys of discovery, rather than the pain of judgment.

Step Five: Just do it!

If you don't start, then you'll stay in the proverbial bleachers, watching life go by. Even the smallest step is movement in the right direction. Get moving now and know what it is you are trying to accomplish. If you notice yourself avoiding taking action, determine why and what you can do to fix it.

You're in the driver's seat of your life. What is it you *really* want? This year, give yourself some mental space to exercise your mind and set your vision in place, so your choices move you smoothly in that direction. Be honest and brave as you explore, and don't be afraid to think big and see where it takes you. Bottom line—you can be brilliant every day! It's about the choices we make throughout the day. Take a great leap in 2019!



This article was contributed by Clare Dunphy. She is the co-author of the Peak Pilates® Comprehensive Education Program and has created several education programs which are offered world wide through the dynamic network of teacher trainers that she had the honor of developing and mentoring. She is truly a “teacher’s teacher” and is excited to continue developing programs, tools and interactive experiences to help Pilates teachers as well as students gain self mastery through Pilates as both a movement system and a lifestyle choice.