

Small resolutions. No revolutions

Esquire design columnist **CYRIL ZAMMIT** peers into his crystal ball



THESE DAYS, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW COULD BRING, SO WHY STICK TO SPECIFIC GOALS?"

The first time you write the date of a new year is always a little strange. You might be delighted to see the end of 2023, but you are so used to writing it out that you just can't quite shake it. Would I like to stay in 2023, not really. Am I eagerly anticipating 2024? Not really either. Things change so drastically these days, that you never know what tomorrow might bring. So is the best decision to think grey and stay in the dark? Absolutely not.

Something my father a few years ago stays with me. I asked him if he was happy, to which he replied: "I am content". Even though I had asked the question, the answer came as a surprise.

Upon deeper consideration, it allowed me to reshape and refocus the purpose of my life, especially as it looks we have all seem to have forgotten all resolutions that we made during COVID—let alone the ones we made on January 1, last year. So let's pledge not to make any in 2024, lest we set ourselves up to fail them.

In Ancient Greece, Aristotle defined happiness as '*eudaimonia*'—an activity of expressing virtue, now, while I won't challenge one of history's greatest thinkers, for me happiness is more about satisfaction than virtue. Going back my father's answer, a happy life is a balanced one. If life is a journey of ups and downs, you must always be willing to pick the positive elements as if they were ripe fruits in a garden. Aristotle's forebearer, Socrates, had a similar approach, famously writing that: The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

With that as a jumping off point, humour me to suggest some positive elements to help improve your life this year. Minimalism and calm energy are set to be trends across both interiors and fashion this coming year, so adapting that into your attitude and daily routine could be very beneficial. Look at all aspects of your life and try to simplify at least one thing (or even more if you can) from that. Open yourself to acknowledge that daily challenges will persist, but try viewing them as expected challenges rather than something to activate your anger switch.

For most of us, life is now a relentless barrage of non-stop emails and 'urgent' deadlines, endless working hours and a constant pressure to deliver more for less. There is little sign of this slowing down in 2024 as we continue to normalise a nomadic style of work and private life.

If your work allows it, make sure to balance the time in an office with the one remotely. Try unconventional co-working spaces but also maybe extend a business trip with an extra day to discover the city you are in or mixing time between work and play.

The coming year is also one to (finally) make personal wellness a priority. Thanks to the evolution of A.I. and biomarkers, there is more access to tailored, detailed information to better improve your nutrition based on your preferences, blood tests or more. In a recent Instagram survey by forecasting agency Worth Global Style Network, 5,000 Gen Z participants were asked about their top three priorities for 2024. The result were: Staying healthy, exploring a career path and travelling.

In the food industry trends are suggesting our food to be fast and functional. Beside the importance of staying hydrated, you may need to consider using natural energy boosters (like mango leaf) to support your reaction time and fight your mental fatigue.

According to Hilton's annual report on global travellers' trends (surveying 10,000 travellers from nine countries) 2024 will see travellers investing in the quality of their sleep and the personalisation of their travel experiences. Further proof that amid the turning page of another year amid global uncertainty, it is the small (but long-lasting) joys that will act positive pills for brighter days. ☺

Cyril Zammit is design consultant and design expert based in Dubai. Follow him @cyrilzam; cyrilzammit.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABDULLAH TOUK