

Hello There!! Hope you had a wonderful holiday season and a terrific end of year. It is good to be back!

It's not just a new year, but a new decade, can you believe it? I'm not clairvoyant nor do I have a crystal ball, but I foresee with some level of certainty that "significant change" could be *THE* theme in my life the next ten years — the big 5-0, kids moving on, a wedding or two, grandkids?? — Okay significant is an understatement. Wow! It's more like a whole new life story. But I'm getting way ahead of myself here. Let's rewind to day 7, the present, puhleeeze!

So first week in January and what are most articles about? My upcoming birthday? No, New Year's resolutions of course. I was reading on the internet the 10 most popular resolutions for 2011: (1) Drink less alcohol; (2) get a better education; (3) get a better job; (4) get fit; (5) lose weight; (6) manage debt; (7) manage stress; (8) quit smoking now; (9) reduce, reuse, and recycle; and (10) save money. Hmmm…sounds good. But can I suggest a list that will cut the one above in half and still leave room for more?

- Break addictions (1, 8, 10 above – check!)
- If still a young puppy, focus and kick butt in school (2, 3 – √)
- If in the older, excuse me, "mature" column and are employed (nowadays a sure blessing), consume wisely and plan ahead (6 – √)
- Drink tap water, lots of it (4, 5, 9 – √)
- Breathe, no really, breeeeeaaathe (7 – √)

See, cut in half. Now let me share a list of "goals" (I prefer that word, feels a bit more purposeful) that I consider somewhat less superficial and a bit more spiritual. Let's count it down, shall we?

- 5 – Serve others – there are plenty of opportunities, take notice, and don't expect anything back. The rewards will come later.
- 4 – Be positive and hopeful – leaves me nothing to lose and everything to gain.

- 3 – Be grateful – brings a change of perception and a better attitude, helping me see the blessed moments in my ordinary life.
- 2 – Improve relationships – there's always room for improvement and "time" is the magic word; invest it in the ones I love.

And my number 1 goal for 2011…(drum roll)…

- Trust God – lifts the weight of the world off my shoulders when I believe there's a bigger plan at work.

Impressive "to do" list, isn't it? Unrealistic you say? You know what though? Not impossible. These are all things I believe I should and could do if I really wanted to. I'm praying like heck God helps me see it through. What about you? What does your "to do" list read like? I tell you what, I hope and pray that 2011 and the rest of this decade brings us all opportunities for spiritual growth. The way I see my decade shaping up I'm gonna need all the spiritual everything I can get.

Side Note: Regarding list above, if all else fails, let's forget about what we *should* or *could* do, and concentrate on what we *must* do — LOVE.
"When we once begin to form good resolutions, God gives us every opportunity of carrying them out."
– *St. John Chrysostom*

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