

The View From Here

By: Justine Chichester

“Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.”

– Michael Josephson

I’ve decided to take a new approach to my New Year’s resolutions this year. In the past, I’ve done what most of us do, swear up and down to lose weight, exercise more, get more sleep.... the list of empty promises with vague, arbitrary deadlines has been an endless one for me. And, of course, inevitably, a few weeks or even a few days into the new year I’ve already broken half of the promises I made, and, yes, probably forgotten about the rest. The reality of real life always takes over and the resolutions go out the window along with any hope of getting any of those things done.

Most of my resolutions for 2018 involve physical therapy and ultimately becoming more functional back on my feet. This is so much more important to me than anything else I’ve promised to do in the past. So instead of just proclaiming some random resolution, and promising myself I’ll work on it throughout the year, I’ve actually made a list of the goals I want to achieve. I wrote them down. When you write something down it becomes tangible. It’s real. Not just an empty promise floating in the wind that is easily forgotten. After writing down my goals for the year, I broke down those goals into specific, smaller steps I could take each day to work towards that overall goal. I read somewhere recently that “a dream written down is a goal. A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan.” A plan is definitely something I can work with.

Coming up with a realistic timeframe for this plan has already been helpful this year. I asked myself, when do I think I can accomplish this? What date will I be able to complete it? I’ve made it a point to work every day, even if briefly, on my plan and I’ve started documenting my daily progress. Yes, I am writing it all down. I know it seems tedious and really impossible with everything life throws at us every day. But, this has probably been the most rewarding part so far. Being able to look back at my progress, in writing, has helped me see the work I’m putting in and gives me a sense of accomplishment in the journey, not necessarily just the outcome. When I get discouraged; or if I have a bad day; or I think I can’t put in the work I need to, I just have to look back at my daily journal and I see something I had forgotten. It is my encouragement to keep going. To keep putting in the work.

I have to admit, though, that it hasn’t been easy. Writing things down has been one of the hardest parts. I tend to fall back on my old habits, “Yeah, I’ll remember” or “I just don’t have the time.” That’s why I’ve solicited the help of close friends, family and my physical therapists to hold me accountable. If I have to answer to someone, I know I am much more likely to be sure I’ve done that task. Accountability is the glue that ties commitment to results.

And that is what I am hoping for in this new year. Results. Just a few weeks in and I already feel a sense of accomplishment with this new plan to reach my goals in 2018. I’ll be sure to keep you posted on my progress!