

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for December 28, 2020**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll look back on our 2020 topics and take a look at one word for 2021.

As per tradition, last week I reflected on all the topics I've covered throughout the year. Many of them have been in response to the pandemic and the way it has affected our relationships, finances, and eating and physical activity habits. We've talked about what to do with your stimulus check and deferred payroll taxes; caregiving and co-parenting challenges; emotional eating and ending world hunger; fair memories and managing family with Alzheimer's disease. The top three segments that sum up 2020 for me are:

3. "What to do when COVID-19 turns your finances upside down" – University Extension systems across the country rallied to provide resources and tools to help families and individuals navigate uncertain financial situations immediately after stay-at-home orders were put in place in March. Free financial coaching remains available through OSU Extension.
2. "Canning lids were in short supply" – More people planted vegetable gardens this spring, which meant more people were preserving the bounty in summer and fall. This and other supply factors created the perfect storm which led to a shortage of canning supplies, especially lids, across the country.
1. "Remembering Ray Griffith and how teachers change lives" - This was my small way to honor a great man and encourage everyone to thank the special teachers who mold and shape us into better human beings.

As 2020 comes to a close, we are reminded that a date on the calendar does very little to change our circumstances. However, it gives us an opportunity to reflect, adjust our thinking, and make plans to change those few things we can control in our lives.

It is my annual practice to choose "one word" on which to focus during the next year. I certainly did not come up with this on my own. I heard about it on a radio program in late 2013 and was attracted to the simplicity. Unlike New Year's Resolutions, this word is not a defined goal. Instead, it permeates every goal I have. It becomes a lingering question, a continual assessment, hopefully resulting in a better me each moment.

My life has usually been filled with busyness. This year completely changed that, and I have been grateful for the slower pace. I used to blame my frenetic schedule when I would display a short temper and sarcastic attitude. When the meetings, appointments, and travel were stripped away, I was left with the reality that my impatient and self-centered attitude was a direct reflection of the condition of my heart, not the condition of my calendar.

It takes energy to be gentle. More self-control to respond with calmness than condemnation. This humble display of courage and intentionality is a sign of maturity, not weakness.

Glen C. Stewart says it like this, “In the gym I have gone to you aren’t allowed to drop the weights, not even a little bit. You must control the weight all the way down to the floor before you let go. Gentleness is controlled strength. Some people just let fly what they want to say or do and walk away leaving you to absorb the shattering thud. Gentleness controls the delivery of what may be hard to receive, while maintaining responsibility for it all the way to understanding and reception.”

My one word for 2021 is gentle. We can bring peace and openness into relationships by choosing humility over pride and reaching out in gentleness. We can be gentle without side-stepping issues. We can praise the gentleness we see in others.

I’ll leave you with this quote from Phillips Brooks: “No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good, without the world being the better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness.”

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day and Happy New Year!