

Choose to Love Yourself for Better Health a Better Life

January 6, 2006 ~ Telluride Daily Planet

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New Year's Resolutions have been made, new promises to ourselves for new ways of being. A week later now, how are they feeling? Do they bring you joy or do they feel burdensome, like a have-to?

We often create lists...lose 20 pounds, quit smoking, exercise more...as if just by writing it down it will be done. It is often only days into the New Year, maybe a couple of weeks, before old habits rematerialize again to take charge.

There are scores of articles that surface at the New Year with many a suggestion as to making resolutions and how to keep them. I have to add my two cents.

There was a game I played in grad-school called "If I Ruled the World". The exercise was to share with the group what guiding principles we would impose if we ruled the world. My thoughts were that if I ruled the world there would not have to be any guidelines.

In my ideal world people loved and cared so much for themselves and each other that they would naturally only be kind to their bodies, to their fellow travelers and our home - planet Earth.

It is from that place that I offer for your consideration that if your goals and resolutions are feeling a chore...if you are doing them because you think you 'should', our culture says you 'should' or you might 'be a better person' if you did... how might you reframe them to be acts of your loving?

My bet is that underlying any goal or resolution that you make is really a desire for a feeling of freedom, joy or loving that you are wanting to experience. How might your relationship to any goal change if your underlying motivation was an act of self-loving that brought you that freedom and joy?

Instead of "lose 20 pounds" or "exercise more", consider "I am choosing to love myself". And because I do...I eat well. I choose to eat well because I just feel so much better when I do. I choose to exercise, not because I have to, but I just feel so much better when I do.

I no longer smoke as I am demonstrating my love for my lungs. I am demonstrating my loving by taking time for myself to relax and rejuvenate, by saying "no" to those myriad of things I think I 'should' do.

I am demonstrating my love for my mind, my emotions, my family and the world by choosing to find positive aspects in everything. Thinking only positive thoughts is a demonstration of my loving.

I can hear the old message of disdain coming from our cultural belief that loving ourselves first is very selfish. We can only truly give, however, what we have first given ourselves and that we now have to give away. How can we expect our children to walk in responsible self-care if we haven't modeled it for them?

We have done our best to beat ourselves into good behavior. Wonder if we tried loving ourselves into habits that benefit us? How might our world change if we chose the loving as our underlying motivation in all that we do?

Maybe those thoughts were worth more than two cents. Many blessings to you all for a New Year of being with yourself in love.