

Read the Eccentric every Thursday and Sunday

Resolve to create your own Drop Everything Day for Family

CELEBRATING FAMILY



LISA LUCKOW-HEALY

No words can account for a broken promise to a friend or loved one, particularly if he or she is one of your children. No excuse will make the pain go away or wipe out the disappointment you leave behind you.

It's time to change your ways - time to turn a bad habit into a good one - by resolving to stop making promises you cannot keep.

You might say, "How can I change something that is inherently part of me?" or, "There isn't anything in my schedule I can possibly drop to make more time for others - or is there?" These sound like excuses.

The answer to these thought-provoking questions is, "Yes, you can change your ways if you put your mind to it." You can resolve to make more time in your life in the coming year to spend with family and friends.

■ You are the key to your resolution's success.

■ You are the only one who can look at your lifestyle and say, "This activity isn't as important as spending time with my children and watching them grow."

■ You are the only one who can admit that the moments of your children's lives that you miss are the ones you will never recapture, no matter how hard

■ Skim the days and weeks of the current month. Ask yourself what you think you might be able to eliminate or move to another day and time.

you try to re-create them.

Let go of your task-laden lifestyle in five easy steps:

1. Evaluate your calendar. It doesn't bite. It may overwhelm you when you open it, but remember, that's your own doing.

Skim the days and weeks of the current month. Ask yourself what you think you might be able to eliminate or move to another day and time. Jet those ideas down on another piece of paper so you can think about what you are resolving to change.

Pay particular attention to your after-school and evening time frames when your children will be out of school and in need of your attention.

2. Spot-check your activities.

Now that you've identified activities you might want to eliminate, conduct a more thorough analysis by determining if they can be rescheduled during school hours when your children will be away, or when your spouse is available to cancel.

You don't want your children to feel as if they are the ones getting in the way of your schedule.

3. Take baby steps.

Vow to start making more time for your family by eliminating what you consider to be one important activity at a time.

4. Schedule family time

into your calendar.

Block out one or more days a week from some or all extracurricular activities for your family. Simply pencil an "X" on your calendar for this time. When you receive a phone call to make plans on this day of the week, you will know not to do so because you have resolved to make that your family time.

Even if your children are in school and your spouse is at the office on that given day of the week, use your quiet daytime hours to catch up on your work. When your children and spouse return home, you will feel organized and ready to devote time and attention to your family's needs.

5. Make a date.

Use the day(s) you've set aside to simply talk to each other, catch up on family projects, go to a movie or exercise together. Call it your Drop Everything Day for Family. Think of it as your family's weekly holiday together (not including the weekend).

With a good dose of self-discipline and the patience necessary to change an old habit, you and your family can turn your busy schedules around to succeed in your New Year's resolution to make more time for family and friends.

Remember, sometimes you really have to work hard to attain something you really want. One of the greatest rewards is gaining more uninterrupted family time!

To leave Lisa Luckow-Healy a message from a touch-tone phone about how you celebrate family, call (734) 953-2047; or e-mail suggestions for future family topics to LiHealy@medianet.net.

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'Candle' with care

Keep your candles burning brightly and safely. Follow these recommendations for proper candle use and care provided by PartyLite Gifts Inc., a leading direct sales marketer of candles and candle accessories.

These candle safety tips are in compliance with guidelines set forth by the National Candle Association.

■ Never leave a burning candle unattended.

■ Burn candles in proper holders and only on heat-resistant surfaces.

■ Keep children, pets and flammable objects away from burning candles.

■ Trim wicks to 1/4 inch before lighting. A "facy" wick (one that curls or bends to the side while burning) causes the wax to drip and the candle to burn unevenly.

■ Use a candle snuffer to extinguish flames and prevent hot wax from splattering. Don't extinguish candles with water - it causes hot wax to splatter and some candle holders to crack or break.

■ Never let taper or pillar candles burn down to more than 2 inches from the top of the holder.

■ Extinguish candles when they burn down to within 2 inches

of decoration, such as a flower ring.

■ Remove any wax, carbon, wick sustainer clips or residue from holders before lighting new candles.

■ Place candles away from drafts and vents. Even the best candles will drip in direct drafts.

■ Place pillar candles at least 3 inches apart to prevent them from melting one another.

■ Store tapers in a cool, dark and dry place and lay them flat. Direct sunlight and bright indoor spotlights will fade colors.

■ Refrigerate tapers before use so they burn more slowly and evenly. Wrap them in foil or plastic first to keep the wicks from absorbing moisture. Don't freeze candles.

■ Remove wax from candlesticks or holders by chilling them for 20 minutes and "popping" out the wax. Allow glass holders to return to room temperature before lighting candles.

To learn more about the candles and accessories available through an independent consultant with PartyLite, call (608) 830-3100 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, or visit www.partylite.com.

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