

21 tips for '21

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My tips are probably different today than they would have been a year ago. I am transitioning from having a full house with three kids and three playful dogs, to a house with my husband, me and our three aging but spunky dogs. We are aging, too, and hopefully, still spunky. These are some tips I have.



- **Embrace the transitions in life, and slow down to enjoy them.**
As I think back, becoming a parent of my now 26-year-old son was a major change. Days seemed especially long when sleep was lacking. As my youngest, an 18-year-old, heads off to college this fall, our house will be fairly quiet without a full family schedule.

I hope that all of you find ways to achieve work-life balance so you can enjoy these fleeting moments. Working in our field of Extension-FCS is both challenging and fulfilling. We can apply what we teach directly in our families from food safety to finance, but we also need to set our priorities.

- **Reinvent yourself now and then, start small and ask for help when needed.** I always liked to paint and draw while growing up, but I had little time to those hobbies for the past three decades. As my creative outlet, I coached three kids through a combined 18 years of 4-H food, art, sewing, dog training, public speaking and other topics.

Perhaps I need to pull out those antique artist brushes and see what happens. My middle child, a daughter, is a talented artist and professional interior designer, so I may need her help.

Is there something you always wanted to do or something you used to do? Don't put it aside for "tomorrow." In anticipation of my empty nest, a couple of years ago, I picked up my flute and began playing more seriously again. I joined a community band, which greatly tested the flexibility of my brain and fingers. After two years, I think my playing is almost back to where I was in college, but that required discipline and a lot of practice. Wow is it fun to meet new friends with similar interests!

Next, I think I will try making a quilt. I may need some guidance from my talented quilting friends in NEAFCS. Actually, maybe I should begin with a table runner.

Overall, I think the pandemic has taught me that we truly have no idea what tomorrow will bring. Be strong, courageous and flexible with life's changes and challenges. Try new things for the sheer joy of trying.