

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

by Gina Kane, MA, NCC, LMHC

Happy New Year to all my friends, family and clients. Many of you will set New Year's resolutions this year as a tradition to start afresh with the new year. Did you know that a typical New Year's resolution lasts only 72 hours?! According to a survey by Miller and Marlatt (1998) 75 percent of people who make a resolution fail on their first attempt and most people — 67 percent — make more than one resolution.

Of those failures many will not even get off the ground – too busy to start, too overwhelmed to know where to begin, or simply unprepared. Go to any gym and you will see it packed. In fact, January 1st and 2nd are two of the busiest days in gym attendance. Weight loss groups, dating sites, financial planners, career advisors, and support groups all report high activity the first week of January. Everyone wants to get in shape, lose weight, meet someone, get a better job, save money, quit smoking, quit drinking and more. On the other hand, people who kept their resolutions tended to have broken their goal into smaller steps and rewarded themselves when they achieved one of these. They also told their friends about their goals, focused on the benefits of success and kept a diary of their progress.

I say, don't set resolutions but create a Life Plan for yourself very much like a business plan. Eckhart Tolle stated, "Thinking without awareness is the main dilemma of human existence." We can translate this to mean – thinking without awareness is not fully living. How are you living? Are you happy? Do you have a direction? Are you stuck? Do you have bad habits you want to change?

By changing the way you view your life you can change your direction. Think about it, journal on it, talk to friends and family about it. What is your direction? Where did you see yourself at this age? Where do you see yourself 10 months from now? 10 years from now? How do you view yourself and your world? This year be the CEO of your life and set a Life Plan. Your life is what you make it. Become aware of your life in the ways that do and do not help you to achieve the levels of health, happiness and success that you desire.

Your Life Plan should consist of each of these seven areas: Health, Growth, Spirituality, Finances, Family, Relationships and Service. Then break them down into small achievable goals and develop them into an action plan. Do not just say, "I want to lose weight" or "I want to work out more," or "I want to be happier." Instead, set out to succeed. If you want to exercise more, how about running a 5K? How are you going to accomplish this? Not by going out and running 3.3 miles. Can you run daily? Weekly? Indoors? Outdoors? Employ the help of someone. Have an accountability partner. Why not? Many great people have a whole team helping them. How about a mentor? Find someone

who has followed a similar path. If that is not an option for you, then educate yourself on the subject, search the internet, go to the book store or library. Creating habits and a life plan is done one step at a time.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to evaluate his life by a conscious endeavor." Without this awareness we are stuck in our own life, bound by excuses, unaware. This year take an active part in your life. Support your own desire to reach higher levels of joy, success and growth. Good luck and have a wonderful year.

Provided below is a sample Life Plan for 2010.

SAMPLE 2010 LIFE PLAN

I. Health

- Exercise to a specific goal
(Example: Train for and run a 5k – run at least one mile a week for the first 3 months, 2 miles a week the second 3 months and 3 miles a week the next 3 months)
- Drink water with each meal
- Sleep 8-10 nightly
- Eat 3 meals daily

II. Growth and Education

- Learn a new area of interest
- Educate myself - take classes
- Read 20 minutes daily

III. Spirituality

- Go to church weekly
- Attend a community group
- Volunteer at my church
- Attend a 12-step meeting
- Foster my relationship with GOD through prayer and asking for answers before making major decisions

IV. Finances

- Increase my business income \$_____ to \$_____
- Work in _____
- Market to local business
- Set up a Retirement plan

V. Family

- Balance family time and time alone with each child monthly
- Plan a family vacation and a personal retreat (e.g., ski trip, girls' trip, Keys, theme park)

VI. Relationships (Social/Friendships/Marital)

- Go out on date nights – when? what day? how?
- Nurture friendships (old and new) through Facebook, phone calls, cards, gifts, focusing on others

VII. Service (Giving/Volunteering)

- Volunteer for and give spiritually to causes I believe in and support

LONG RANGE GOALS

- Joy/Happiness
- Good health
- Be in a happy relationship
- Have a successful business