

editors notebook 1.10



Photo by Gordon Hesse

Well, here we are in January 2010. Not only a new year, but a new decade. It's a time when so many of us determine to make ourselves over...to become "new" along with the year, even though we know that newness doesn't need a date on a calendar. Every day carries with it the opportunity to accomplish something/meet someone/try something new. Yet every year we celebrate the turning of the calendar page from December to January as if it were the one day we can better ourselves.

Every January 1, the Dear Abby column carries reminders based on the Al-Anon credo: live for today; don't attempt to overcome all problems at once; be happy; accept what is; improve your mind; be courteous, positive and courageous. Although I'm guilty of falling into the resolution trap too, last year I took "Abby's" advice to heart and resolved to do my best to be present and live each day, one at a time.

This year, I plan to do more of the same—remain as 'in the moment' as possible as each day rolls into the next. Because there is only the now, and as each day passes, we live in a new 'now.' Of course, that means something different for each one of us. For me, 2010 means a new age-decade. Turning 50 doesn't bother me. If it did, I certainly wouldn't proclaim it here! I also will try on a new name for the first time sometime in early August... I think Grandma will suit me just fine! (My eldest announced this exciting news over the holidays, and our family couldn't be more thrilled.)

We often want to change ourselves, to transform into

version 2.0 of our former selves, thinking if we just lose a few pounds, wrestle our finances into shape, delete the negative relationships, find a new job or learn a new craft, somehow, we will be better people. While that may be true, we too often bite off a huge chunk of overly ambitious goals and expect our enhancement to happen in a day or two. And when we don't feel or look different right away, we lose our ambition and backslide—waiting another year to make another stab at "self-improvement."

So I'd like to suggest that this year we try to take just one step at a time in the direction of our future selves. One way to do that is to put others first. Try it out. Find a way today to contribute to the wellbeing of someone else. A great way to kickstart service to others is by participating in an event on January 18—Martin Luther King Day of Service. Read Mary Shafer's story on page 46 to get some ideas and places to get started. Over the years, this federal holiday has evolved into a day to do for others. Across the country, thousands will give up their day off to do something meaningful for someone else. It doesn't much matter what it is, as long as you do it; your efforts will be recognized and appreciated.

You may be pleasantly surprised at how transforming service to others can be—any day of the year.

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