

## Welcome to Quiet Courage – December 2009

The online newsletter helping you live your life from a place of courage, intention and gratitude from Catalyst for Courage and Mary Ann Bailey, MC.

### Feature Article: Reflect, Then Plan

This year is coming to a close. With only about 2 weeks left, 2009 is just about history. Was 2009 a good year for you? Did you accomplish the things that you wanted? Did you realize the plans you made for the year? How about your New Year's resolutions - what kind of success did you experience with those?

As we head into 2010, it is easy to focus on the future and the things we want to achieve in the New Year. We don't always take the time to reflect on what has happened in our lives over the previous year. That might be because we don't feel great about what we have accomplished, or it might be that we perceive this year as over and we see no need to think or worry about it any longer.

However, if we don't take a little time to reflect on both our successes and non-successes of the past year, we will probably have a very similar success rate in the coming year. I am sure you are familiar with the quote, "If we don't learn from history, we will be doomed to repeat it." The same thing can be said for how we tackle New Year's resolutions and our goals for the upcoming year.

As you think about what it is you want to achieve in this coming year, how many of your items are hold-overs from last year, or maybe from the last few years. Resolutions such as losing weight, getting more exercise and spending more time with family and friends are ones that seem to recycle from year to year. What goals you are recycling?

For those of you have been following me for awhile, you know that I believe process is always more important than content. And I think New Year's resolutions are a great example of that. The process that you use to choose your goals and the process you use to work toward those goals will have a much greater impact on your rate of success than will the content of the goals.

For example:

Let's say you want to lose 20 pounds this year. That's the content; and by itself, it looks like a fairly simple goal. Now let's throw in some process. Here are some questions to ask yourself about that goal.

- How did you decide on that goal?
- Is it a goal you are truly invested in or something you think you should do?
- How do you plan to make this happen? Join a gym? Get a trainer? Work with a buddy, hire a coach, create support system?
- Is the time commitment needed going to interfere with anything else? If so, how are you going to reconcile that?
- What kind of plan do you have in place for when you start falling behind with your goal?
- What kinds of reinforcement and support do you need to achieve this goal? This is very important. Going it alone is really hard.

- Where did you get stuck this year and what would help you avoid getting stuck again?

Most people don't take the time to think about these questions. They just write down their goals; and then with great intention and energy, they start working toward achieving those goals. But then life pops up. A meeting here, and unexpected appointment there, then a little resistance appears and suddenly the goal gets put on the back burner and eventually fades completely out of the picture. But it doesn't have to be that way. You can be successful in achieving your goals and resolutions for the New Year. But in order to do that, you have to know where you got tripped up this year. And the only way to know that is to take some time to sit quietly and think about questions such as these:

- What were the goals I wanted to achieve this year?
- Which ones did I accomplish and which ones fell by the wayside?
- What was the difference? Was it the goal or was it lack of interest, resources, support, etc.?
- Where did I get sidetracked?
- What obstacles got in my way?
- What have I learned from my experience this past year and how I can I use this information to be more successful this coming year?

Please remember that New Year's resolutions are optional. If you don't have anything you want to change, or if you are not in the space in your life where change would be easy, cut yourself some slack and don't worry about coming up with a list of goals to achieve. Life will give you enough to keep you busy.

But if there are a couple of things you would like to work on this year, take some time to really think through the process and make sure that your goals are ones that excite you and that feel right to you. Then plan out what you need to put into place, (resources, support, finances, time, etc), to ensure you the highest probability of success.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Wonderful New Year!  
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