

Family and friends – We are hours away from welcoming a new year…PHEW!! 2008 has been a duzy that's for sure. Anyone out there who did not fear they could end up living on the streets by year's end raise your hand…anyone?…anyone?….Right, I thought so. This year brought us the collapse of banks, the stock market, and the U.S. auto industry, sending many to the unemployment line. And all courtesy of the third deadly sin: Greed. Greed on the part of the companies that enticed us with their rose-colored avarice; and greed on the part of the consumers who, despite their own economic hardships, thought that bigger and better than their neighbor meant happier. Luckily we're all quick studies. Hopefully, no?This year also brought us the continuation of the never-ending Middle East chaos, which sometimes looked like child's play in comparison to the atrocities being committed right here in our homeland by some of the less than human and more possessed-like individuals to make the freak list. Unreal! Oh, and yes of course, it brought us a new president…uhum uhum….
It wasn't all bad though, and many of us triumphed as we fought tooth and nail to overcome whatever stones patterned our paths. Fortunately for us, the infinite grace of God once again held our planet together yet another year, despite our relentless attempts to destroy it and everything in it. May He continue to be ever so merciful, is all I can say.

Meanwhile, my sincere best wishes go out to all of you for a healthy and happy 2009. May the Lord provide you with a daily dose of serenity, strength, courage and wisdom. God bless you, and your 365 new ones!

I leave you with a recipe for a Happy New Year that I found recently:

> Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate, cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past—have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of Time. Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot this way) but prepare one day at a time.

> Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing— don’t do it), prayer, meditation, and one well-selected resolution. Put in about one teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

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