

Don's Home News

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How a 'Life Audit' Can Help Your Resolutions Stick

It's the time of year to make plans and set a few goals. However, despite the best of intentions the majority of resolutions fail to germinate. Following are three ways to make sure you stick to your resolutions:

Be Sincere: Sometimes it is difficult to determine what is - and isn't - really important. Peer pressure, expectations of family and friends, and even your own fears all tend to inhibit the ability to admit what you really want. Audit your emotional state by writing down the most important people, events and feelings you have experienced in the past year and what you would do differently next year. Make it meaningful.

Take Small Steps: Rather than trying to tackle all of life's little challenges at once, take small steps instead. Make a list of things that are incomplete for 2010 that could be finalized during 2011. Next, make a list of things you would at least like to begin next year, including any assets or special information that will be needed. It's a great way to build on success, rather than becoming frustrated with failure, which comes from an "all or nothing" mentality.

Eliminate Negativity and Naysayers: Let's face it, trying to reach a new goal is tough enough even without the influence of naysayers and other negative influences. Trying to climb to new heights with a boulder of negativity on your shoulders is a burden you don't need. Eliminating negative people, actions and activities from your life not only increases the odds of reaching your goals, but more importantly it enhances your enjoyment of the entire process.

Thinking of Selling Your Home? Get My Free Guide

In a competitive market, you need to do a little extra to get the best price for your property.

Help your home sell more quickly by asking for my free guide, "Great Ideas for Quick, Easy Fixes That Will Help Your Home Sell."

Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com and I'll send it right out to you.

What's New? What's Fun? What's Hot?

Following are some useful links from the web that are sure to provide you with some interesting ways to save money and entertain yourself:

Think Ahead for Cheap or Free In-Flight Wi-Fi

from www.Unplggd.com

This site has some terrific tips on how to save money and stay connected when away from home.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/2e48dox>

Kid-Approved

from *Make*

Sooner or later we all need a few fresh ideas of what to do with the kids. It doesn't matter whether you are a parent, grandparent or simply a family friend, these super-fun ideas are sure to make the time fly while everyone enjoys the fun. Learn how to make everything from ultra-cool rooms complete with chalkboard walls using chalkboard paint that you make yourself to LED dice and Storm Trooper helmets, all with the help of *Makezine*. These are so fun you might just want to try them out on your very own.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/6atzoc>

Top 10 Fast-Food Recipes You Can Make at Home

from *Lifehacker*

This could very well be one of the most delicious recipe sites on the web. Discover the secret ingredients that make movie popcorn taste so good and learn why McDonald's fries are a family favorite. You can find out how to re-create some of the most beloved fast foods in the nation right in your own kitchen.

More: <http://tinyurl.com/2b5uzjk>

Real Estate Resolutions: Tips for Homebuyers

Planning to buy in 2011? Preparation is the key to getting the best deal when shopping for a new home. Following are some tips to help you get started:

Define Needs Versus Wants: Make a list of your needs versus wants in the new home. For example, if you have a large and growing family then four bedrooms might be a necessity, while a pool might be negotiable.

Select a Location: Spend some time driving around town, researching schools and local amenities, crime rates, and other safety considerations. Select three to five areas to focus your search on.

Get Pre-Qualified: Find out how much you will be eligible to borrow and begin the paperwork so you are prepared to move quickly should a great deal arise.

Also, most private Sellers and all institutional Sellers require prequalification letters with offers.

Contact an Agent: Ask family and friends, perform a search for real estate agents that specialize in your target area. Be sure that your agent is an [ABR Accredited Buyer Representatives](#) are Buyer Specialists whose Code of Ethics assures you of competent representation.

Read, Set and Search: Sign up for [automatic listing notifications](#) and begin viewing prospective properties online. Ask your agent for additional photos, virtual tour links, Neighborhood demographics, and crime data. Once you find a property of interest, take a few minutes to Google it before actually driving out in person.

An Affordable Vacation with a Difference

Thinking about hitting the highway or flying somewhere for a bit of rest and relaxation? Why not consider a volunteer vacation instead?

Volunteer vacations are relatively new phenomena that combine domestic or international travel with the opportunity to help others while enjoying yourself.

Depending upon the program, location and other specific criteria, room and board is often part of the experience, making it an affordable way to visit areas that might otherwise have been out of the question.

Some programs actually pay a small stipend for those that volunteer for longer-than-average durations.

If you are considering a volunteer vacation it is important to plan ahead, especially for overseas locations.

A passport/visa will be needed and you may have to get vaccinations.

Many programs have a limited number of spots available, or there may be qualification criteria, so make sure you apply early.

You can learn more at the following websites:

<http://charityguide.org/volunteer/vacations.htm>

<http://www.americanhiking.org/volunteervacation.aspx>

<http://www.globalvolunteers.org>

<http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/service.aspx>

<http://www.independenttraveler.com>

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/volunteer/index.shtml>

<http://www.idealists.org/volunteer/travel.html>

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at donzahnle@gmail.com for the answer.

