

As published in *The Easley Progress*

February 6, 2002

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The Key Is Integrity

Are you still making New Year's resolutions, or have you quit like a lot of people because you know you probably won't keep them? Why do we make annual resolutions to "do better," only to break them and thereby lower our self-esteem even further?

I believe it's because we all really do want to do more with our lives. The highest and best part of us yearns continually to grow and improve. We all want to do, have, and be more. We see the New Year as a fresh start, a way to get ourselves back on track. So why then is it so hard to keep our resolutions?

Discipline. Unless one is seriously dedicated to living in integrity in every part of their lives, it's too easy to slip back to doing things the same old way. And if your resolution involves an addiction to something, it's very difficult to give it up. In fact, you won't give it up until you are ready with your whole being to do so. Getting help from a support group, coach, or therapist may be the only way for some to get back the control they're desperately seeking.

The key is integrity. Living in integrity means more than being honest and moral, although those certainly are strong elements of such a life. Integrity means strength. The steel and concrete that comprise the foundation of a building must have integrity – strength – so the building won't topple. The same is true of people. The stronger our personal foundation is – the more we live in integrity – the happier and more successful our lives will be.

So, I would like to ask you to do something other than make New Year's resolutions this year. I'd like for you to make a list of all the ways you are living in integrity right now. That includes everything you're doing which is for your highest and best; keeping your house or office neat and clean is one of them. And if you've recently quit smoking or drinking, then put that at the top of your list. Yea! for you! Next, I'd like for you to make a list of the ways in which you're living out of integrity. Some examples could be that you're eating poorly, coming late to work or meetings, or arguing constantly with someone close to you.

Be sure in making this list that these are things you want to do or stop doing, not things other people tell you are important. Focus on what you're doing right and give yourself credit; don't "beat up" on yourself for the areas in which you're falling short. Then decide, "Do I really want to continue with this limiting behavior, or do I want to change?" Then begin consciously changing your behavior, your attitude, your outlook, whatever it is that's holding you back. Don't go it alone. Enlist the help of a friend, family member, mentor, or hire a personal coach to help you. Don't try to do it all at once. Do what you can and focus on what you have accomplished, not on what you haven't. Keep at it even if it takes another year or longer. Integrity also means not giving up if you don't get results as quickly as you'd like to. You will succeed!

Have a wonderful 2002!

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