

Passion for Life Coaching

Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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New Year, New You

Happy New Year to everyone! Was it just me or did the holidays fly past in a blur?? I hope you took time to find moments of peace and rest during the busy time. With the New Year upon us, it is a time of new beginnings, new possibilities, and new resolutions. Or perhaps, your resolutions are the same, just the date has changed. Either way, now is a time to consider the changes you would like to make and how you can attain the goals and dreams you desire in the coming months.

Many of us, myself included, make resolutions about what we would like to change in the next year. And, many of us, again myself included, have found limited success. Is it because we lack willpower? Is it because we are lazy? Is it because we decide we don't care after a month? It's not likely these are the actual reasons for our lack of accomplishment. For most of us, we state a general goal we want to attain or a situation or behavior we want to change, but we do not plan how to make the change happen. Of note, we spend months planning vacations, parties, and moves that are over in a day or a week but devote little time planning how we will accomplish the changes we feel are important to us. In other words, this serves as an example of how we slight ourselves by placing other activities, events, and people above our personal needs.

This year, try a new approach to your resolutions. Put yourself first and make your resolutions a reality!

Plan out your goals. Write them down then break them down. Saying "I want to spend more time with my family" is a great start. But, this does not describe the how, what, when, where, and how often of the changes that need to take place. The more specifically you outline goals, the greater the chance you will attain them. Consider planning them out day-to-day or week-to-week.

Set aside time to envision your success. Imagine how you may look, feel, and act differently if you make desired changes. In your vision, you can "act as if" these changes have already occurred to get a sense of how they will impact your state of mind and self image.

State your goals in positive words. For example, instead of saying, "If I stop biting my nails, I will get a manicure," say "When I stop biting my nails, I will get a manicure." The small change in wording makes your goal a reality instead of a distant possibility. Subtle shifts in vocabulary that make goals authentic and put you in action can create mental shifts that help you stay focused and motivated.

Remind yourself of your goals. Develop a mantra you can use throughout the day. An example would be “I am a confident person and will act confidently.” Or, post your goals where you will see them daily. I like to use the dry erase board on my refrigerator. Others I know have posted messages on their bathroom mirrors or their computer monitors. Journaling can also be a useful tool for maintaining focus, documenting successes, and strategizing how to cope with challenges.

Enlist support in attaining your goals. The more often you tell someone what you plan to do, the more solid your commitment becomes. You may find someone else with a similar goal, and you can use the buddy system to support and encourage each other. Hiring a coach is also a great way to have someone assist you in specifying goals, hold you accountable, give encouragement and support, and celebrate accomplishments. My coach is wonderful at this!

Remember to celebrate your victories. Rewards reinforce positive changes and give you something to look forward to. Plan rewards that are realistic, attainable, and immediate. Rewarding weight loss with a trip to Aruba in November is a fantastic idea but that’s 11 months away. Develop smaller rewards such as a facial or a massage that you can give yourself as you make progress.

Most importantly, *be patient with yourself.* You did not arrive where you are overnight and you will not get to your new destination overnight. Changing habits, beliefs, and attitudes is a learning process. You will miss the target and hit the target in various places before you hit the bull’s eye. You do not need a new year to make a resolution. Each day is a clean slate and an opportunity to make the changes you desire.

Exciting news since my last newsletter!! My web page is posted!! Please visit me at www.passion-for-life-coaching.com. Special thanks to those who helped me with this project. It would not be as complete and beautiful without you!

If you found valuable information in this newsletter, please pass it along. I welcome new subscribers! To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net.

A coach can help you make your resolutions a reality by assisting in setting attainable goals, holding you accountable, and providing motivation and support. Contact me at passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net or 410-757-7326 to learn more or to schedule a complimentary 30-minute session. Coaching sessions are generally conducted via telephone so they do not require that you reside in the same area as the coach.