Announcer (00:00:03)

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

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As we start the new year, it's a perfect time to reflect on the past, learn from our experiences and pave the way for a brighter 2024.

While the new year can be exciting, it can also bring about pressures to set resolutions and meet unobtainable goals.

Unlike resolutions, intentions are about creating goals that tie directly to your core values.

I'm Adair Seifert, and today, Tammy Dixon, assistant director of the counseling center at Missouri State University, offers insight into setting achievable new year intentions.

Tammy Dixon (00:00:45)

The new year is a great time to set intentions. They help drive us to live our values.

The new year is a blank slate because we can review kind of the past year and the ways that we have grown and changed and build upon that or change. It’s an opportunity to make changes in the intentions we want to live within the upcoming year.

Adair Seifert (00:01:13)

She explains the difference between resolutions and intentions.

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So, this is in my opinion, but goals and resolutions are great, but they hold us to a set standard. That's why I like to talk about it in the term intentions. Intentions do not have a time-sensitive or measurable goal to them. They are strictly living by our values.

So, where a goal might be, I'm going to exercise every day, an intention would be to live healthy the upcoming year. For some of us who are kind of perfectionistic, we can feel like we failed, and our goals are our resolutions, whereas intentions are bringing our values to life and really living our values.

I think setting intentions can help individuals achieve their goals by helping them remember the why. Why they're working on the goals they're working towards. Why that's important to them, reminding them that, hey, this is a core value of mine that I really want to focus on.

I also think that living with intention helps individuals reflect. So, whether that be through meditation, conversation with trusted friends or mentors, or even journaling, it gives them time to reflect and make sure that they're staying on target with their goals and intentions.

Adair Seifert (00:02:28)

She offers strategies and tips on how to set realistic intentions.

Tammy Dixon (00:02:33)

I do recommend taking that time to reflect on the past, both successes and challenges that you've experienced. I also suggest obviously staying with the intention piece because it means that we're human and we recognize that challenges can come up that get in the way of goals. So, this allows us to be a little bit more flexible.

Also, kind of clearing your space. I know for me if I'm trying to reflect during a time when my house is messy, that's not a great time to do that. So, I encourage people to spend some time clearing their area.

Another tip I would have is to make sure that your intentions are clear, memorable and they can be repeatable.

So, I've been seeing a lot of individuals over the past few years who have words that they use. They may put them on Post-its around their house or they may have a bracelet that's made with that word, but really having a small phrase or word to kind of remind the individual what they're working on.

Several ways to stay on track might be to find an accountability buddy, a trusted friend or mentor. Again, that you can talk with. Be reminded of those values, why you're doing what you're doing.

Another thing and this sounds odd, but to give yourself an intentional ritual. So, whether that be playing a specific song when you're engaging in that goal or actions towards that goal that could be playing music that could be meditation. Some people have candles they burn as just a small ritual to remind them. And like I said, the reminders of a phrase or a word can also be very helpful.

I also think it's important to set short-term intentions that can help when plans go awry, but also have a long-term intention that can be your anchor and a motivator when times get challenging as well, but always pushing for growth in both short-term and long-term intentions.

I think it's important to keep our intentions doable, so they're not set too far or too hard that we shut down because it becomes too challenging. It's important for them to be clear so that there's no grey area as to what you're working towards. You want them to be memorable and you want them to be repeatable because the more that you can repeat your intentions the better that you're going to follow through with them.

Adair Seifert (00:04:45)

That was Tammy Dixon, assistant director of the counseling center at Missouri State University.

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I'm Adair Seifert for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer (00:04:54)

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397, the Missouri State Journal is available online@ksu.org.