

# February: A Time to Reflect, Plan, and Implement Change

**February is the shortest month, but it is full of sparkling possibilities and opportunities.**

BY ERIN R. OGDEN

February is the year's shortest month, but it can feel like the longest. We are still in the thralls of winter, the excitement of the holidays is in the rearview mirror, and Wisconsin residents are questioning their decisions about living where it makes their face hurt. But much like the ice crystals we are scraping off our windshields, February can be full of sparkling light, delicate nuance, and a potential harbinger of things to come.

The name of the month comes from the Latin word *Februa*, which refers to a Roman festival of purification or cleansing. We now have time to reflect on what happened last year, clean out the junk that didn't serve us, and enact some change in the new year. No one says change can only begin on January 1.

To enact change, I recommend a few old-school techniques. Grab a mug of something warm and a pen and paper, and sit down for some introspection and planning. Clean out the stuff that didn't work and focus on what does and will work for you.

Start with what went well. Celebrate every win. Sit and soak in the warm feelings of a job well done. Now, don't stop doing the things that went well. Oddly, that is sometimes easier said than done, but if something is working, keep doing it.

Next, consider what went okay – not poorly but not great. These are areas of incremental improvement. You likely have a slew of things that fit in this category, and it might overwhelm you. Pick three items at most. Resist the temptation to pick more; maybe select only one or two. Then focus on those. Figure out what you want to improve, how you want to do so, and how to implement the things. If you are

a magical wizard and can do more than three things in a year, then figure out four, five, and six when you are satisfied with the first three.

Finally, think about what went poorly. Figure out why – without judgment. Things go poorly sometimes. Get over it. Decide whether an area is worth improving or instead should be dropped. Your new offering went over like a lead balloon? Maybe it isn't in demand. Don't spend more time revamping it if it never

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should be. If it should be, you don't need to make it perfect with the next swing. Just get it closer to the hole. Find one or two ways to improve. You just need it to move to the second category above, not the first. The first milestone is "okay." Then improve on that.

If you want to have more in the top two categories, keep that piece of paper handy or move it somewhere digital. Then look at it every quarter, month, and week. Plan your actions for those periods to implement your improvements. Do one thing per week. You will be amazed how many more things are in the "celebrate" category in 2026. **WL**



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