

simply strategies to maximize
the last weeks of the year.

end well



Rachel Marie Martin
FindingJoy.net

KEEP FIGHTING.
FOR YOU.
THE YOU FIVE YEARS
FROM NOW
NEEDS YOU
TO NOT GIVE UP
ON HER DREAMS.

RACHEL MARIE MARTIN
THE BRAVE ART OF MOTHERHOOD
FINDINGJOY.NET
Rachel Marie Martin

Original words by Rachel Marie Martin of FindingJoy.net
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Introduction

Have you ever gotten to New Year's Day and felt that sense of relief that the year before was over? We all have those years that are tough - years of loss or change - but if every single year is met with the same sigh of, "thank goodness that is done..." then perhaps there is something that needs to change. What if this year, when you hit the end of the year, no matter the start, you have thoughts of how great last year was instead?

What if you took back the hours, the minutes in your now and decided that each day some of them will be spent investing in your heart or changing patterns where you might be stuck or creating new habits?

This is a very simple guidebook based off of the concepts found in [The Brave Art of Motherhood](#) designed to help you stay on track during one of the busiest times of the year. The holidays can be all consuming, they can be challenging, but just because you are busy doesn't mean you can't dedicate time to completing goals. Don't let the busy stall you. Instead let's work to reclaim busy, to get unstuck, to identify excuses and to end the year well.

I believe in you.

~Rachel

A Look Back

In order to pursue goals and change sometimes we need to look back first. Don't avoid looking back and analyzing your choices. Yes, there will be somethings that didn't get done, but more than likely there will be many things that you've completed.

1. What were the goals you had for the past year?
2. What was the biggest thing you've accomplished from that list?
3. What did you accomplish that you didn't even plan on?
4. When January 1 rolls around what will happen if you decide to do nothing goal wise from today until then?
5. Is doing nothing worth it? In other words, will you get there and not care or will you get there and have a twinge of regret?
6. Now imagine it is January 1 again and you've accomplished your goals (or one you will set today.) How do you feel in that moment? How does that compare to doing nothing?
7. You might get to January 1 and have made progress or a lifestyle change. Can you imagine how great you will feel if you've got a kick start to the goal? Write that emotion.

stuck

Stuck means to be TRAPPED in SOMETHING.

For years I would have described myself as being stuck. For me, it was financially stuck, honestly. And because I didn't have much money, I was trapped in a place of limited options. I wanted to get out, but oftentimes the more I tried to move, the more stuck it felt like I became and the more stuck I felt the more frustrated I felt as well.

In order to get unstuck you have to exert effort, change directions, receive help and get messy. If your vehicle was stuck in thick mud the only way to remove it is by changing the strategy. If you floored the accelerator you'd make a bunch of noise and create a giant mess, but truly, most times your wheels would just sink deeper in the mud.

In life we are so often caught doing the same thing over and over and over again. That cycle is like flooring the gas trying to get unstuck, but staying in exactly the same spot.

However, there are other times where admitting we are stuck is the hardest thing to do. I know in my financial story I felt so much shame over the finances that I tried to make everything look perfect in fear that others might see that the wheels were deep within the mud.

Being honest is truly the first step to change. Lying to yourself only keeps you exactly where you are right now.

1. So let's be really honest - what is your SOMETHING that you are stuck in?

2. If you want to start getting unstuck by the new year (notice I said start because sometimes the process of getting unstuck takes time...) you need to pay attention to the reasons you give yourself for not starting. What are your excuses? An example could be that it is the holidays or there is no money or not enough time. Don't worry, we'll get to breaking them down in week two, but for now, start to become aware.

Agreements are subtle contracts that we make with ourselves that keep us in a cycle of stuck. In *The Brave Art of Motherhood* I break down how agreements fuel our excuses which creates our realities which solidifies the agreements and so forth. This is the cycle. In order to break out of the cycle you need to identify the agreement that has kept you where you are now. In my cycle of financial struggle the agreement was one that it wasn't my role to fix the finances and since it wasn't and the finances were bad I felt that if I "meant enough" then the

finances would be resolved. It wasn't until I changed that initial agreement until things changed fiscally.

Now, I want to challenge you to take responsibility for getting stuck. Ouch, right? Because who wants to do that? It's uncomfortable and oftentimes we give ourselves a pass when we're stuck. I know I did, but no one moves anywhere with a pass.

For years I blamed my circumstances, others, the weather, my education, my situation, my finances, you name it - I would blame it. But not in a loud way, rather in a quiet way that excused myself from the responsibility. In order to change, you **MUST GIVE UP BLAME**. You have to take responsibility, it is your life, your decisions, your choices.

1. Do you find yourself blaming being stuck on others/situations?

2. When we let go of blame then the responsibility to change things shifts to self. How does this make you feel? You have power because you get to choose your response. Work to replace the fear with courage.

This is the point where overwhelm and the voices of "who do you think you are?" And "you're crazy!" start to kick in. Be on alert for them. Remember the mess when you get a car out of the mud? It's the same here. It's not neat and tidy changing your life and your habits. When you change you face resistance and it feels uncomfortable, but it's unbelievably worth it. When January 1 rolls around there is only one person that can change your mindset - you.

1. You are worth using these days as a kickstart for next year. If you had everything perfect and a ton of time and money wasn't an issue - what would you do?

