

Ten Ways To Set A Refreshing Tone For The New Year by Carol Kuruvilla

For thousands of years, humans have marked the beginning of a new year with sacred festivals. January is named after the Roman god Janus, whose two faces looked to both the past and the future.

As you consider the many days ahead in 2016, take some time to reflect on the past as well.

Try these tips if you're searching for ways to make this year's New Year's celebration more meaningful.

1. Choose a word of the year.

Choose one word that will set the tone for 2016. Think of it like a chapter heading for the book that is your life. Print this word out and place it in a part of your room that you will see every day.

2. Be grateful.

YouTube

As the year comes to a close, spend some time focusing on gratitude. You can write in a journal or thank a friend who helped you during a tough time this year. Cinematographer Louis Schwartzberg's TEDxSF presentation "Gratitude" can help awaken the thankfulness inside of you.

3. Attend a religious service or have your own spiritual celebration.

Lisa Klumpp

Whether it's a candlelit service at a church or a guided meditation at a local Buddhist center, New Year's Eve is a good chance to explore the spiritual offerings in your neighborhood.

You can also create your own beautiful rituals by inviting a few close friends to your home for a night of meditation and reflection. HuffPost blogger Sofia Rose Smith shared a few

ideas for creating a meaningful New Year's ceremony. You can listen to her guided New Year's meditation here.

4. Take a mindfulness walk.

from Wholly Healthy

Step away from whatever screen you're looking at and take a short walk outside. Focus on your five senses and enjoy being alive.

5. Write a letter to yourself.

from Going Reno

Start a New Year's Tradition of writing a letter to yourself, to open the following year on New Year's Eve. Store it away in a safe place, to be opened at the end of 2016.

6. Carry out one small act of kindness.

from POPSUGAR Smart Living

Pay the toll for the car behind you or bring your neighbor a tray of baked cookies. Think of just one way to practice kindness today.

7. Make a "remember-lutions" jar.

from BuzzFeed

Instead of focusing on goal-oriented New Year's resolutions, fill a jar with notes about your favorite memories and accomplishments over the course of 2016.

8. Remind yourself to be happy all year.

Engadget

Choose one random day every month to do something that makes you happy -- whether it's treating yourself to a facial or cooking a dish you've been meaning to try. Use a calendar app to schedule these good intentions on New Year's Eve and throughout 2016 -- the reminders will give you permission to step away from your busy life.

9. Do a video interview with a loved one.

from How Does She

Make a list of questions that you and your kids (or your significant other, best friends or parents) can answer every New Year's Eve. Tape the interview and make sure to

keep the tradition going every year to see how your answers change.

10. Make resolutions that give you joy.

from theprojectgirl.com

Mark Twain once wrote that New Year's "is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual."

As cynical as that sounds, Twain had a point. Only about 8 percent of people actually carry out their resolutions. But that doesn't mean you should stop the practice altogether. Resolutions can help you reflect on the past and build dreams for the future.

This year, commit to making small changes that give you joy. Frame your resolutions as questions instead of statements -- for example, "Will I try meditating more this year?" instead of "I will meditate more this year." Studies show that when people phrase these goals as questions, they're more likely to follow through.

Use a resolutions app to keep track of your goals, if you need to. Or just make a list of things you want more and less of in 2016 and leave it at that.