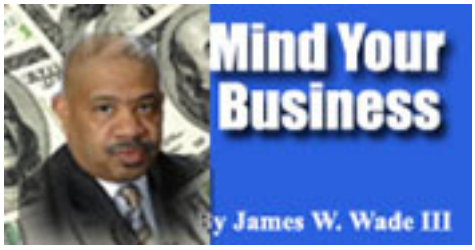

To enjoy this New Year, first you have to change your mind then you've got to change your habits. That's how you're going to make a lasting change. Happy New Year and remember to stay upbeat and excited about 2012.

Happy New Year!

Well another year is here and 2012 will be a much better year then 2011, many say. Some believe they do better on even years, which means this is their year…

I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday season with friends and family. I hope New Year's Eve was all you wanted it to be no matter where you spent it – like the big parties, at work, eating apple pie and ice cream, or at Watch Night Service.

People all across the United States were celebrating the arrival of 2012 at their churches, in a tradition called the "watch-night" service that dates to at least the 1740s. While not as widely known as the Christmas Eve Service or the sunrise service on Easter, the watch-night service holds meaning and tradition for Christians, especially in the Black community.

The beginning of a new year is a fresh start and a great time to think about what you want to accomplish in your personal and professional life.

I know many enjoyed the great traditions of having certain foods on the New Year's Day to bring prosperity and money. Many have black-eyed peas and greens. The black-eyed peas are for good luck and the collard or turnip greens represent the folding money.

I think these foods are cook mainly because it is very comfortable for people who were raised with these traditions to stay in touch with the past. How many still do or remember a man must enter the house first for some type of good luck?

There is so much about our lives that changes from generation to generation, but food is something that puts you back in touch with older generations. My grandmother served black-eyed peas and my mother did too. It's staying in touch with history and family. The holiday food staples may have originated from superstitions about bad luck and lack of money throughout the following twelve months if peas and greens weren't downed as the year dawned.

In some households, pork is a must. The lore explains it this way. Since pigs root forward when searching for food, they represent moving forward in the New Year. Because birds scratch around, eating fowl, so you'll be similarly scratching around for money all year or worse… that your luck may just fly away.

Away from the dinner table, some families avoid everyday activities on the first day of the year. It's just tradition. I remember people saying all clothes must be washed before the New Year, never understood why… But, if someone knows, can you please call or email me the information please.

Nothing... not even garbage is to leave the house on the first day of the year. Don't so much as shake out a rug or take the empties to the recycle bin. In some homes, people open the doors and windows to let the old year escape so the new one can come in.

This year, I heard a new one… **new clothes.** It is believed that if you do not wear new clothes on January 1st, you will not be receiving many new garments in the New Year. Red clothing is preferred for New Year's Day since red is considered a happy color and is sure to attract a brighter future for the wearer (The ladies of Delta Sigma Theta would have no problem with this color).

Those who lent money, paid bills, or settled debts on New Year's Day were said to bring bad luck onto themselves. For these acts, it was believed the person would be cursed with a year's worth of financial trouble.

No matter what you did or where you went, it should have been a great time.

Special shout out to Bilal and Heidi for their yearly New Year's celebration at their house where it's just a good time for both old and new friends to get together and have fun.

If you have not made any resolutions, why not just try to treat everybody right, do the right thing. Life is so short and you look up and the people you care about are gone and you never got to tell them how much they meant to you.

If it's about your faith, then do more to be better in your religious beliefs. No matter what you do… just be like Nike and "Just Do It." Be very, very clear not only on how you will accomplish your resolution but also on why you want to accomplish it.

If you can't come up with good and meaningful reasons that resonate with you, then it's probably not a good resolution. Resolutions should be more than mere wishes.

New Year's Day is a big day for college football! And many enjoy this day being relaxed and watching the games. Reach out to some friends, you can never have too many friends and New Year's Day is the perfect day of the year to reach out to those who you haven't spoken to in awhile. We all get so busy, especially around the holidays.

Also, in this economy with more layoffs announced daily, keeping in touch with friends, extended family and colleagues is very important. When it's time to change employers, having an inside contact can make a significant difference, considering all the competition.

Have strategies in place before you embark on your resolution, chart your changed behavior, and reward your successes with “a healthy treat or compliment.” Align your surroundings with your goals. If you want to cut down on sweets, avoid bakeries.

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