**New Year’s Resolutions You Can Keep!**

- **Take better care of you**
  We’ve all heard this cliche, but it is so important. We get so caught up in the stress of everyday life that we don’t stop to take care of ourselves. If you are taking on too much and not honoring your own space, how can you really be there for others? Make more time for yourself instead of giving it all away.

- **Carve out some time for your loved ones**
  Make a date one day a week with your loved ones. Spend one weekend day with your family instead of doing chores around the house. Even if you can only spare two hours, you’ll cherish that time—and so will they!

- **Narrow down your to-do list**
  Do you have one of those overly long to-do lists that make you tear your hair out because you never reach the bottom? No one can possibly complete such lists. Knowing that is the first step. Next, take an hour (yes, you really can spare one for this!) and really think about each item on the list. Which ones are really important, and which ones can be crossed off? If you have carried over items each day for the last six months, you probably won’t ever complete those tasks. If you just can’t part with some of your ideas, create a new list with three headings: A, B and C. List the most urgent and important tasks under A, and save the rainy-day projects for C.
Making a scrapbook for someone else is more challenging than compiling your own. If possible, you’ll need some help from the person you are honoring.

First, ask the person to write everything they can remember on the back of each image you plan to include. To fill in the gaps, you’ll need to think like a detective. Start with these questions:

1. Do the photos contain recognizable buildings or famous landscapes, such as a well-known mountain or hill?

2. What does the weather look like in the picture? Was it stormy, sunny, overcast?

3. What is the subject wearing in the photos? If the same outfits appear in several photos, look at other people in the photos. What are they wearing?

4. Do you have a summary of your friend’s travels and adventures? Did he or she visit multiple destinations, or stay in one city? Guided tours usually have pamphlets with plenty of clues. If you know which cities your friend visited, you can more easily determine famous architecture or landscapes.

5. Did the person keep a journal of the trip? Can you find information on the Web about each destination—perhaps even notes from another traveler from the same trip?

6. Finally, how do you want to organize the scrapbook? Do you want to set it up by days, starting with Day 1 and continuing through the final day? Or would you prefer a less-traditional grouping, such as by subject matter? Perhaps you could bunch all of the landscape and architecture photos together. Unless this is a gift, you can also ask for input from the person who will receive the scrapbook.

Your generous offer to make a scrapbook may seem like a lot more work than you first anticipated, but your friend will appreciate every ounce of your efforts. You’ll be rewarded, too: As you sift through your friend’s cherished memories, you will feel closer. Just remember to have fun and take it one day at a time.
PAINTING A ROOM EFFICIENTLY

Recently, I repainted my large bathroom all by myself. To some, this may seem like an overwhelming task, but I found it to be truly rewarding. Just follow these tips, and you will be amazed at how easy it can be!

1. TAKE EVERYTHING OUT OF THE ROOM YOU ARE PAINTING. Make sure to box and label things carefully so that you can easily replace everything when you are done.

2. TAPE, COVER OR BLOCK OFF ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT PAINTED. I would strongly recommend the following:

   • Blue masking tape
   • Heavy-set plastic—this is worth the extra money because the thinner plastic will leak.

3. SHOP FOR THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIES:

   • Tape
   • Plastic drop cloths
   • Contractor’s paper: This brown paper on a roll is an excellent tool for painting
   • Paintbrushes or rollers
   • Paint holders
   • Foam brushes for any drips
   • Paint: Have this mixed while you finish your other shopping. (If you haven’t picked out a color, that can pose another challenge altogether. Get a second opinion from a friend or color specialist.)
   • Large sponge for washing the walls
   • TCP soap for washing the walls
   • Bucket for clean-up
   • Cover-alls
   • Mask or new filters used for paint
   • Protective eyewear
   • Head cover
   • Shoe covers
   • Joint compound for skim-coating the walls
   • Two wall scrapers (one small, one large) for applying joint compound
   • Water well for the joint-compound container
   • Spackle for small nail holes
   • Spackling tool
   • Patching kits for larger holes (Trust me: This is easier than patching holes the old-fashioned way!)
   • Step-stool for reaching the ceiling
   • An air filter to confine the paint fumes to only one room. Double your efforts by taping plastic over the doorway.

Note: Because of my busy schedule, it took me two weeks to complete the painting process (This includes drying time and multiple skim coats, which you may not need). For a great article on painting time-savers, visit the following Web site: http://tinyurl.com/9vs4r