

## Setting Your Goals for 2012

Written by U.S Immigration News  
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It is another brand new year; the year 2011 is gone for good, leaving us with only those things we were able to get out of living through the year. Some were able to get so much out of the year; some, not much, and some are still counting their losses. Some countries fought and unseated tyrannical leaders, some had a successful transition of government, some had their leaders give up on their own at the face of phenomenal national crisis, some went into war, some signed the peace pact, some were hit by natural disasters and struggled all through the year to wriggle out of the debris, most suffered economic depression while some surprisingly had economic advancement, recording more gains and less losses. It is the same story with corporations, groups, families and individuals. We all have different stories to tell and different souvenirs to show for our experience in year 2011. However, we all have something in common, we all made it through that year and we have gotten another opportunity to make things right, pursue a better life, turn our bad situations around, build on our successes and generally attempt to make something remarkable out of the twelve calendar months that make up year 2012. May I on this note join other members of the editorial board of the US Immigration News in welcoming you aboard this New Year? We wish you good life and we wish you continuous and consistent successes in all your undertakings in the New Year.

As much as one may wish to have a fresh start in the New Year, issues and challenges of the previous year do not automatically terminate at the end of the year, some of the problems we had last year survived the year, and we still have to tackle them this year. As a matter of fact, dealing with issues of life is a continuum with one breakthrough leading to more challenges and one success giving rise to a greater need to succeed. Except for the end of a calendar year and automatic increase in individual's age, nothing significant really happens between the last day of a year and the first day of the next New Year. Regardless, it is constructive to take time out at the beginning of a New Year, to take a retrospective look at some of the happenings in our lives and the world at large during the last year and take cognizance of the lessons derivable from them. This is the only way we can identify our mistakes and avoid same pitfalls in the future. There is an African Proverb that says when a child stumbles and fall, he looks ahead, but when an adult stumbles and fall, he looks back. The wisdom in looking back is that, when you look back, you get to identify what made you fall, so that you can watch out for any more of it and avoid falling again. There are definitely priceless lessons to learn from our experience in the past year, and this is a good time to pick them out and imbibe them.

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Perhaps, a good starting point in this regard is to check on your dreams and aspirations. How well did you pursue your dreams and how far were you able to go? What are the internal and external factors that slowed you down? Were you able to achieve your set goals? Did you really make the best out of the opportunities you had last year? What can you possibly do to make things better this New Year? These are germane questions we ought to provide objective answers to at this period of the year. I recall writing about a stage drama character, Kiloku, last year. Kiloku, a promising young man who went on a mission which took him far away from his home and his people but never got to accomplish his mission because he allowed too many distractions. Kiloku misplaced his priorities and consequently failed those who counted so much on his unrealized dreams. We need to have a good appreciation of our dreams and ambitions and how well we did with regard to them in the period under review.

It is difficult for most people to objectively assess themselves as being recommended here, this is because it is much convenient to pass the buck and blame others for whatever did not go right. But if one really takes a long, hard look at his or her life in the past year, it should not be so difficult to come to terms with the fact that there is need to take some measure of responsibility for whatever did not turn out right. The truth is that, our lives are defined by the decisions we make, thus, if anything goes wrong, we should know that we are the most culpable. The damage usually continues until a mistake is admitted. Sadly, some people never admit their failings until irreparable damages have been done.

Another approach is to review some of the criticisms and displeasures registered against us by people in our world and make efforts to improve. We do not have to be so defensive every time we are criticized, especially when such is coming from those who should ordinarily be concerned about us. If your boss is complaining about something and your spouse complains about the same thing, then they must be seeing something you are not seeing and before it causes a major embarrassment, it is wise to do something about it.

Self evaluation requires a good measure of humility and sincerity. It is a major illusion to think that you have got it all figured out. If you are lucky to have people who care enough to tell you what you are not doing right, do away with your ego and deal with the problem or at least take time out to review the situation. The purpose of self evaluation is to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. Your talents can give you recognition but your weaknesses will make you lose it faster than you gained it. People usually spend more time trying to be better at what they do best and take the necessary things they suck at for granted. At the end of the day, the society will not judge you based on what you do well, but on what you fail to do well.

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This is a good time for parents to ask their children what they think they are not doing right; spouses should ask themselves the same question. It is the only way we can make things better. You cannot keep doing the same thing time and time again and expect a different result each time.

When you give people the opportunity to tell you what they think about you, you should look forward to hear some hard truths. As mentioned earlier, it takes humility and sincerity to learn and work at self improvement, but one is always better off giving those hard truths some serious considerations.

Refusing to admit one's failings is a major problem on its own. Sometimes in 2011, I wrote about a young professional who was asked in the course of a job interview if he could identify any weakness he needed to work on, but said he could not think of any. He thought he could sell himself better by not admitting to having failings, but his failure to own up to his most obvious weakness was a significant factor that deprived him of the opportunity of getting that job. How can one work on being better when he has not seen the need to identify what he is not doing right? Being human raises an irrefutable presumption of imperfection. We all have our frailties; the great among men are distinguished by their ability to passionately build on their strengths while working very hard to get over their weaknesses.

There is a lot of good in looking back but there is nothing good about living in the past. Here at the USI News, we strongly believe that life offers so much here in the US for those who are willing to pay the price. If you made it here, we know you can make it here. Goodluck!