

From the Kitchen

29 December 2010



Dear part-of-me-that-is-perfect,

I will once more rely on you to ensure that the list of resolutions I dream up for the coming year will be adhered to and shepherded to fruition in a timely manner and with the help of your infinite wisdom. You see, it will soon be a brand new year and I am determined that I will be a brand new person.

I know that I make a list such as this every year and that I fail miserably to adhere to it and that by mid-February I may as well not have gone to the trouble of compiling a list at all. But next year will be different, because I am more focused than ever before and, besides, I already have an exhaustive list of everything I need to get done next year and will get done, all ranked according to importance and urgency. I cannot fail. I must not and I will not. So there!

As I was saying, dear perfect-me, we will be partners as we embark on travelling through these next, brand-new 365 days and nothing will get in the way of our working steadily and steadfastly through the list and making all my wishes, I mean resolutions, come true. I have thought about all the things that could possibly derail us and I am confident that there will be no unforeseen events, for I have anticipated all of these.

So what am I resolute about?

I will enjoy myself and my enjoyment of life will take precedence over all other considerations. When I find myself not enjoying what I am doing, I will question the wisdom of the task or its means of execution. If the task cannot be avoided or delegated and it has to be done in this particular way, then I will choose to enjoy it; I will find some aspect of it that is enjoyable.

I will limit what I put into my mouth to those foods and drinks that will have a positive effect on me, physically and emotionally. I will be aware of the effect this has on my body and ensure that all of it increases my wellbeing.

Similarly, I will limit what I allow into my mind from outside. I will avoid any stimulus that will have a negative or depressive effect on me. Thus, I will exclude bad news and bad music and poorly written or expressed sentiments. I will feed my mind with noble and uplifting thoughts.

When I have negative or bad thoughts about people or situations, I will replace them with positive thoughts, or I will cease to think about them at all.

I will exercise my body in order to keep it fit and strong. When I feel lazy or just can't be bothered, I will challenge myself to at least go for a brisk walk or take my camera to the forest as the excuse for a walk and to breathe fresh air. When I could walk instead of driving a short distance, I will do so. I will make sure I get enough sleep and rest so that my body and my mind may recover from the demands I will make of them.

Every evening, before I go to bed, I will go over my list and evaluate how well or badly I have managed to stick to my resolutions. I will resist the temptation to castigate myself for any lapses; instead I will analyse why any such lapses have occurred and learn from this. I will then recommit to my resolutions so that I will do better the next day.

By the end of 2011, I expect to be a perfect individual, fully in control of myself. What the implications of this perfection will be for the future, I cannot tell. I could write a self-help book for all those people who do not have the insight or resolve to improve their lives and stick to what they promise themselves they will do. I could also write a book for those who don't care about their unenlightened attitudes to themselves, showing them where they are wrong and indicating how to make the necessary corrections. The overwhelming success of both these books will have the result that everyone will care and be positive, leading to political changes: governments will only act to improve the lives of citizens and to improve the state of the environment. Businesses will change their attitudes and activities so that everything they do will be for the general good. Wars will become unnecessary and the resources thus released will all be put to improving the lives of all people.

So, dear perfect-me, that is the plan for the coming year and I challenge you to keep me to it so that I don't have to go through the whole dreary exercise again in 2012.