

LIVE LIFE INTENTIONALLY

Set a Theme for Your Year



IT'S THE START OF A NEW YEAR and resolutions are in full bloom. Fueled by enthusiasm and commitment (or maybe it's the champagne), you're ready to hit the ground running, eagerly anticipating the day your goals become reality.

New Year's resolutions feel great...until they're drifting into oblivion by the second week of January, buried under mounds of to-do lists and ingrained habits. It's not all bad though. Now that those resolutions are wrapped back up for next year, you can focus on choosing a theme instead.

Though this may have been the year you were (really, truly) going to...be more focused, less intense, have more fun, work

"Have you been toying with any resolutions? What makes them compelling? If you were to stick with them for a whole year, what benefits would you see?"

harder, live a healthier lifestyle, whatever you were going to do more of, less of, improve; resolutions rarely do the trick. They may help you identify your desired end result, but unfortunately no roadmap is included.

And that's where the theme comes in. It gives you a structure on which to hang your actions, reactions, and mindset, the "magic" combination that creates the kind of change that lasts.

SOMEWHERE UNDER THAT RESOLUTION THERE'S A CORE

For years, I had a recurring New Year's resolution (sounds a bit like a stress dream!): "This year I will be more organized." People who know me are surprised when I share that, because they assume it's my natural state of being. But in fact it doesn't come

naturally, and year after year I'd whip myself into a frenzy, creating systems and processes, vowing to keep my office organized and my desk clean.

Despite my best intentions, by early February the receipt for purchases from Staples' organizing aisle was the last vestige of that goal. And then one day, in one of those duh! moments, I realized that organized wasn't what I cared about. Instead, I was simply tired of wasting time looking for stuff, getting distracted by all the things on my desk, and worrying I'd forgotten something.

My theme for the year became "flowing smooth and easy."

I said it out loud every morning, stuck it on my computer monitor, and looked at what I really needed to keep things flowing smoothly and easily. There were still plenty of action steps to get there, but it was also a huge perspective shift, and that's what made the change stick.

WHAT'S YOURS?

There are an infinite number of themes. My clients' choices range from "the year of living healthfully" to "joyful business growth" and everything in between. Choose one that strongly resonates and will make a difference in your year and, more importantly, in your life.

Even if you already have a good idea of where you want to focus, take some time to reflect on the following questions:

1. Have you been toying with any resolutions? What makes them compelling? If you were to stick with them for a whole year, what benefits would you see? What's the essence of what you want from them?
2. Think back over the past year. What were your successes, milestones, favorite moments, and so forth; whether ex-

pected or not? Where were you less successful? What were the surprises? Now compare all that to what you expected at this time last year. The differences you see are all clues for potential themes.

3. What are your intentions for the coming year? What would you like to say about the year when you're reflecting back twelve months from now?

Paint as vivid a picture as possible with your theme. Write it down, say it daily, and keep it at the top of your mind. And if you're feeling inspired, you can also add in a theme song, as one of my clients did last year. (In case you're wondering, she picked *Peaceful Easy Feeling* by the Eagles.)

Once you get going, it won't be long before your actions and thoughts begin to align with your theme...and with the way you want to live your life.

"Now that those resolutions are wrapped back up for next year, you can focus on choosing a theme instead."

Where do you get your inspiration to live with intention? If you have an idea or story to share, or if you'd just like to comment on this article, drop me a note at sessig@priorityventures.com.

THE WOMEN'S EDGE CONNECTION

Women on the Rise A Networking Event for Professional Women Under 35

Capital City Club

Thursday, February 28, 2008 • 5:30-7:30 PM

\$10/per person • Cash Bar

For reservations contact: Capital City Club 919-832-5526

Sponsored by Women's Edge Magazine

*Join us for an evening just for young professionals and their peers.
Bring a friend and network, have fun and make connections at this premiere event.*

