

21 tips for '21

Lisa McCoy (MD), Eastern Region Director

When it came my turn to write my 2 tips, I took some time to reflect on what things I have found helpful to me not only with work but life in general. The work of Extension is never done as all of us realize but it is important to keep our sanity through it all. My 2 tips are practices that I try to use in my life when it becomes overwhelming and I feel like a hamster on a wheel.



1. When I have an overwhelming task, whether it is writing an article, creating a curriculum, or cleaning out a closet or room, I use the “Pomodoro technique”. This is a time management method that was developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. This technique uses a timer to break down tasks in short intervals of time, separated by short breaks. The traditional time interval is 25 minutes, but I tend to go a little longer, 30 or 45 minutes. I start working on my “project” and take a break when the timer goes off. You will be surprised how much you can accomplish in this short period of time. Take a break for 15 minutes and then do another short work interval using the timer. I use this practice when doing projects around the house and writing my dissertation. Our minds can only stay focused for a short period of time so working in smaller increments helps to keep me focused.
2. My other tip is to find “joy” every day. Joy is defined as “an emotion comprised of feelings of happiness, contentment and harmony”. Joy is not the same as happiness, but it is an emotion that comes from within. We often get so busy in our lives that we forget to slow down and look around to appreciate the beauty of nature, the kindness of others and the simple joys that are with us. Joy is that contentment that we can feel knowing that life may not be perfect but there are good things going on in our lives. Take a few moments to appreciate joy every day and you may be surprised how it changes your outlook and maybe even those around you.