

A New Take on New Year's Resolutions
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*The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am,
then I can change. –Carl Rogers*

New year – new resolutions! But, who actually follows through with the harsh rules we impose on ourselves at the start of each year? The gyms flood in January only to be deserted again by March. We ambitiously vow to stop doing XY & Z until we inevitably do and are left feeling worse than we did before we decided to better ourselves with this age-old tradition.

New year's resolutions, like so many of our efforts to change, are built on the belief that something is wrong with us. As one year comes to an end and a new year begins, we scan our lives and ourselves and ask, "what's wrong with me now?" "What about me is ugly, embarrassing, lazy/ineffective?" With questions like these we engage in harsh self-analysis (the kind we wouldn't wish on our worst enemies) and are left with feelings of shame and unworthiness. Nothing good ever comes from this space. In fact, shame exacerbates (if not causes) the very things we want to go away – overeating, lack of motivation, anxiety, depression, and disconnection from the people we love. Shame is the voice inside us that says "I'm not good enough." It's the belief that if only we were *different* in some way, we would be OK.

Paradoxically, as Carl Rogers so simply captured, it is only when we release our shame and open to ourselves to life just as we are right now that we allow ourselves to experience creativity, connection, and love. It's only from this accepting space that we experience true growth and transformation.

When setting goals for the upcoming year, question if you are motivated from a place of shame/stagnation or acceptance/growth. Are you looking to change something so that you will be ok (shame)? Do you need for your new year's resolution to be met before you can start *really* living (shame). Or, do you allow yourself to live fully right now, exactly as you are, and feel that meeting new goals might only add to your life (acceptance)?

As we collectively welcome 2017, let's question the energy that we are inviting into our lives with our thoughts and beliefs about ourselves. Are we feeding the negative, yet familiar, internal dialogue that asks what's wrong with us? Or, are we brave enough to step into a new place of acceptance where we will be truly present in our lives and open to thrive in the new year? For real change - chose the latter.

What can you do? Join our workshop in January! See our website for more details!