

Intentions to Find Satisfaction

For the last three years, I have been fortunate to work with the US Forest Service – Rocky Mountain Region. We kicked off 2023 with a fantastic discussion during their monthly event, Wellness Wednesday, with a conversation on the topic of...you guessed it – resolutions! However, we chose a different take on resolution and discussed satisfaction, both personally and professionally. More importantly, being intentional about living a life of health and well-being creates satisfaction.

How do you define satisfaction? What is satisfaction in your personal and professional life? How do we measure satisfaction? I recently read, “A satisfied life is better than a successful life because our success is measured by others, but our satisfaction is measured by our own soul, mind and heart.” It’s impossible to use a measurement tool for our own soul, mind, and heart, but we certainly know when that satisfaction is not there.



One way of feeling satisfaction in life is to recognize the many things that we’re already doing. It’s important to give ourselves credit – for everything from the small tasks we’ve accomplished to the loftier goals we’ve achieved. Often, we minimize our work or our accomplishments with the act of reprimanding ourselves, by critiquing what was done or belittling it because we feel like it’s not enough, but it’s time we find satisfaction in starting small. In fact, be intentional with starting small. As the saying goes, we can only eat the elephant one bite at a time. Big goals are great, the possibly life-changing resolution you might have conceived is important, but if we only ever look at the big picture and not break it down into bite-size pieces, it can become overwhelming. We might create analysis paralysis: We begin to see a situation as too complicated, and a decision is never made. We desire a perfect solution, agonize over what we “should” be doing but fear making a “wrong” decision. Again, what’s more important, is being intentional in giving ourselves the credit for what we ARE doing and stop “shoulding” all over ourselves.

To begin, we can be intentional about designing structure for ourselves. When we start formulating a plan to recognize how to create satisfaction in our life, things start to take shape. By starting small, we intentionally take each step, already knowing – or have an idea – what the next step could be for our health and wellbeing. For example, I often use the SMART acronym when setting goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Based. This acronym is a way of creating structure to what you want to accomplish. How might you use a similar approach when outlining what helps to build satisfaction in your life? Structure creates clarity, but it also allows for mistakes. We’re human, mistakes or missteps are going to happen. Having a plan in place, a purposeful step-by-step process, removes analysis paralysis and gives us permission to reevaluate if needed – or just take a break. An outlined structure allows us to pick up again when we’re ready and continue to move forward.

Intention is the compass – let finding satisfaction in life be one of your intentional acts, the compass to guide you to enjoyment, well-being and contentment. Give yourself credit for the many good things that you’re already doing and celebrate every small step! Remember, we can only eat the elephant one bite at a time.