



College of
Pharmacy

Work Life Journey Tips for 2021

Wow, 2020 was quite a year to remember. The world as we knew it changed significantly. We pivoted, pressed forward, supported our teammates and found creative ways to communicate safely with family and friends. There is no doubt that we have been through a very challenging time and we all did the best we could given the circumstances. After the year we've had, I think that is good enough. So as we forge ahead into this new year, here are a few tips to incorporate along the way:

1. **Try organizing your calendar for the whole next year.** This one action may allow you to manage your time and prioritize. Studies show that planning 12 months ahead maximizes productivity. It doesn't mean that everything on the calendar needs to be locked in, but it gives an idea of where you're going to be and when so you can maximize your time. You'll always have a reference.
2. **Try new things.** Try a new workout routine or different type of exercise for 2021. Experiment with mindfulness or gratitude exercises. Work on different ways to build new healthful activities and more variety into your routine.
3. **Healthy Eating.**
 - a. Try to set your intent early on: People tend to stick to goals more effectively if they write them down. Try to make a plan for the month to help yourself find a balance that feels right to you. Write down your goals. Have some fun with it. If you are like me and you love crossing things off lists, make little boxes that you can check off whenever you do healthy things. Make sure to build in some flexibility so you can enjoy treats - reward yourself along the way for your efforts!
 - b. Get creative with healthy alternatives: Many resources are available to help us recreate healthier versions of our favorite appetizers, side dishes, main courses, and desserts.
 - c. Intentionally fill up on healthy things first: Make it a point to fill up on the healthiest things first. Have a plate of salad, fruit, or vegetables first, and then make the rest of your meal choices to find a healthier balance.
 - d. Have a day-after plan to get back on track: If you do have a day where you indulge more than you wanted to, don't sweat it. The next day is an opportunity for a fresh start. Start it off by eating light with fruits and vegetables, get some exercise in, and try to keep busy and not sedentary. The important thing is to stay balanced.

4. **Find inspiration.** COVID-19 is an era-defining crisis. It's a unique opportunity to reimagine a future where everyone acts with a deep sense of purpose. Find your purpose and continue to look for ways that you can make a difference. Recognize and celebrate the collective purpose of our team.
5. **Collaborate more, build more bridges.** One of the revelations of the past year has been the widespread cooperation and collegiality among workers. From being unified to serve the greater good, and in many cases even competitors became collaborators. Continue this spirit of peer outreach and collaboration into 2021, remembering that you are not alone in the fight against the pandemic.
6. **Understand the impact of stress.** Studies show that 95% of chronic illness is related to stress, anxiety, depression and inflammation, and is potentially preventable and reversible. Reflecting on the pandemic, note that stress can be defined as the interpretation of threat, whether it's physical threat or psychological threat or emotional threat, it doesn't matter. If you feel threatened your body goes into sympathetic overdrive that can result in inflammation. Seeking ways to relieve stress is important. For example, exercise, getting good sleep, deep breathing, mindfulness, meditation practices, etc. can all help mitigate inflammation, depression, anxiety and disease.
7. **Take care of yourself.** You can't take care of others without taking care of yourself. Keep your tank filled. Burnout is real. We're here for each other, so share your experiences. Fortunately, for many people, COVID-19 has rekindled a sense of purpose. Many team members are reconnecting with their missions. Take the steps to care for yourself and keep reminding yourself: "I am making a difference."

My hope is that we remember to do our best to take care of ourselves, but most importantly we enjoy the many great memorable moments that occur this year and stay hopeful for better things to come.