

A new year, a new you

By Ernestine Brown

Perhaps you have already made a list of New Year's resolutions. Or maybe you have just mentally decided you were going to make a few changes for the better in your life in 2010. May I help you along? Here are twelve ideas that are bound to make you feel better about yourself, and even if you adopt only half of them, you will be happier, which means a healthier person.

1. Start out by saying you care about yourself. This year you are going to admit you are a good person, and you are worth looking after. That means adopting a new eating style that will add years to your life. If it means getting professional help, do it.
2. You are going to look after your body. Maybe that means joining a fitness class, or going to the pool at least once or twice a week. You are going to become more active physically this year.
3. You are going to be happy with what and who you are.
4. If you have to update your appearance, this is the year to do it. Starting today, you are going to make sure you are dressing to your full advantage. This too, may mean updating your wardrobe, and seeking advice from someone you trust who will help you.
5. You are going to live with this rule: Forget yesterday (it's gone), Don't worry about tomorrow (it isn't here yet), live today as if it were your last. Enjoy every minute of it!
6. That means adopting Norman Vincent Peale's advice (live in day-tight compartments)...in other words, take one day at a time.
7. Do something nice for yourself every day. This may mean giving yourself a facial, going for a walk, doing nothing for the whole day but read, make your favourite lunch, or sit in your favourite chair and listen to music. You

deserve one day often when all your attention is focused on YOU! That could mean letting your phone take your messages and then answering only those that are important to you.

8. Every day (and this may be the most important of these twelve), do something nice for someone else...write a note, make a phone call, visit a shut-in, give a helping hand. Make an extra few muffins and pass them on.

9. If you need help, ask for it.

10. Get to know at least one stranger every month! This could be a neighbour in your community or in the building in which you live, someone you meet every day, but have yet to be introduced to. Go out of your way to introduce yourself to someone new. Many a great friendship has started this way.

11. If you have time, and are physically able, become a volunteer. The possibilities are endless...go to a church and ask if there is an organization you can join that helps the needy...work at the food bank, a homeless shelter, at a community centre, or your local hospital.

12. Keep a ledger...or if you prefer, a diary. Even if it's only two lines, try to write something in it every day. Record your daily activities. Expand your jottings to include the scene around you, your feelings that day, what made you happy, what made you sad. This is the greatest and cheapest therapy you can give yourself. And don't ever forget, your memories in your ledger are the most priceless legacy you can leave your family!

I wish you a happy and a healthy 2010.

This article originally appeared in the January 2010 issue of Forever Young Newspaper