2. What makes you smile? If this is hard for you, that's okay. So often when we are in the process of change it's easy to forget what makes us smile.

3. Dare to pick a day this week to do **ONE** thing for yourself. Remember what makes you smile? Choose your one thing around that and work to smile more each day, even in the busy.

Finally, this week make another decision to see how many days you can do one thing in a row that moves the needle forward.

Create a streak.

A streak is a grouping of days in a row where you accomplish a task. Oftentimes when the streak gets bigger there is a great deal of momentum to NOT break the streak.

Perhaps it is a streak of kindness or a streak of working out or a streak of not drinking wine or a streak of drinking 8 glasses of water a day. But make it important, a priority and work hard to not break it.

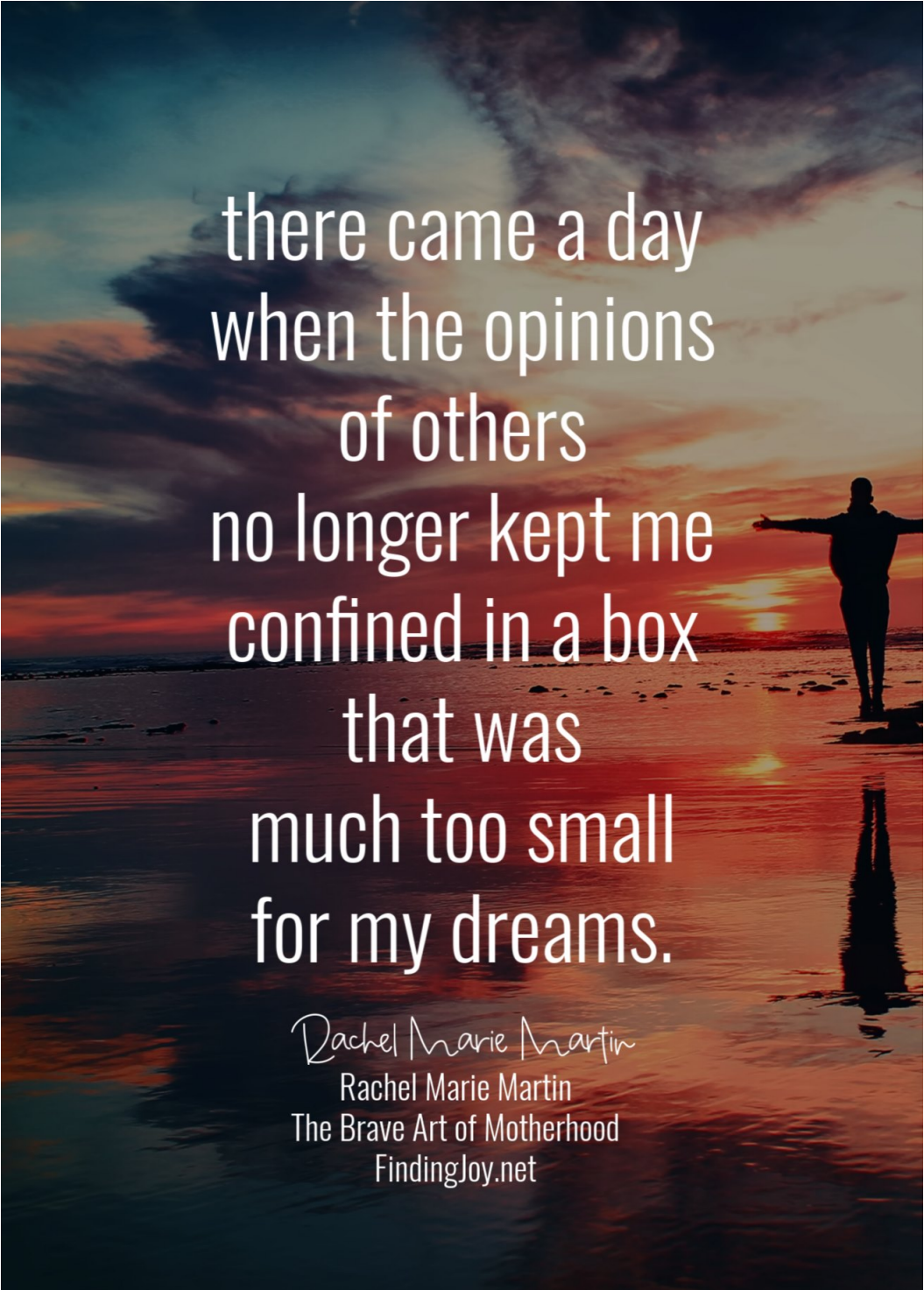
That being said, if it is broken - DO NOT QUIT. Simply start up again, keep going. One of my favorite quotes says, "fall seven times, stand up eight." It truly implies that life is celebrated in the standing up and that falling is part of it. Bravery happens in the standing up.

My Week Streak Goal:
(mark below the days you accomplish this):



Next week we'll work on excuses that keep us spinning our wheels.

You've got this!

A person stands on a beach at sunset, arms outstretched, with a quote overlaid. The sky is a mix of dark blues and oranges, and the water reflects the sunset colors. The person's reflection is visible in the water.

there came a day
when the opinions
of others
no longer kept me
confined in a box
that was
much too small
for my dreams.

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