

Happy New Year!

I've been pondering what to write in this newsletter for about a month, because I didn't want to repeat the goal setting/positive focus information I gave in my "Ask Dr. Debra Column" on my website, www.drdebraholland.com or the www.wetnoodleposse.com website. (The new column will be posted on Jan 2nd or 3rd.)

For me, the ending of the old year and the start of the New Year is a deeply spiritual transition. It's when I take the time to examine my accomplishments for the last year, and set goals for the New Year. I like to meditate and pray about the future, ask for spiritual guidance in the coming year, and journal my goals.

I also like to step back and examine how I might be blocking my own growth and achievements in any area of my life. There is a saying: *If you keep doing what you've been doing, you'll keep getting what you've been getting.* This year I'm going to focus on changing unproductive thoughts and behavior.

Much of what I've been doing has worked, and I'm happy with my accomplishments. Yet there are other areas I need to examine if I want to change. How can I be a better, more spiritual, more loving person? Where do I need to push myself a little harder to accomplish my goals? What (as they say in Alcoholics Anonymous) are my character defects and how can I overcome them? By this time in my life, my character defects are pretty entrenched. But that doesn't mean I can't change a little or even a lot. That worn-out saying, *you can't teach an old dog new tricks*, is just an excuse to avoid making the attempt.

I like to take five to fifteen minutes every morning to read a motivational or self-help book, then pray. This helps me start my day in a positive, upbeat manner. I've just finished reading a book that belonged to my father, *The Magic of Thinking Big*, by David Schwartz, Ph.D. This book was written in 1959, and, while some of the financial examples are amusing because they are so low by today's standards, the concepts and examples of the books are timeless. One of the chapters listed the following rules, which "Senator" Lyndon Johnson kept in his desk and referred to often. I think they are great suggestions to incorporate into your goals for 2006.

1. Learn to remember names. Inefficiency at this point may indicate that your interest is not sufficiently outgoing.
2. Be a comfortable person, so there is no strain in being with you. Be an old-shoe, old-hat kind of individual.
3. Acquire the quality of being relaxed and easy-going, so that things do not ruffle you.

4. Don't be egotistical. Guard against the impression that you know it all.
5. Cultivate the quality of being interesting, so people will get something of value from their association with you.
6. Study to get the "scratchy" elements out of your personality, even those of which you may be unconscious.
7. Sincerely attempt to heal, on an honest basis, every misunderstanding you have had or now have. Drain off your grievances.
8. Practice liking people until you learn to do so genuinely.
9. Never miss an opportunity to say a word of congratulation upon anyone's achievement, or express sympathy in sorrow or disappointment.
10. Give spiritual strength to people, and they will give genuine affection to you.

In the book I'm currently using for my morning reading, *The Call to Create: Celebrating Acts of Imagination*, by Linda Schierse Leonard, Ph.D, I came across a sentence that grabbed my attention.

The word courage stems from the Latin word cor, for heart.

I'm going to write this sentence on cards and hand them out to people, adding a few sentences about the unique ways I see them showing courage. I encourage you to make a copy of this definition for yourself and put it where you can see it. Then use it to remind yourself to face your fears. For true courage is about being afraid, and still doing what you fear, whether it's being more emotionally intimate in your relationship, sending your first book out to an editor, or starting a new business. You can work through your fears by taking little steps, or in one big leap. Both are equally courageous.

This New Year's, reach deep into your heart for the courage to meet both the challenges you set for yourself, and the one's life brings to you.

Dr. Debra