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Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



New Year, New Thinking: You Can Transform Your Resolutions into Reality! by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.



Goodbye 2020
[\(Night at the Opera\)](#)

“Genuine beginnings begin within us, even when they are brought to our attention by external opportunities.”

William Bridge

Templates serve as models and patterns that provide a secure base from which to evolve.

What old templates play a key role in defining your behavior and /or your actions.
What do you want to break free from and what do you want to hang on to?



“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.” — **James Baldwin**

Recently, “Andy,” a client, called to address his thirteen-year-old son’s aggressive behaviors which consisted of screaming, throwing things, hitting his sister and paying no attention to the house rules. “What’s his problem?” asked Andy. “My *Resolution* this year is to change my son’s destructive behavior, but I keep hitting a brick wall,” he stated.

I'd been seeing Andy in treatment for quite a while, so I recognized that his son's aggression triggered a bushel full of unresolved issues for Andy, leaving him feeling helpless: "I didn't know what to do," he said. "I just want to smack him."

That, of course, is what happened in Andy's childhood when *he* acted up. He was smacked around by a father who ruled the house with "my way or the highway thinking". Whenever young Andy tried to express his thoughts and emotions, he got shut down and cut off. Over time, he never was able to recognize his own needs or what he was feeling. He learned to read his father's moods, but not himself. As an adult, Andy remained emotionally invisible, clueless as to his own need for empathy, care, and nurturing so how could he know those of his son. As an adult, Andy still had no vocabulary to articulate the feelings that were alive in him. In fact, he was going through a difficult evaluation of his marriage and his co-dependent role in that relationship.

Having been raised with punishment, fear, and a swift back hand, Andy (thanks to therapy) had, in his wisdom, chosen *not* to repeat his father's same punitive style of parenting with his son. But that's as far as he got – and it wasn't enough. He had no empathy for himself or others, and no breathing room to make competent, well-thought out decisions without being pressured by an *inner critic* as severe as his own demanding parent.

However, when it came to his son's aggression, Andy knew that his emotional *repertoire* was going to have to expand further so he would not repeat what had caused *him* physical and emotional pain throughout his life. The problem compounded by the fact that Andy bent over backwards to be different from the father who raised him. He never learned to set limits or boundaries, or asked anything of his children. All he heard growing up was NO; his son never heard NO.

Breaking old patterns learned in childhood is hard work. His son's aggression was a "knock at the door." It was Andy's kick in the pants which encouraged him towards growth and change. His son's "problem" and his New Year's Resolution moved Andy to action mode, towards real growth and emotional development. He learned to connect with his own feelings, develop clear boundaries, more effective communication, all of which benefited his marital relationship. His son's "problem" offered opportunity to claim aspects of himself that had been rejected or neglected to develop.

It's typical that people make New Year's Resolutions once a year! They wait until circumstance drags them kicking and screaming towards something new and different. Why wait until your back is up against the wall, or you are on your knees, praying for a way out of the pain of old, destructive patterns? Whether extrinsic or intrinsically motivated, now is the time to begin the shift from trying to "fix" what you perceive as others' problems to "fixing" the broken parts of the self. Now is the time to begin the journey inward from the wasteland of an inner prison. towards meaning, emotional intimacy and a strong sense of identity? The answer is NOW!

Do you need a New Year's Resolution to create change? Now is an opportune time to assess unmet needs, to define your goals, and focus your attention on getting them met. But that can be done 365 days a year! Don't put it off. A healthy review of one's established patterns helps us work through life's emotional hurdles, assess strengths, develop new tools, explore options and set-up additional groundwork for a healthier, more enriched, balanced life-style.

What is your goal? What is your intention? The therapeutic goal is to bring awareness of unconscious belief systems that block change and create new tools for growth and individuation. Change your thinking; change your life!

"What's not brought to consciousness lures one as fate." — **C.G. Jung**

Thank you for your support!

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