The basis for this website's name and my OnePlusOne comes from an idea that had rattled around in my head for years, and finally came to fruition of understanding and implementation after I got sober. I'm a sober alcoholic, but that is beside the point. I simply write that because the changes I started making to my life in my early 30's could in several cases be attributed to thinking on that phrase for years.

So, 1+1… 1+1=2, duh! But for me, it's not that simple. It is a shorthand expression that helps me get out of my own way. It is an idiot-proof(me, I am the idiot) way to accept the past while preparing for the future.

Okay, so 1+1, what comes out if this equation? The number two. You don't get eleven, you don't get five. You get #2. Two, this number two, is a whole new thing. And it is undeniable that the result of adding one and one is two.

The numbers, one and one, these are your "now" and the decision you will make of what to do next.

Once these combine, you get what? You get something new, and that this is just as undeniable as the sum of 1=1. Those two, becomes the past, this past is a whole new thing. Whole, just like #1 is a whole number.. so it can go back to the number 1, plus another (singular) decision you will make of what to do next, again.. This recursive aspect is why like this so much.

Every action that I make, and everything that I do leads somewhere. You can't have your present without your past. The things we do now in the present affect our future. Just like the simple math equation: 1 + 1 = 2. Actions plus more actions equal your reality.

The simple realization is that the only way to get to two, is to add one and one. You can't make something out of nothing, just like you don't get the number two without adding those two ones.

I wanted my life to get better. The only way I could do that was by making sure the ones (I.E. choices available to me) would make a two that I could use.

My life began to get better once I realized that the only reason things were so bad, the only actionable reason that is; was in was because of things I'd done in the past. The only way that I was going to make my future better was if I started doing things that would lead to better outcomes. Lamenting past mistakes, and hoping to do better in the future, were only ideas. They were not real. I had to stop spiraling.

Being stuck in a headspace which was preventing me from doing better was awful.. it still is awful. So I got sober, so what? It felt that all it did was remove a legitimate (not acceptable mind you.. but legitimate) reason for why things were so bad. Instead of being able to blame my circumstances on poor decisions that I could say were because I was under the influence.. all I had now was myself. Everyone can relate to the empty feeling experienced when the only one you can blame is yourself. Its difficult to look myself in the mirror and think about this stark reality, it was worse when I was crawling up the bottom. I needed something with purchase. Once everything came back into focus and my universe stopped spinning I had to find the edges and crimps, that would help me out of the hole I had thrown myself down.

One thing I decided was that I did not want to make the choice to agonize over the past, wish I made better choices, and leave it at that. It feels good to understand things, and when that understanding comes in retrospect, the conviction in those beliefs is so strong, liberating and intoxicating that the realization in and of itself feels like a job well done. It really is too. But there is nowhere to go once you stop there.

Wishing things were different and spending time feeling bad about things, or feeling sorry for yourself is literally taking energy away from time that could be used to better ourselves and our lives. The amount of time we have is finite. There's literally nothing you can do about it.

It was with this understanding that the only way to go forward would be to start doing things now. Time spent thinking about past mistakes or past wins is time you're taking away from thinking about positive things you could do for yourself in the future.

I realized that I had a choice to make. I could continue taking the easy path, which would let me have a comfortable life, a normal life—nothing wrong with that—and I wouldn't have to struggle and I wouldn't have to face failure, but I would never get out of that headspace. The only way out would be to do things that were uncomfortable: face myself, accept that things could fail, and strive for what I wanted anyway. I could take away some comfort and peace in the present, which would increase my enjoyment of the rest of my life so much more than the initial discomfort I was afraid of at the time.

I realized that I can't keep wishing for the future and expect good outcomes, and that agonizing over the past, is like grasping a fistful of sand, holding it tightly so that it will stop slipping though your fingers. By doing this, all that happens is that the sand has less places to stay, and so it doesn't. You squeeze it out instead of holding it while its there and once you see your dusty palm, that's it. Your life is finite. So, Instead of trying to restrict the departure of the sand, I realized I had to use what was there in the best way possible. That meant taking responsibility for my actions and using my personal agency to choose what to with it. I needed to create opportunities, be mindful and live with intention.

There are some difficult truths we all have to face, just like there are difficult times we all have to go through. There's no changing that and there's no fighting against it, but we all have opportunities to ensure that the sum is something we can be proud of. Whenever I'm struggling or whenever I'm sad or whenever things aren't going my way, the only thing I think of is what I can do to make that moment better. It doesn't mean change it, doesn't mean remember the past—it means accepting reality, seeing it for what it is, and adding more ones to the equation.

Trying to get to a hundred when you're at zero is daunting, just like trying to get out of bed when your life is falling apart seems impossible. But there's always something you can do—always something you could do. It doesn't matter how small, but it's an action. Getting up out of bed, washing your hands, washing your face, brushing your teeth—those are all things that will lead to a future you that was in a better space than where you were before you started. That's your new one.

Building off past mistakes and past wins is the only way to create a world, a mindset that you could be happy about, that other people can be happy about. I'm not talking about self-actualization or creating a vision board or a memory board, although those are all good things that can help you. What I'm talking about is action: simple action, doable action, achievable goals. And these don't have to be wins in other people's eyes. These are things that don't even have to be wins for you—just something that you didn't have before and now you do.