

Reclaiming Hope

There was much to cheer about when the clock struck 12 on New Year's Eve, yet in a seeming blur, 2017 is gone and you were probably thinking to yourself, "Well this year was the worst ever and I'll make sure not to open the door to the past." Little did you know that you would go down the same lane with the same pain! There is no denying the fact that resolutions are hard to keep. They are like the "dear diary" moments, and two weeks later your diary just does not know what is going on in your life! However, no matter how many deaths resolutions have died, the hopes should not.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

As clichéd as it may sound, even in this age of digitisation, the handwritten word has a charm like no other. Often, a favoured line of poetry or quote is not remembered in words, rather, an image of the handwriting you first saw it in.

Time to give yourself the same pleasure. Get a notebook, plain or jazzy as you like. Then every day from January 1, write just one blessing you received that day — be it the rickshaw you found in a jiffy on the way to work, or a stranger's gentle smile.

Keep this as your go to vial of good feelings if and whenever you need an extra boost.

RECONNECT

Our lives are so busy that our connections are now restricted to posts on social media, and sometimes via media of others — and I often find myself too guilty of this one.

Try to reconnect on a real basis. Not all of us have the skill or tendency to simply go up to someone and have a heart-to-heart, but this can be consciously cultivated with dear ones.

Write a long text or email, or pick up the phone and call. If there is a rare holiday, visit that grandpa you have not seen except at wedding functions. Talk to them. It might turn out to be an exhilarating experience.

MAKE MEMORIES LAST

We all take pictures, some of us ALL THE TIME. But most of these are not really worth keeping, if you think of in terms of quality over quantity. Go through your digital archive, and find good pictures of important memories, and get them printed. Make different albums, and feel through those whenever you miss someone, or simply want to rehash some good times.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Once again, this does not have to be something clichéd like 'learn a new language', even though that is a great idea, it requires a lot of commitment and effort. Try something simpler, like how to care for one plant.



Get a potted plant, and learn to take care of it and let it thrive. You might be surprised at enjoying it, and if you do not, you can find something else to learn, like fix your shirt's button, or paint a pot. The possibilities are endless.

COOK

Cooking is an underrated joy (except when people are forced into it as a chore and it becomes an everyday hell). Of course, we cannot all become culinary experts but making tea for the family when you arrive home earlier than expected, making the Friday lunch, or filling the tiffin boxes of all your family that has jobs to go to, are all well appreciated and fun gestures. Keeping it simple is the trick though.

KNOW YOUR CITY

Travelling makes it to most people's resolutions every year, and many keep that one.

But many more do not get to. A simple way around that is to redefine your idea of travel. We all suffer from the traffic jams and pollution of the city, and yet, most people also love it. Why do they? Try and find out. Rediscover the city you live in, starting from the historical places, museums, the lake and quaint alleys.

BE THE CHANGE

We always complain about how others litter, break lines, use unfair means and so on. The first move towards change is being it. Do not litter, do not be rude. Smile at people and speak gently. If someone else is in trouble, try to be helpful as much as you can. Also, do not look for extra favour or go out of line to gain the upper hand when it is not your turn. Speak up more often, but without ridicule.

NO MORE TEMPORARY

They say, "People come and go." The statement might be true but the idea of making friends or colleagues who would eventually ghost away from your life is certainly a sad event and something you should not look forward to. So, choose your companions wisely and love them as much as you can.

PICK YOUR PREFERENCES

If you want to skip a wedding, skip it! If you want to wear your pyjamas and order - in instead of going to a fancy restaurant with your friends, then do it! Follow the Nike slogan — Just do it.

SKIP THE GYM

This is the mother of all resolutions!

City life tends to make the privileged of us mostly sedentary — sitting in a car, sitting at work. Honestly, if going to the gym is a dreadful start to your week and you end up skipping sessions more often, than there really is no need for you to hit the gym anyway.

There are ways you can exercise with more intensity while you are at home. Cardio, Yoga, Pilates, Zumba are excellent exercises for you if you do not enjoy internally crying on a treadmill.

When you think about it, resolutions will not be so difficult to make once we learn to be comfortable with certain things about ourselves. As January is already here, prepare yourself to reclaim your true joyful self, the one that was once full of dreams of flying on proverbial wings.

By Sania Aiman and Sumaiya Tasnim
Photo: Collected