



Health & Wellbeing

We have set up a sub committee focusing on Health & Wellbeing. Our Executive Committee Member Dorcas Falode is heading this new sub committee. The emphasis of this is to help and support our members with any difficulties they may face in this area. Each edition of SOLO Journal will have a specific focus on Health & Wellbeing, in this edition the topic is New Year's Resolutions.

My new year's resolution is to be kind to myself.

We've had the Christmas and New Year celebrations. The whole process was full of excitement and stress, it's all over now and we are in a New Year. It's customary to start the year with a resolution. Take care not to make one that will put you under unnecessary pressure. Guiding principle on resolutions: should be simple, measurable and achievable. For me: Plan my time, build in rest and worry less.

The goal this year should be about you and how you can be a lot kinder to yourself. One key lesson from the pandemic is that you need to take care of yourself. Eat healthy food and build up your immune system. When we work hard and we achieve a goal, we work even harder to achieve the next goal. Slow down and pace yourself, the world is different, things have changed and are still changing. Changing the way we work and adapting to our new environment carries its own pressures. Don't add to it by setting goals or making resolutions that will stress you further. It's easier to build a few minutes' rest into each day than to build in an hour.

I'm building in a 15-minute "me-time" to each day. I'm setting aside 5 minutes at the beginning of the day and 10 minutes at night with no phone, no computer, no TV and no talking. When you try it, you will realise how long 5 minutes is when you just sit quietly and reflect on things that truly matter to you.

While we've had to contend with COVID in the last couple of years, the effects are still lingering and the virus seems set to stay, at least for the time being, so we have to learn to live with it. Although unprepared, we've had to devise new ways of working, working smarter and caring for ourselves better whilst ensuring that our businesses were not too badly impacted, and our clients continue to get the good quality service that they deserve.

We have a lot under our control and it's important that we focus on building our better selves. Simplify your life and cut out all the irrelevant things. We wake up, go to work, eat, take care of our homes, family and sleep. Those are the essentials, everything else is by choice. Choose to spend your time on things that will add value and make your life easier. Friends that stress you out are not true friends, so keep them at arm's length and lower your stress level. You can apply this principle to all aspects of your life. Remove non-value adding activities and relationships.

Plan more and stick to the plan. It's very easy to make a list but it is hard to stick to the list because our lives are full of distractions. The mobile phone is the worst culprit so please limit the time you spend on the phone and turn off non-essential notifications. Only check the phone when you need to and set up your phone to report how many hours you spend on it daily. You may be unpleasantly surprised when you see the result!

Helpful hints:

- Start the day with a few minutes of "me-time" – relax, reflect and clear your mind of disquieting thoughts.
- Your phone is a communication device not part of your body so when not using it, stay off it. We all spend far too much time on the phone.
- At the end of the day, leave the phone to charge in a different room, it will still be there when you wake up and so will all your messages.
- You don't need to go on a diet, it hardly works for many and puts you under undue pressure. It is better to make subtle changes to your lifestyle and eat healthily. You will not feel under pressure and the effects will be long lasting.
- Build exercise into your lifestyle. A few minutes of walking daily e.g., walking to the local shop instead of driving and taking the stairs instead of the lift can be effective. Don't wait until you have time to go to the gym before you exercise.
- Surround yourself with people who make you happy and cut out those who stress

you. Quality time with those you love is very important so spend more time with them if you can.

- Spend time with yourself. Relax, reflect and plan the year ahead. You will feel rejuvenated.
- All life's pressures are not going anywhere. When one pressure goes, another one comes along, so don't stress. You can do it. It's called living.
- Take care and pamper yourself from time to time and don't feel guilty about doing something nice for yourself. You deserve it!
- Work is a means to an end and not an end in itself! Your clients will get the best of you when you are at your best.

