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Greetings!

Whether it's setting goals, fashion, decorating or technology, it's always good to improve our knowledge and reach for the stars. Our first article defines the important characteristics of setting good goals and the second article highlights some of the hottest home and garden trends for 2010.

Many digital camera owners are totally in the dark when it comes to getting a clear, sharp photograph. If you'd like to do more than point, shoot and pray, our third article's for you!

Finally, our fourth article features an amazing lemon cheesecake recipe that's perfect for entertaining. It tastes as delicious as it looks!

Thanks so much for taking the time to check out our newsletter. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments regarding the articles or real estate in general -- we'd love to hear from you!

Did you know...

Families are like fudge - mostly sweet with a few nuts. - Author Unknown



In This Issue...

[Characteristics Of Good Goals](#)

[The Hottest 2010 Household Trends](#)

[Point and ... Oh, Shoot!](#)

[Luscious Lemon Ginger Cheesecake](#)

Characteristics Of Good Goals

A. Specific

A "good" goal says exactly what you want to accomplish. If you wanted to work with people, for example, you would need to be more specific than that. Physicians work with people and so do undertakers. You want to "Help people." Be even more specific, how do you want to help people? Your goal might state "I want to be a counselor helping the elderly," or "I want to become a geriatric nurse."

B. Measurable

Being specific helps to make your goal measurable. You need something by which you can gauge your progress and tell you when you've reached your objective. For example, if



you are in school, at the end of each semester
you can tally up the credits that you've earned toward your degree.

C. Challenging

Your goal should require you to do something that will allow you to grow and improve yourself. Good goals are stimulating. Commit yourself to actions, which will stretch you to do your best.

D. Realistic

A "good" goal must be attainable. Do you have, or will you be able to acquire the skills, experience and training you need to get the job you want? If your life's dream is to work as a geriatric counselor, you would first have to finish your Bachelor's Degree and then you will need to go to graduate school to be licensed in the field.

E. Time-Limited

You should not direct a goal to some vague period in the future. Select a reasonable time limit in which you can accomplish each step toward your goal. "I will have earned 30 credits toward my degree by the end of this school year."

F. Action-Oriented

When expressing your goals, your statements should have active tense verbs and be complete sentences. Don't make statements about something you won't do. Make positive assertions instead. "I will go back to school next semester," or "I will be certified as a geriatric counselor by this time next year."

G. Useful

This is the crucial test. Have you selected goals that will be most relevant to bridging the gap between where and what you are now and where and what you want to be? Do your goals deal with eliminating the differences in your present situation and what you want your future to be?

The Hottest 2010 Household Trends

2010 rings in various household trends that reflect the current economic situation and the desire to live within our means. Preserving the environment is also popular as people continue to purchase eco-friendly products and materials. Here are just a few trends you'll see this year:

1. *Eco-Decorating* - The credit crunch has inspired many of us to decorate a little more creatively. Homeowners are adding charm and character by purchasing used, vintage pieces of furniture and reupholstering old chairs. Using recycled glass and wood are also earth friendly ways of decorating.
2. *Home Cooking* - In order to save money, people are swapping restaurants for home cooked meals. Commercial grade appliances are therefore becoming very popular. Built-in recycling areas and composters make "going green" easier, while bamboo flooring and recycled glass countertops gain popularity.
3. *Air Quality* - Toxins in our homes are often more dangerous than those outside. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are toxic chemicals emitted from building materials such as cabinetry, carpet and paint. Homeowners are now investing in air purification systems that combat airborne chemicals. There are also a wider variety of low VOC products on the market to choose from.
4. *Green Thumb* - Concerns over pesticides coupled with the desire to save money are encouraging homeowners to transform their lawns into vegetable gardens. More and more people are organically transforming their gardens with local plant varieties that use less water as well as using rain barrels to curb water usage.
5. *Pampered Pets* - People consider their pets part of the family so it's no surprise they're opting to remodel their homes around Fido and Fluffy. Showers or tubs with hand held sprayers are increasingly popular along with specific 'pet rooms' to store food and litter. Hardwood floors for easy clean up, fully fenced yards, heated floors and storage benches are also popular design features.



These trends result from our desire to be eco-friendly; both ECO-logically and ECO-nomically. More and more homeowners are going back to basics -- staying in is the new going out so people are putting more focus on transforming their home and garden into comfortable sanctuaries.

Point and ... Oh, Shoot!

Remember the olden days when you had no idea how your photos would look until they were developed? Digital cameras eliminate this problem but there's more to taking a great photo than just pointing and shooting. Here are some easy tips that separate the amateurs from the pros:

1. *In Your Face* - Don't be afraid to get up close and personal when you're taking pictures of people. If you're not able to get in close, use the optical zoom instead of the digital zoom as the digital feature causes blurriness.
2. *Know Your Modes* - Don't just set your mode to "Auto" and hope for the best. Get to know all your camera's scene modes such as "Portrait", "Night Mode", "Kids & Pets", etc. as they'll make a huge difference to the sharpness and quality of your photo.
3. *Practice Makes Perfect* - A common frustration is shutter delay caused by autofocus. One solution is to press the shutter release button halfway down to lock the camera's focus and when you're ready to shoot, fully press the button and the photo will immediately be taken.
4. *Light it Up* - Photography's about capturing light so it's best to take your photos outside as household light often shows up yellow. Turn the lights on if you're inside and make sure to hold your hand steady so the shot isn't blurry. Turning your flash off can sometimes help.



The Internet offers many tips for the budding photographer including composition and lighting tricks. Improving the quality of your photographs isn't about buying a more expensive camera; it's about understanding the camera you already have.

Luscious Lemon Ginger Cheesecake

Words can't describe this delicious lemon ginger cheesecake that'll have your guests lining up for the recipe! The real lemon juice and zest adds zing and because this "no bake" dessert can be made in advance, you'll have more time to enjoy your guests. Here's all you need:

- 9 oz. ginger nut cookies, crumbled
- ½ cup melted butter
- 1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 2/3 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 lemons, juice and zest

Put the cookies in a zip loc bag then seal and crush with a rolling pin. Mix the melted butter with the cookie crumbs and press into a spring form pan. Chill a few hours until firm. Whip the cream until softly peaking and stir in the lemon juice and rind. Next, fold in the condensed milk and spread evenly on the chilled base. Let the cheesecake set for a few hours in the fridge. For added flair, sprinkle some chocolate flakes or lemon zest on top and serve with raspberries!



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