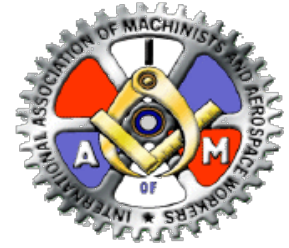




HELPING HANDS



Embracing New Beginnings

(excerpts from *Declutter the Mind*, Rachel Sharpe, December 29, 2022)

As a new year is about to start, it's time to reflect on our past and make way for new things and new beginnings. No matter what challenges you've come across in the past, there are ways to forge ahead to a brighter future. In our lives we'll experience adversity. By making tweaks to our situation, we can improve our situation in the next chapter of our life. Here are some ways to embrace new beginnings.

Know change can be good

When all we've seen in our lives is trauma, hardship, and challenges, it's hard to imagine a world where change could lead to something good. Those with childhood trauma often imagine their adulthood as more difficult, especially if they carry that trauma into their future. All those difficulties taught you something valuable so you can make better decisions about your future. It's normal to experience a fear of change. But it's crucial to remember that change can be a good thing. Let the story unfold and see what surprises and goodness life has in store for you in these new beginnings.



Surround yourself with good people

Having a strong sense of community will help you in your new beginnings. The people in your life will make or break you. If you're around **toxic people** who fail to help you, you'll never grow or succeed. If you're around people who lift you up, cheer you on, and want to see you thrive, you'll take more action to keep getting better. They say you're most like the five people you spend most of your time with. So, surround yourself with **happy people**, successful people, and supportive people if you hope to achieve great things in life. Cut out the people from your life who bring you down. Your job isn't to make people better. Your job is to make you better. And by **improving yourself**, you'll attract higher quality people into your life.

Tackle new opportunities

As you embark on new beginnings, it's time to look towards new opportunities too. For example, if you realize you're working a job in a negative environment, you might start applying to jobs with higher employee morale. You might start looking at Glassdoor reviews of companies online before applying. You might interview hiring managers about the company culture. And you might say yes to something new. New opportunities can be found all around. And they aren't all tied to your career. You might look at opportunities to travel, to date someone new, to make a new friend, run an experiment, to start a family, to improve your home situation, learn a new skill, or to start a business.

Take a break

In some cases, new beginnings might require a quick break or pause before moving forward. It's important to know when the past isn't over yet, or we're still not fully healed from past hardships. You'll take many breaks in life. You'll take breaks from school, relationships, jobs, and more. Breaks are important part of life where we unplug momentarily. Sometimes, you need to turn yourself off to give yourself a break. Recharging those batteries is daily upkeep. Taking time away from work to relax on a beach and not check a single email or Slack message is life changing. Taking a break after a series of projects to re-evaluate your strategy and **improve yourself**, can help you reset. Hit the pause button when you need to. It's normal and healthy to do this. And it could be just what makes your new beginning more spectacular.



Celebrate your progress

New beginnings are all about new wins. As you go onto your next life chapter, it's important to track your progress, see how far you've come, and make tweaks. Mistakes, disappointment, and failure will still happen in your new chapter. How you learn, grow, and pivot despite these challenges is what will ultimately play a role in your success. Life isn't without struggle, even when we do everything right. It's unpredictable and there are many moving parts. But celebrate the highs as they come. And learn quick from the lows. Be a champion in your success. Spend some time giving yourself credit for what you have accomplished. Reward yourself for things you have done well. Pat yourself on the back for how far you've come.

Build new habits

Forming **good habits** and eliminating **bad habits** can be a good practice for new beginnings. It's all about coming in with the new and shedding the old. What happened in the past shouldn't be repeated, so the habits that led to those events should be replaced with new habits. For example, if you got into a relationship with a toxic partner, you might want to create a list of values you want in your next relationship. Then, find someone with those same values. In moments of insecurity, you'll need to build the habit of saying no to something that doesn't feel right to prevent repeating history. You'll reject people who showcase red flags early on, instead of questioning it. And you might listen to your friends, family, and that good old gut instinct when something seems off.

New beginnings are just that - beginnings. The road in life is filled with turns, and roadblocks along the way. Prepare yourself for success by strengthening your mind, body, and willpower. Continue learning from mistakes as they are happening and making changes as needed. Cut out the wrong people and bring in the good folks who aren't afraid to cheer you on when you're crushing it.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer volunteers do not make clinical

diagnoses or clinical evaluations; however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer volunteers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Lean on gratitude

New beginnings should have an emphasis on being grateful. Come up with a list of things you're grateful for, your very own **gratitude list**. When you focus on gratitude instead of what you lack, your mind feels better. You won't feel like you got the short end of the stick, you won't be disgruntled, you will have fewer complaints about life in general. Instead, you'll see all the good things you have that keep coming your way. And you'll continue to attract more good things because of your attitude. An optimistic view of the world helps us in numerous ways that a pessimistic view can't. When we experience gratitude, we're so much happier. Make it your personal mission to express gratitude in life and to look at the world with an optimistic lens.