

Keeping your mind clear in the New Year

By Yumi Ueda



Kung Hee Fat Choy! Chinese New Year, which started on February 12, 2021, is the year of the Ox – the second zodiac animal. For those of you who remember the legend from my article last year, the Jade Emperor said the first twelve animals to arrive at his party would designate the calendar years. The Ox was in the lead but Rat tricked him into giving him a ride, then jumped in front of Ox to arrive first. So, Ox ended up as the second animal of the zodiac. Those born in the year of the Ox are said to hard-working, reliable, trustworthy, calm and gentle.

As you are reading this article, it will almost be a year since our state's first confirmed COVID case back on March 6, 2020. After a long period of school closures, office shutdowns, gathering prohibitions, and vacation cancella-

tions, we have adapted and found a new "normal" routine. Working from home is common, virtual meetings are necessary, virtual school is expected, and gatherings are limited to those in your "pod". With most organized sports on hold, we all try to look for ways to get out and exercise or do things that help us relax and keep our sanity.

Those born in the year of the Ox are naturally calm, but many of us need to make a conscious effort! One thing that helps me calm down and relax is using a mind jar. I made this back in April with my kids – if you have kids, this is a fun project to do with them!

The idea behind it is the jar of water and glitter represents our minds. When you shake the jar and the glitter swirls around, that represents our mind when feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, upset, or having trouble focusing. As

the glitter settles, take some deep breaths while watching the glitter. This can be very calming and soothing – almost the same effect as watching a fish tank but much smaller and more cost-efficient!

A mind jar is very easy to make! All you need is:

- A glass jar
- Clear glue
- Hot water
- 1 tsp. glitter
- 2 tsp. salt
- 4 drops dish soap
- 1 drop food coloring

To make your mind jar, use about 25% clear glue and 75% hot water, add the rest of the ingredients, cover your jar and shake. You have a mind jar! Keep on your desk as a reminder to breathe and relax throughout the day.

