

In the tradition of the familiar year-end “Best of” and “Top Ten” lists, let’s pause on the cusp of the New Year. Pause here before you find yourself deep in February wondering where January went. Pause not to create a list of resolutions, but to create a list that celebrates your successes.

This is a gift you can give yourself every year-end and it is one I always challenge my clients to give themselves. The challenge is to list 100 accomplishments from the past year - - large, small, professional, personal, measurable, immeasurable, tangible, and intangible. As you make the list, you will realize that you accomplished far more than you thought you did. And at some point in the list-making process, you will realize it is not only about the “doing,” it is also about the “being.”

What does it mean to also be about the “being?” Make your list of 100 accomplishments and find out. You will probably start with easy metrics and matters related to your work. Your calendar will be a useful tool. At some point you will start thinking about all of the things you did in your personal life as well. Eventually you will get to more of who you were — perhaps how you remained resilient, persevered, asserted yourself, met new people, were a friend, or deepened relationships.

I know this challenge makes many lawyers uncomfortable, especially self-described perfectionists and those who loathe self-promotion. But no one else needs to see your list. The only person possibly judging you is you.

This is a time to be proud of yourself and who you were this past year. You will see that you accomplished more than you gave yourself credit for during the year. A beautiful bonus is that at the end of it all, without having made a single resolution, you will more clearly see what you want to accomplish in 2019. You will see who and how you want to be, and how you will make that happen.

Speaking of 2019, if you do not already have one, create a success folder in Outlook or other location. Throughout the year, save appreciative emails, letters, notes, and your own reminders of your accomplishments. Successes are more than just wins, new clients, and increased revenue. Being able to remind yourself of them will help you ride out the year’s inevitable valleys. Having them available at year-end will help you enjoy it all over again.

Pause as one year ends and another begins. If the Bar can better serve you in 2019, please let us know. In the meantime, congratulations on your 2018 and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and successful 2019.

Cheers from the Bar,
Elizabeth