When the Prince of Wales is crowned King of England, what will he be known as?

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighborhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just [contact me](#) for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I won't try to push you into listing with me or waste your time.

I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

And maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Just call me at 404-939-1309 or email me at donzahnle@gmail.com and we will arrange a time to get together.

Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

Real Estate Resolutions: Tips for Sellers

When a new year starts, many people resolve to lose weight, give up smoking and spend more time with the family. Others add selling the house to their list of resolutions. Following are eight tips to help you decide whether or not to sell, and how to go about it:

1. Take a good hard look at your home. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Make a list.
2. Watch for sale signs in your neighborhood and go to open houses. Start thinking about how your home compares.
3. What have other similar houses in the area sold for? Most homeowners are a bit unrealistic about what their house is worth. You want to be

on the same wavelength as your real estate agent when the time comes to set a price.

4. Research the market. How long do houses stay on the market in your neighborhood? Is it a hot market for sellers right now?
5. Know what it will cost to sell your house. Will you pay for a home inspection, legal costs or renovations?
6. Spruce up the house. You know you'll have to do it eventually, so why not present your house in its best light now? De-clutter and finish uncompleted do-it-yourself projects. Outside, tidy up the

property, sweep the steps and change the light bulbs. It will allow others to see your house in a new light.

7. Select a real estate agent who is familiar with your neighborhood and ask friends and neighbors for recommendations. Word-of-mouth is the best way to source a realtor with a proven track record. [Contact](#) me for a referral.
8. Take your time. Selling your home for the best price may take longer than you anticipate. Don't add to the pressure by setting unrealistic time limits.

Apps That Add Pizzazz to Your Photos

There are a number of easy-to-use apps available that can add pizzazz to your cell phone photo shots. Following are some apps that can help you dazzle and delight.

For Android

Vignette: Frame shots for a custom appearance, then add artistic aging, enhanced lighting and other special effects.

AndroPan: Love the look of panoramic photos, but haven't figured out how to reproduce them on your cell phone? Here's the solution you have been searching for. Take side-by-side shots then seamlessly merge them for a broad perspective.

For iPhone

DSLR Remote: Use your iOS to take photographs with your digital single-lens reflex camera by connecting your regular camera to the computer using a USB cable. Superb for remote and live-view applications.

ComicTouch: This tool can manipulate and distort faces to create custom-made photos. Add captions and other enhancements then email or upload.

Apps That Can Help You Stay on Track

There are some great apps available to help you stay emotionally, physically and financially fit this new year.

Body: Traineo is an app that provides the motivation, diet tips, exercise and other data you need. More: <http://traineo.com>.

Money: Mint.com is rated as a breed application for keeping your finances on track. More: www.mint.com.

Mind: Discipline your mind with the Don't Break the Chain application that encourages sustainable change by tracking success. More: www.dontbreakthechain.com.

Spirit: Get in touch with your inner self with this nifty Ben Franklin Virtue Chart. See how you measure up. More: www.diyplanner.com/templates/official/hpda/addons/franklin

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

I'm interested in purchasing an environmentally friendly home so that I can be good to the planet and save money on energy. What are the key things to look for when viewing houses?

An environmentally friendly home will probably have:

1. Effective insulation - to ensure even temperatures throughout the home
2. Energy efficient windows - to help keep heat in during winter and out during summer and to protect furniture and flooring from the discoloring effects of the sun
3. Tight construction and ducts - to reduce drafts, moisture, dust, pollen, and noise and to improve indoor comfort and air quality
4. Efficient heating and cooling systems - to improve home comfort and use less energy
5. Efficient products - such as light fixtures and appliances with an energy-efficiency designation.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

[Don Zahnle](#)

	5	4			9			
2		6	1			3		
7	3		2				9	6
5		9			2			
			3			7		4
9	6				4		1	7
		8			1	9		3
			9			2	4	

Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9.

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Recipe: Chicken Rice Corn Casserole

Serves 4

- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 3 cups cooked white rice, cooled
- 2 cups shredded chicken breast
- 1 10-ounce package frozen corn, thawed
- 3 tablespoons minced onion
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Paprika

Directions

Preheat oven to 356° F and butter a 2 -quart casserole dish. Place milk in a small bowl and add salt. Stir until salt has dissolved. Combine the remaining ingredients, except the paprika, in a large bowl with the milk mixture, gently stir, transfer to the prepared casserole dish and sprinkle generously with the paprika. Bake uncovered in pre-heated oven for 40-45 minutes or until knife inserted comes out clean.

Don's Home News is brought to you free by:

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Thanks for reading! If you'd like to tell me what you think about this newsletter, or if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate, please [get in touch](#).

