

full tilt living newsletter

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It's January and we're fully into winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

I remember my mother bundling us up to go out and play at this time of year. She'd send us out trussed like turkeys for maybe a half hour before our teeth started chattering and then haul us back inside and peel us back down to just the inner layer. I'd say the dressing and undressing took her a full hour if there were no emergency potty breaks involved. Ah, snow!

So winter slows us down, even if we've gotten the bundling-
unbundling thing down to under fifteen minutes.

Bold strides have been exchanged for penguin waddles as we shuffle along with our heads down, shoulders hunched, hands tucked in gloves.

And the rain and the snow come between us, cutting down on our range of vision. Our eyes are on the ice—or mini-lakes if it warms up—under our wheels, under our feet. Not on each other.

There's an introspection that comes with this as well. Just

when the calendar is calling for us to leap into a new cycle, make action plans for the coming year. What I feel like making is hot cocoa and watching the marshmallows melt across the top of my mug. Not an action plan that any manager wants to hear about.

I say go ahead and introspect. Look into some things about yourself. Start with checking out how your body is doing. I mean really ask it. "Body, what do you need to be healthy and fit?" Ask this simple question before you get settled in for the night. Leave a note pad on your nightstand so you can write down any thoughts that pop up the next morning. If you get more general type answers (exercise, healthy foods, more rest, etc.) ask for specifics the next night. For as many nights as you need. It's uncanny how much good solid advice you can get this way.

Then ask another simple question, choosing from this list:

- What is most important for me to accomplish this year?

- How can I make my relationships better?
- What do I most need to learn?

Once again, if you get an answer that is more general in nature, ask for specifics over the next few nights.

And what are you going to do with all this good advice? First make sure you write it down when you get it. Second, read it out loud to yourself. Third, agree that you will do these things. And you will find that serendipitous events occur that give you the opportunity to do them. Fourth, do them. They won't be difficult or out of sync with the rest of your life. They'll be just what you've always wanted.

Oh, and if you'd like to take a shortcut on writing that action plan, ask one more question: "How can I best reach my goals?" So you may look like a penguin when you walk in the door in the morning, but no one will doubt that under all those wraps beats the heart of a winner. Just be sure to get all of the marshmallow off your upper lip.