

Joyful

Fall/Winter
2026

Living

What
Can
I Do?

By Robin Littau

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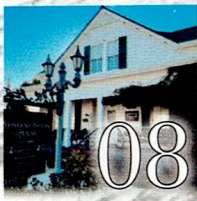
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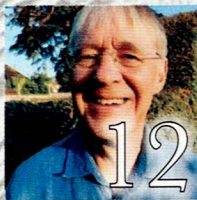
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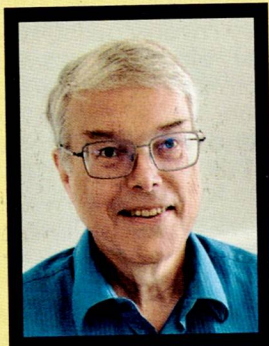
Joyful Living Magazine is a local publication intending to connect the community together with inspiring/encouraging articles that: advertise the heart driving local businesses, share resources/local information and shine light on hope filled, love-in-action good works occurring in our community.

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THE TIRELESS TO-DO LIST

By John W. Nichols



Where would I be without my to-do list? Life brings so much to track and handle, and I wonder how many things I would forget without that list.

I fell in love anew with to-do lists as I participated in the wedding planning for two daughters. Those who have been there understand the effort. My wedding lists took the form of spreadsheets to track purchases and chore lists to assign responsibility and measure progress.

With all the electronic devices at hand, to-do lists are easy to create. I can open the notes app on the smartphone and simply speak. The phone enters the items for me, though the action often delivers humorous misquotes. For household maintenance and garden chores I prefer a low-tech paper to-do list. I keep it near the breakfast counter so that I can review it and determine my plan for the day. Here are some tips I've gleaned from using to-do lists.

1. Be specific when adding items to the list and include enough description so the entry makes sense.
2. Don't allow the list to become a project in itself. Think of the list as a prompting tool, and be as brief as possible.
3. Be realistic in setting expectations. A day that begins with twenty items listed, each requiring an hour of effort, means that some will be left for tomorrow. Or next week. And that's acceptable! The items are noted so they won't be forgotten.
4. Each day pick the item requiring the most effort and tackle it first. Once that task is completed the remainder of the day seems easier.

☒	_____
☒	_____
☒	_____
☒	_____

5. Use the list as a placeholder when interruptions happen. Set the list aside while you handle those unplanned issues. The faithful to-do list will wait patiently for your return.

6. Mark completed items with a check mark (or strike a line through them) and enjoy the sense of accomplishment. This action gives a visual progress indicator and fosters motivation to complete the next item.

7. On days when mental fog sets in, push the list aside and take a long walk. What a great moment to meditate on favorite passages from God's Word. To-do lists are non-judgmental and completely supportive. If it helps, add an item to the list, "Take today off from the to-do list!" And don't forget to mark it as completed.

What are some benefits we can expect from using to-do lists? Consider that entering items on a list means we do not have to juggle them in memory, and that eases the load on our overworked minds. The to-do list adjusts our focus on the day's plan providing some degree of time management for our overcrowded schedules. Use of this simple list brings direction to our efforts, increases our efficiency, and gives a boost to our productivity.

Remember that the items on the list can be prioritized to help us achieve both short term and long-term goals. With the help of a to-do list we can track and accomplish more than might happen were we to rely solely on memory. The cost of using the list is low, and the payback is high. Why not give the to-do list a try and see how it works for you?