

EMBRACING CHANGE WITH POSITIVE INTENTION



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I think it is safe to say that we encounter change every day. Some changes are expected, while others are a surprise. Many changes are anticipated such as finishing high school, getting your first job, buying a car, entering into your first serious relationship, finding your own place, and the list goes on. We welcome and embrace these transitions as a rite of passage, milestones we have passed. Even when the unexpected happens, we mourn the loss, but we find a way to move forward.

This year has been especially hard with the arrival of COVID-19. We are all working hard to navigate what this means in our lives. At this very moment, we are adjusting to wearing masks, carrying hand sanitizer, and practicing social distancing. As schools and business reopen, we are also aware that things are not as they were. Feelings of anxiety, vulnerability, and apprehension may rise up as we question the safety of grocery shopping. Yet, we are doing it.

We are adjusting because we know that doing so will keep us safe. It does not mean we have to like it, but we are learning to live with it. Personally, I am constantly amazed at the ingenuity of business owners who create safe spaces, who seem to have endless supplies of hand

sanitizer, and who are masters at making sure that I touch nothing. It's pretty impressive!

Embracing change begins with changing how you look at something. Your response to (perception of) any event determines the outcome you experience. To embrace any change, big or small, prepare for it in your mind-set. Today, in the new year, or whenever you feel ready, start by changing how you talk to yourself—the language that you use. What do I mean by this? The new year is a perfect example.

As we usher in 2021, we will make all kinds of promises to ourselves. January is the month that brings a frenzy of resolutions to create our best selves and find renewed happiness. With a little bit of self-control and discipline, there should be no problem, right? Fast forward three months and goals/resolutions have fallen by the wayside, and you feel like a failure. Negative self-talk creeps in, and you use it as a stick to beat yourself up. Big goals can push you towards repeated failure, taking a toll on your emotional and physical well-being.

This year, you could develop some “Positive Intentions” and banish the words “New Year’s Resolution” from your vocabulary! Rather than saying, “I really need to lose weight/stop smoking/spend more time with my family,” change the language and focus your intention on feeling stronger, fitter, and more energized. This takes the pressure off and directs your energy towards a lifestyle change.

Positive intentions start with some self-reflection. Ask yourself, *What do I want for my life? What is important to me? What do I need to be happy?* The answers to these questions

are the map to guide you towards change. A personal inventory is helpful at the end of the year—a good time to take stock of where you have succeeded and where you need improvement. Make sure to take the time to celebrate your achievements; this is very important. Relish in your achievements as this reinforces that change is possible.

Your next step is to write down the changes you want in your life. This will help to establish your intentions, giving clarity, building

resilience, and providing a pathway of small steps that will help you stay focused. These are daily goals, baby steps towards the finish line. No pressure allowed!

Most importantly, do a self-check at the end of each day, asking, “What went right today?” If your day did not go as planned, review your hiccups/slips through the eyes of a compassionate and caring friend. Acknowledge the good in each day and let go of the negative. Shifting your focus to the good will boost your spirits.

Mother Teresa is often quoted as saying, “There is no key to happiness; the door is always open.” Whatever your intentions may be moving forward, start by choosing happiness and letting go of the things/people/perceptions that no longer serve you. Remember that positive self-talk will help build your confidence, change how you think about your situation, and move you in the direction you wish to go. These are positive intentions we can all embrace.

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