

FINISH

FINISH WHAT YOUR START — On your "to-do" list, how many of the items have been started but not finished? How many loose ends do you have?

The problem is that the loose ends, the projects not finished, loom large in your mind and can overwhelm you. You think you have too much to do as you have so many partially completed items.

The irony is that you spend more time stressing over the loose ends than the time it takes to finish them. Plus, every time you finish one you feel great.

As the year end was approaching, and I was preparing to go away, I was aware I had not finished putting my boat to bed for the winter. I just had to finish the project so I would not worry while on vacation. On December 31st I went to the boat and finished the project. It took less than two hours.

I had spent more than two hours concerned about what had to be done before I went away. For some reason, I couldn't find the time to do it. Finally, I had to finish, and finish I did. Then, I felt great and reflected on how little time it took and how great I felt with it done.

As we start this year, I bet you have items left from last year that you have not finished and are gnawing at you. Make a list of them, and do one a day. Do two if you have time. But make the list and finish them, checking them off.

You'll feel great, and your list will shrink quickly, and your mood will pick up. For many, it's those Christmas decorations that still need to be put away in January. It's those things that have to be returned. It's year-end and holiday stuff.

It's far easier and more rewarding to start a project and complete it at once. Or, based on the time available, go back and finish it before starting a new project. The problem occurs when too many projects are started and in process. None of them get the proper attention and you feel stressed.

You are not alone when you realize things take longer to do than you anticipate. In boating, we say a project takes twice as long as anticipated. Unfortunately, it's true. I have finally learned to allow more time. Now, the projects are fun again.

Your mind gets cluttered and stressed when you have a lot of loose ends of unfinished projects. But, doing one at a time and checking them off the list feels good. Often, there is not much left on a project in order to finish it.

Notice people who always seem organized also have free time. You'll find they start and finish a project, even cleaning up after themselves and putting the tools away. The office

person has a clean desk. The homemaker does not have a lot of stuff hanging around. They finish, and they put the stuff away.

If others can do it, you can also. We all have the same 24 hours a day. Sure, we all have different responsibilities and challenges. But, we can all finish our projects. If you have a big commitment, such as child care, do not start projects that can't be done. Don't start what you can't finish. Wait until you have the time, and then do the whole project.

Finish now. Finish the pending items. For the future, try to finish one project at a time before you start another. You'll be amazed at how many projects you can FINISH.