

6 Tips for 2006

Just 6. That's right. Six tips to make life simpler by getting more organized. And for something different this year, read about creating a "theme" for yourself in 2006.

Tip #1 – Get Organized – What's Your Theme for 2006?

Think about it. When you plan a party, you establish a theme, from a Barbie party to an adult luau. When you decorate your home, you establish a theme --Tuscany, country French, traditional. Why not a theme for 2006? It can be simple. Have the theme to make decisions without any regrets, to surprise your clients with added value or to choose to enrich your mind, body and spirit daily. Have a business and a personal theme. A theme is not about goals and dates in which to do them; a theme is about your vision of the New Year and how you want to **experience it**. What is your theme for 2006 going to be? Take the Personal Life Balance Wheel challenge at <http://www.opendoorcoaching.com/PDF%20files/WheelLife.pdf> See which areas of your life deserve a smoother ride. Target an area or two and develop a theme that works for you. Contact Debora McLaughlin, Career & Business Coach, www.OpenDoorCoaching.com or 603-880-1968.

Tip #2 – Get Organized for What YOU Want

Make the time to figure out what to do about the results of your Wheel of Life.

How to make time? (Notice I didn't say "find time." "Make time" implies it's a priority.)

- > Schedule time in your planner (really!) for a daily walk, until it becomes a habit.
- > Book yourself away for a day or a few nights' retreat.
- > Spend time or take a class at The Holistic Self-Care Center <http://www.thehscenter.com/>
- > Take 10 minutes to sit still, before everyone wakes up in the morning. ... Or later at night.
- > Create a "space" in your home which everyone knows is *all yours*. Try a comfortable chair in a reading nook at the window. Or a "junk" room you turn into your retreat space.

For help discovering where and how to create your own "space" at home, contact me.

Tip #3 – Get Organized -- Your Financial Records

Sherrill St. Germain, of New Means Financial Planning, comments: "Keeping good records is one of the most important elements of a successful financial plan. To quickly put your hands on accurate financial information prevents costly mistakes, oversights, and delays with tax prep, bill payment, loan applications, and other transactions."

Try these tips to help ...

- > Place tax documents in a large envelope *as you receive them*, right at your desk or wherever you open the mail. They'll be altogether to submit later on.
- > Outsource to a CPA. A strong team member alleviates stress, gives you back time and has focused expertise for you. Pam McCarthy, CPA tells me "I have never reviewed a self-prepared tax return and not found *missing deductions*. Even including tax prep fees, taxpayers usually *save money* by having their returns professionally prepared. And CPA-prepared returns are *less likely* to be audited by the IRA than self-prepared returns."
- > Work with a financial advisor. Invest in yourself and in your business. Rely on someone who focuses his or her time on knowing how to handle investment and other financial decisions.

Sherrill provides financial planning and investment advice on an hourly basis. This is an ideal choice for people who aren't necessarily looking to purchase financial products or engage a full-time financial advisor, but may simply need objective, professional advice from time to time.

More from Sherrill: "A more subtle benefit is the awareness that results from keeping good financial records. My experience has been that clients who know how much is coming in the door, where it's going, what they own, and what they owe are in a much better position to 1) make financial decisions that are in line with their stated goals and 2) take advantage of financial planning strategies that accelerate their progress toward those goals."

Contact Pam at 978-649-3447 pam@pammccarthycpa.com. Contact Sherrill at sstgermain@newmeans.com or 603-465-3485. For an organizing tip sheet or hands-on assistance with bill paying, receipts, taxes, files, & more, please contact me.

Tip #4 – Get Organized in Your Office

Treat your home office as *only* an office -- not a TV room, reading room, or crafts room. You're serious about building a business, so dedicate the space and organize it from the start. Bulk supplies and reference files go in another part of your home. Anything you don't use weekly is distracting if you leave it in your 'everyday' workspace. Try out different layouts so it's productive and inspiring. Create a daily workspace and also a projects workspace.

Can you find any piece of paper, e-mail or file on your pc within a minute? **Take the Disorganized Desk Test** <http://www.taylorintime.com/cluttertest.php> If not, you may be wasting billable time. Keep track of your time for a week and see where it goes (it's always surprising!). Reclaim time by getting more organized.

Which aspects of business management do you *not* like to do? Which aspects do you procrastinate about? What's the cost of outsourcing temporarily, compared to what YOU gain in time?

Get an instruction sheet for creating folders on your PC, by Evelyn Hausberger of "Mayday" computer help. Evelyn@MaydayNH.com 603-888-5122. Contact me for assistance or tip sheets for organizing your office, creating office systems, handling mail/e-mail, & more.

Tip #5 – Get Organized – Learning to Say "No"

In business, it's a struggle. Keep the vision of your business in focus all the time. When you are presented with advertising opportunities, joint ventures, presentation opportunities, do a check against your business goals. Same thing with our family activities and family schedule. Every choice is a choice *to do* one thing, and *to give up* something else.

Tip #6 – Get Organized for Your 2006 Holidays!

Put away your decorations in plastic, labeled bins. Put like items together. Keep a list during the year of gift ideas -- *for* you and *from* you. When you vacation, buy unique gifts. Choose *one* place to store the gifts so you know what you have. At family events, get updated addresses for those you don't see often or are out of state. Party planning checklists minimize stress, mistakes and last minute problems. Add to the list with each event.

Ask for tip sheets or assistance to organize/declutter from this holiday season.