



## START OVER

Those two words can take the wind out of your sails. It's bad enough if it's an accidentally deleted blog that you labored over or the paint color you chose for your bedroom is all wrong.

### But what if it's your life?

Starting over when you've . . .

- moved.
- gone through a divorce.
- retired.
- downsized.
- lost a loved one.
- changed jobs.
- had your last child move out.



Instead of STARTING OVER, give the process a new name, like . . .

STARTING FRESH

or

STARTING ANEW.

View this stage in life as an opportunity for new choices and new directions. Trust that God is IN this new start. Trust that the path ahead holds blessings that you can't imagine.

Resisting the process will only bring more frustration, anxiety, and discouragement. Beginning today, you're embarking on a fresh start that will lead to new adventures and new discoveries. God will provide new possibilities, new purpose, new plans, new provisions, and new growth!

Embrace them!

Read on for more inspiration to turn "starting over" into "starting fresh".

*"For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland."* Isaiah 43:19

*"Every morning I must say again to myself, today I start."* - Anthony of the Desert

Every "today" is an opportunity to begin again. It's a new day to surrender to and depend on God. A new day to love fully. A new day to be grateful. A new day to begin again.

Create a sticky note that you'll see every day—or write on the mirror in lipstick—

**Today I start.**

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- Video downloads now available for each session of the *NEW After the Boxes Are Unpacked Video Series*
- Check out our new website!



Although life can only be *understood* by looking backwards,  
it can only be *lived* by moving forward.

- Susan Miller

## Press On

By Susan Miller

Are you making a fresh start? This is a great opportunity to make some changes that will give you new direction and make your life easier, more rewarding, and more enjoyable.

The giant step of self-discipline will be the springboard for setting new goals, new priorities, and doing some reorganizing.

*I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)*

These verses give me some biblical insights regarding self-discipline.

Do you see the four key phrases in these verses which are necessary for self-discipline? They are: one thing, forgetting, reaching forward, and press on.

**One thing** means I need to be single-minded and focus on what I'm trying to accomplish. Doing ten things at once is definitely a distraction from my primary goal.

**Forgetting** indicates putting something out of my mind. I need to clear my mind of less important things so that I can be free to do what is most significant.

**Reaching forward** involves stretching or extending myself. At times I feel like I'm trying to do something that's out of reach, but the more I stretch toward the goal, the closer I come to achieving it.

**Press on** means to go forward with effort and commitment. Worthwhile goals aren't simply going to happen. They must be pursued with determination.

Self-discipline—also known as self-control—is one of God's promises in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Self-control comes as a result of God's Spirit living within you. He will help you through the power of His Spirit. You are not on your own! *"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think."* (Ephesians 3:20, NLT)

## Tomorrow. God is already there.

It could never be better to stay once God determines otherwise; if the loving hand of our Lord moves us forward, it must be best. Forward, in His name, to green pastures, quiet waters, and mountain heights (see Psalm 23:2)! "He goes on ahead of (us)." So whatever awaits us is encountered first by Him, and the eye of faith can always discern His majestic presence out in front. Comfort your heart with the fact that the Savior has Himself experienced all the trials He asks you to endure; He would not ask you to pass through them unless He was sure that the paths were not too difficult or strenuous for you.

This is the blessed life – not anxious to see far down the road nor overly concerned about the next step, not eager to choose the path nor weighted down with the heavy responsibilities of the future, but quietly following the Shepherd, one step at a time.

The shepherd always walked ahead of his sheep. He was always out in front. Any attack upon the sheep had to take him into account first. Now God is out in front. **He is in our tomorrows, and it is tomorrow that fills people with fear. Yet God is already there.** All the tomorrows of our life have to pass through Him before they can get to us. —F.B. Meyer



I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year:  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

He replied, "Go into the darkness and put your hand into  
the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light  
and safer than a known way!"

From "God Knows" (popularly known by "The Gate of the Year")  
by M. L. Haskins.

## 10 Tips for a Fresh Start

By Ann Kelley

1. Be in God's Word and spend time in prayer. God has promised to use all of your circumstances for your growth and to honor Him. Even if you can only devote 5 minutes, you are in a better position to recognize His leading and to meet daily challenges with grace and patience. Pick up a new devotional book at your local bookstore as a guide through scripture reading.
2. At least twice a week take time for yourself. What is it that rejuvenates you? A walk, a bubble bath surrounded by candles, reading a book or magazine in a quiet place; set aside a few minutes to refill and recharge.
3. Once the dust settles after a move or other life change, take a class for personal development or to improve your abilities for a favorite hobby. This is a great way to meet people with similar interests.
4. Designate two nights each month as Family Game Nights. Order pizza so that you don't have to cook. If you're single, use these nights to go to a movie or to get together with a friend.
5. Choose a room in your house for a face-lift. Paint at least one wall with a bold color that makes a statement. Purchase or make slip covers for the furniture. Paint wooden furniture a shabby chic white, a rich black with bronze accents, or a whimsical color. Scour your house for accessories that you may have never thought to put in your dazzling new room.
6. Plan a date night with your husband. Meet him at a restaurant that you have wanted to try. Are you so new to your area that you don't know a babysitter? Set up a card table in your bedroom with candles, flowers, and your best dishes. Put the kids to bed and enjoy a romantic dinner *chez vous*.
7. Carry a water bottle with you wherever you go. Drinking plenty of water helps flush out toxins and keeps your body hydrated.
8. Clean out your closet. Give away any clothes that you have not worn in the past year or that you do not feel terrific in. Simplifying your wardrobe in this way can be very freeing and reduce decision-making. Make some money by taking clothes that are in perfect condition to a consignment store.
9. Listen to playlists or pod casts that encourage and motivate you while you are doing household chores or driving around town.
10. Keep a journal as you process your emotional, spiritual, and physical issues surrounding a move or other life change. Each time you choose to do something that recharges you, write it down in green ink. At the end of the week, make sure that you don't have to turn too many pages to find a green entry.





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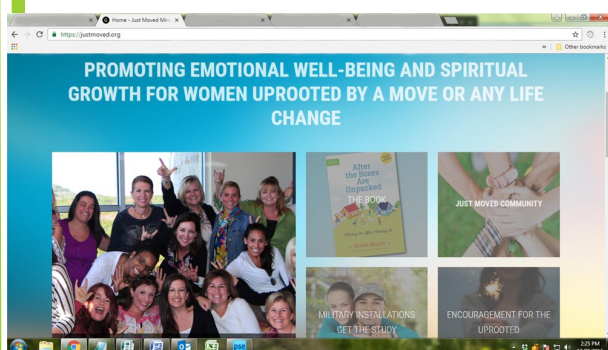
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