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# THE GYPSUM GROUP OF COMPANIES NEWSLETTER

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December

2018

## Fun Facts About Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa

- Each year more than 3 billion Christmas cards are sent in the U.S. alone.
- According to the Guinness World Records, the tallest Christmas tree ever cut was a 221-foot Douglas fir that was displayed in 1950 at the Northgate Shopping Center in Seattle, Washington.
- Each year there are approximately 20,000 “Rent-a-Santas” across the United States. “Rent-a-Santas” usually undergo seasonal training on how to maintain a jolly attitude under pressure from the public. They also receive practical advice, such as not accepting money from parents while children are looking and avoiding garlic, onions, or beans for lunch.
- Approximately 30-35 million real (living) Christmas trees are sold each year in the U.S.
- Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for dedication. It commemorates the rededication of the second Temple in Jerusalem, which had been defiled by the Greeks in 164 BC. The story goes that the Jews, led by warrior Judah the Maccabee, revolted against Antiochus and reclaimed the Temple.
- Hanukkah is also known as the Festival of Lights. While restoring the Temple, the Jews found that there was only enough oil to kindle its lamps for one night. According to tradition, though, that small amount of oil miraculously burned for eight nights until more could be procured. That’s why Hanukkah is an eight-night celebration.
- A *menorah* is a lamp with seven branches, which is what would have been used in the ancient Temple. On Hanukkah, Jews light what is called a *hanukkiyah*, a lamp with nine branches. Eight are for the lights that are kindled each night of the holiday; the ninth branch is for the *shamash*, or “helper” flame, which is used to light the others.
- The holiday of Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate family, culture and heritage, and is modeled after the first harvest celebrations in Africa.
- There are 7 Principles that emphasize a unique set of values and ideals during the **7 days** of Kwanzaa: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-determination), Ujima (Collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith)
- The colors of Kwanzaa reflect the principle of “unity” for peoples of African descent worldwide: **Black** for the people, **red** for the noble blood that unites all people of African ancestry, and **green** for the rich land of Africa.

The Gypsum Group of Companies would like to wish you and your family the happiest of holidays and our best wishes for a happy, healthy and successful 2019!



## Making Effective New Year’s Resolution(s)

New Year’s Resolutions come every year and tend to begin with zest, passion, and excitement and all too often fade away into frustration, discouragement, and flat out abandonment. Statistically, 97% of people have already drop their resolutions by January 24<sup>th</sup>, so how can you be one who sticks to your new goals and resolutions? Begin by asking the right questions to guide your path to success.

1. Ask: “**What would make me happier?**” It might be having more of *something good* – more fun with friends, more time for a hobby. It might be less of *something bad* – less yelling at your kids, less nagging of your spouse. It might be fixing something that *doesn’t feel right* – more time spent volunteering, more time doing something to make someone else happier.
2. Ask: “**What is a concrete action that would bring about change?**” One common problem is that people make abstract resolutions, which are hard to keep. “Be more optimistic,” “Find more joy in life,” “Enjoy now,” are resolutions that are hard to measure and therefore difficult to keep. Instead, look for a specific, measurable action. “Distract myself with fun music when I’m feeling gloomy,” “Watch at least one movie each week,” “Buy a

lovely plant for my desk” are resolutions that will carry you toward those abstract goals.

3. Ask: “**Am I a ‘yes’ resolver or a ‘no’ resolver?**” Some people resent negative resolutions. They dislike hearing “don’t” or “stop” or adding to their list of chores. If this describes you, try to find positive resolutions: “Take that dance class,” “Have lunch with a friend once a week.” Or maybe you respond well to “no.” Your resolution should be aimed at getting you to stop doing something or to do something you don’t really want to do. There’s no right way to make a resolution, but it’s important to know what works *for you*. As always, the secret is to know your own nature.

4. Ask: “**Am I starting small enough?**” Many people make super-ambitious resolutions and then drop them, feeling defeated, before January is over. Start small! We tend to over-estimate what we can do over a short time and under-estimate what we can do over a long time, if we make consistent, small steps. If you’re going to resolve to start exercising (one of the most popular resolutions), *don’t* resolve to go to the gym for an hour every day before work. Start by going for a ten-minute walk at lunch or marching in place once a day during the commercial breaks in your favorite TV show. Little accomplishments provide energy for bigger challenges. Push yourself too hard and you may screech to a halt.

5. Ask: “**How am I going to hold myself accountable?**” Accountability is the secret to sticking to resolutions. That’s why groups like AA and Weight Watchers are effective, and there are many ways to hold yourself accountable. Keep a Resolutions Chart where you write down your resolution(s) and then write down everything you do that you believe pertains to that resolution. Accountability is why #2 is so important. If your resolution is too vague, it’s hard to measure whether you’ve been keeping it. A resolution to “Eat healthier” is harder to track than “Eat salad for lunch three times a week.”

Happy New Year 2019

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### Famous Last Words:

“I reached the pinnacle of success in the business world. To some, my life is the epitome of success. However, aside from work, I have little joy. In the end, my wealth is only a fact of life that I am accustomed to. At this moment, lying on my bed and recalling my life, I realize all the recognition and wealth that I took so much pride in have paled and become meaningless in the face of my death. You can employ someone to drive the car for you, make money for you, but you cannot have someone bear your sickness for you. Material things lost can be found or replaced. But there is one thing that can never be found when it’s lost, Life. Whatever stage in life you are in right now, you will face the day when the curtain comes down. Treasure love for your family, love for your spouse, love for your friends.

Treat yourself well and cherish others. As we grow older, and hopefully wiser, we realize that a watch costing \$30 or \$300 both tell the same time. Your true inner happiness does not come from the material things of this world. Whether you fly first class or economy, if the plane goes down - you go down with it. When you have mates, buddies and old friends, brothers and sisters, who you chat with, laugh with, talk with, sing songs with, that is true happiness! Don’t educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy, so when they grow up, they will know the value of things and not the price. Eat food as your medicine, otherwise you have to eat medicine as your food. There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few really understand it. You are loved when you are born. You will be loved when you die. In between, you have to manage! The seven best doctors in the world are: sunlight, rest, exercise, diet, love, self-confidence and friends. Maintain them in all stages and enjoy a healthy life.”

~ Steve Jobs (final essay)