

WELLNESS

Funneling Positivity & Justice Ginsburg in 2021

By Wendy-Adele Humphrey

Pop, Fizz, Clink! As we entered this new year, did you think about New Year's resolutions? I typically do not make resolutions, but the most popular resolutions include improving physical well-being, mental well-being, and finances. But one study showed that 88% of those who set New Year's resolutions fail, even though 52% of participants were confident of success at the beginning.¹ Now those percentages are somewhat discouraging. So instead of making specific resolutions, how about simply making a broad declaration to be more positive? That's right, in a time focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, social injustice, and political unrest, we can still make our own call to action to have a more positive outlook. I am a lover of lists, so here is an abbreviated version of a list by Jon Gordon called "20 Tips for a Positive New Year."² And, of course, the proclamation to funnel more positivity can be made at any time, not just as we enter a new year.

1. Answer the following question when you wake up in the morning: "What are the three most important things I need to do today that will help me create the success I desire?" Doing so will help you focus and tune out distractions.
2. Focus on "Get to" vs. "Have to." In other words, each day focus on what you get to do. (I even frame my to-do list as my "get to-do list.")
3. When you can, squeeze in a morning walk of gratitude. This walk will be your "thank you walk."
4. "Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a college kid with a maxed-out credit card." (Ramen, anyone?)
5. Take time to mentor someone and be mentored by someone.
6. Live with the three E's: Enthusiasm, Energy, and Empathy.
7. Speaking of energy, do not waste your energy on toxic gossip, things you cannot control, or other energy vampires.
8. Try to implement the "no complaining" rule. "Complaining is like vomiting. Afterward you feel better, but everyone around you starts to feel sick."
9. Get more sleep. A double latte cannot replace sleep. #truth

Cont'd on page 9

Cont'd from page 8

We should all try to do another thing during 2021 and beyond, and that is to funnel our inner Ruth Bader Ginsburg. For many reasons, I have long admired Justice Ginsberg. I even had the good fortune of seeing her speak in person five times! And thanks to her, I will be able to sign my mortgage—by myself—in a few months when my new home is ready.

Justice Ginsburg's passing on September 18, 2020, at the age of 87, was a tremendous loss for women and society. As you probably know, she was one of only nine women in her class at Harvard Law and the second woman to be appointed to the United States Supreme Court. Throughout her career as a lawyer, law professor, and Supreme Court Justice, she was a warrior, a trailblazer, and a fearless champion for women's rights and equality in general. How can we funnel her in 2021? I could create a long list because she was such an amazing woman, but I am focusing on five ways you can funnel Justice Ginsburg for this article. (Thank you to Shelley Zalis and her *Forbeswomen* article "12 Life Lessons from Ruth Bader Ginsburg,"³ for providing insight for the list.)

1. **Carefully Pick Your Battles:** Justice Ginsburg's mother-in-law handed her some advice on her wedding day. According to Justice Ginsburg, that advice was to tune out a thoughtless or unkind word rather than reacting in annoyance or anger. She employed this advice in her marriage and in the workplace, helping her to stay focused and happy.
2. **Be a Resilient Leader:** In 2015 at Harvard University, Justice Ginsburg said, "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."⁴ She, of course, argued and won five landmark Supreme Court cases during the 1970s.⁵ She did so not only through her stellar advocacy skills, but by remaining resilient, even when she had personal setbacks.
3. **Don't Be Afraid to Dissent:** Justice Ginsburg was known for her well-crafted dissents. She was not afraid to point out when she believed her Supreme Court colleagues were wrong. But she always did so with the utmost respect and professionalism.
4. **Be Patient:** We often want things to change overnight, but that is simply not realistic. As Justice Ginsburg said, "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."⁶ We should all remember this statement when we find ourselves frustrated at how long real change takes.
5. **Don't Forget to Exercise:** Last year, one of my friends gave me a book called *The RBG Workout: How She Stays Strong . . . and You Can Too!*,⁷ written by Bryant Johnson. Topping just five feet tall, Justice Ginsburg was challenged by several cancers over the years, but she continued to exercise on a regular basis. If she could work out on a regular basis, can't we, too?

To sum up, I leave you with the words of Justice Clarence Thomas, who wrote, "Through the many challenges both professionally and personally, she was the essence of grace, civility, and dignity."⁸ We should all strive to funnel Justice Ginsburg's grace, civility, and dignity as we face our own challenges. In 2021, be notorious in your own way.

Cont'd on page 10

Cont'd from page 9

Wendy-Adele Humphrey is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Brock Professor of Law at Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock. She also is a State Bar of Texas Director and Liaison to the Women and the Law Section. Wendy-Adele can be reached at wendy.humphrey@ttu.edu.

¹ See Richard Wiseman, "New Year's Resolution Project," *Quirkology* (available at http://www.richardwiseman.com/quirkology/new/USA/Experiment_resolution.shtml) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

² See Jon Gordon, "20 Tips for a Positive New Year," (2020 updated) (available at <https://www.jongordon.com/positivetip/20-tips-2020.html>) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

³ See Shelley Zalis, "12 Life Lessons from Ruth Bader Ginsburg," *Forbeswomen* (Sep. 25, 2020) (available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelleyzalis/2020/09/25/12-life-lessons-from-ruth-bader-ginsberg/?sh=e70a79326255>) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

⁴ Alanna Vagianos, "Ruth Bader Ginsburg Tells Young Women: 'Fight for the Things You Care About,'" Harvard Radcliffe Institute (Jun. 2, 2015) (quoting Ginsburg) (available at <https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/news-and-ideas/ruth-bader-ginsburg-tells-young-women-fight-for-the-things-you-care-about>) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

⁵ See Penny Venetis, "Ginsburg's Legal Victories for Women Led to Landmark Anti-Discrimination Rulings for the LGBTQ Community, Too," *The Conversation* (available at <https://theconversation.com/ginsburgs-legal-victories-for-women-led-to-landmark-anti-discrimination-rulings-for-the-lgbtq-community-too-146546>) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

⁶ Joshua Barajas, "After RBG's Death, This Poet Urges Us to Follow in Her Steps," PBS News Hour (Sep. 24, 2020) (quoting Ginsburg) (available at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/poetry/after-rbgs-death-this-poet-urges-us-to-follow-in-her-steps>) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

⁷ Bryant Johnson, *The RBG Workout: How She Stays Strong . . . and You Can Too!* (Oct. 17, 2017).

⁸ U.S. Supreme Court, "Statements from the Supreme Court Regarding the Death of Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg" (Sept. 19, 2020) (quoting Thomas) (available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/publicinfo/press/pressreleases/pr_09-19-20) (last visited Feb. 24, 2021).

FREE CLE

CLE Video Library

Enjoy this Member Benefit: watch recorded CLEs, download course materials, and claim MCLE credit!

Access Instructions:

Visit <http://txwomenlawsection.org/>

Click on "Members"

Select "Members Only"

Select "CLE Video Library"

Type confidential pw "justice"