

TURN RESOLUTIONS INTO REVOLUTIONS!

Resolve: I will not make a single New Year's resolution until I've read this article!

We humans are creatures of habit. When we find something we like to do, or get used to doing, it becomes part of our routine. And then, it becomes part of our identity. We call ourselves *drinkers* and *non-drinkers*. *Meat-eaters* and *vegans*. We *play sports*; or, we *don't have time to exercise*. We *can't start the morning without a coffee*. We *get by on five hours sleep*. We *can't stay up past nine*.

Knowing who you are, free to choose how you want to live, is a big part of being an adult. Problems arise, however, when choices from your past become fixed beliefs that interfere with experiencing and appreciating who you are today.

Let's say you've been eating pretty much the same way for years: Cereal, orange juice, and coffee for breakfast. A sandwich for lunch. Something fast – often pasta – for dinner. You'd never had a problem, but recently, you've been popping antacids like candy. You watch the commercials – It's normal! *Everyone gets heartburn as they get older, right?*

No, they don't. It never occurs to you that what you're eating could be the cause of your distress.

Reconsider.

Our bodies are constantly changing. As children, we may have allergies that we outgrow as we become adults. As adults, we may develop sensitivities that we didn't have as youngsters. Our health and nutritional needs evolve throughout our lives.

But, as our bodies continue to change, if we continue the same old habits, willfully ignoring the signs and signals that things are going awry, those habits can make us sick. That's not big news. Most of us realize that making different food choices, getting more sleep, reducing stress, and exercising are good ideas; and yet we resist adopting new ways.

Why?

Because our long-standing habits are not just *what-we-do*. *They are who we are*. And while our bodies evolve, our self-perception remains optimistically, and happily, fixed.

Re-view.

New Year's is the culturally-mandated time to examine our lives, make resolutions to change our ways and adopt new healthy habits, which is all good. Unfortunately, for the majority of us, our resolve quickly dissolves, and we snap back to doing what we've always done.

I'm suggesting something different. This year: make a New Year's resolution not to make a change -- but simply to discover who you are *now*.

Spend some time every day tuning in to how you feel.

Begin by noticing how you feel when you get out of bed in the morning. Are you rested? Did you get enough sleep? Do you feel energetic? Before you launch into your day, do a quick body scan. Is something asking for attention? Be aware of it!

Set a reminder on your phone to check in with yourself a few times during the day. At midday – did you remember to eat? In the afternoon -- did you grab coffee when you really wanted a nap? In the evening -- are you still working when everyone else in your house has already gone to bed?

Even if you do nothing else new in the next year, increasing your self-awareness will be a huge step toward increasing your health and vitality. Don't underestimate the critical difference between *mentally knowing* something and *experiencing it physically*. The more you become aware of what your body is telling you, the more inclined you will be to make healthful choices in everything you do.

Start experimenting.

When you've identified a habit that no longer works for you – for example, getting an upset stomach every time you eat your favorite pasta – try an experiment. Don't think about giving up pasta forever. Just go pasta/gluten-free for a week or two. See if you notice a difference in how you feel. I think you will.

While you're experimenting, it's helpful to keep notes. Jotting down a few words about what you ate and how you felt afterwards will help you to see patterns, causes and effects more clearly.

Then, take the same approach to exercise. And sleep. Make one small change for a specified period of time and see how you feel. Set the bar low enough so that you can stay with the program, then raise it gradually. Keep focused on your efforts.

Set an intention.

When you experience clear results from your experiments (assuming you've identified habits that didn't work for you, and new behaviors that do) you're ready to take the next step: to set an *intention*.

When you set an intention, you create a vivid mental picture of your goal. You make a commitment to do what's necessary to achieve it. Your intention should be a clear-headed, emotional as well as rational choice, based on a firm decision to take actions that support your health and well-being.

When you live your life with clear intention there's no difficulty keeping your resolutions. Making a conscious choice and commitment to do what's best for you is the hard part. The rest is easy!

Even better, the more frequently you make positive, conscious choices, the easier they become.

Over time, you'll discover that what you once called *resolutions* have become *revolutions*. You'll have transformed your health and your life simply by taking the time to appreciate who you are.

Wishing you a very happy and healthy 2014.

###

Dr. April J. Modesti of Serenity Chiropractic in Los Altos moves people gently toward radiant health. An expert in gluten-free living, Dr. Modesti is also the author of *Mandala Salad* – a gluten-free cookbook. Reach Dr. Modesti at 650-949-1089. serenitychiro.com