

2019 will only be different if you make it to be!

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2018 has come and gone and many of us are going to swear to ourselves that we'll finally hit the gym, stop eating carbs, take our business to new heights and spend more time with our families! Unfortunately, as we have seen in past years, again and again, our deeply ingrained habits often supersede our good intentions, and we fall back into the same old habits within weeks.

I see this at the gym. I am Group Exercise Instructor at Virgin Active and from the third week of January my classes are always full to a level which at times is undesirable, but the classes return to normal at the end of February. In fact, studies show that only between 8% and 11% of people end up achieving their New Year resolutions.

I personally don't make New Year resolutions, but I have a continuous system of objectives setting and review. May I suggest that instead of focusing on these resolutions, perhaps we can aim to raise our level of self-consciousness? Let's reflect and evaluate what is and isn't working in creating a happy and fulfilling life. As we start afresh this New Year, here are four questions to contemplate.

What kind of people are you attracted to and are attracting?

Birds of the same feathers flock together. It's possible that you need to change your "flock" in order for you to achieve some of your desired goals and objectives in 2019 and beyond.



For this you need to examine who you're drawn to, and who you're attracting – there's rich and telling information there waiting for you in such an analysis. Tyler Perry has a useful analogy of a tree to describe three types of people in our lives:



The Leaf People:

They are only there for a season. You can't depend on them or count on them because they are weak and only there to give you shade. Like leaves, they are there to take what they need and as soon as it gets cold or the wind blows in your life they are gone.

The Branch People:

They are stronger than leaves, but you have to be careful with them. They will stick around through most seasons, but if you go through a storm or two in your life it's possible that you could lose them. Most times they break away when it's tough. Although they are stronger than leaves, you have to test them out before you run out there and put all your weight on them. In most cases, they can't handle too much weight.

The Root People:

Like the roots of a tree, they are hard to find because they are not trying to be seen. Their only job is to hold you up and help you live a strong and healthy life. If you thrive, they are happy.

They stay low key and don't let the world know that they are there. And if you go through an awful storm, they will hold you up. Their job is to hold you up, come what may, and to nourish you, feed you

and water you. We all need more of the root people for they are the source of nutrients, support and anchoring. Evaluate what kind of people you surround yourself with and what value they add to your life. Do they make you a better person? Similarly what kind of a person are you to others who's lives you are in.

You also need to ask if the people generally want your time, or are you the one usually chasing people for their time? If you are a person that sucks energy from people they will usually be repulsed from you.

Are you the one that's generally seeing the cup as half empty, seeing everything as negative, complaining, dumping your problems, asking what others are doing for you, judging, and/or interacting in an ego-state with a sense that you are the best all the time?

If you make it an intention to leave people feeling more inspired, understood and special after each interaction, you will find that more and more people will gravitate to you because you breathe life into them, versus sucking it out. In the end, the only thing people will remember about you is how you made them feel.

You need to translate all of these to your social space (family, friends, church, social club etc.) and your workplace (the surgery, the Hospital, the University etc.).

Are you going to accept mediocrity or strive for greatness?

Success begets success. But everyone has to make a conscious decision as to what they choose to stand for and what they will accept as their standard. Why is it that one dentist is more successful than the other? We have to all agree that nothing great in life has ever been the result of minimal effort and a mediocre company.

Scott Alexander says that "All good is hard. All evil is easy. Dying, losing, cheating, and mediocrity is easy. Stay away from easy". I say: stay away from easy and the road well travelled. It's time to raise your bar, create your own path, follow your own dreams but know the difference between the pursuit of excellence and the obsession for perfection.

The world is changing around you and the opportunities are expanding. If you don't dare to expand the parameters of what you think is possible, you will not realize your potential. You need to take a calculated risk that can take you to new heights.



Is fear controlling you and shaping your journey?

We all have our own bad experiences from the past but we should never allow it to ruin the good experiences ahead. We must welcome and see the great opportunities the world has for us, amidst all the challenges, instead of being in a state of constant defence, layered with armour to protect us from what may, or may not, happen. The armour itself is slowing you down and impeding your movement forward.

Do not let the fear of yesterday take away the joy today. Stop waiting for the other shoe to drop – it is the root cause of much unnecessary anxiety. Many people who have been successful in life have learned to leave the fear behind. The stress and negative energy you are creating through fear do nothing for your situation or the world around you except to cause you to be overburdened by things you may not have control of. Rather move forward and if things fail or fall apart, deal with the problem then.

Just as in the past, carry on with life, live life and if something should go wrong trust that you will have the ability, tenacity and strength to deal with the situation at hand – at that moment. Don't let fear cause you to stagnate and die slowly or fail to reach for your goals.

Do you have goals?



We all know that setting goals helps you focus. Without goals, one will always go where the wind blows. Knowing where you want to go helps you to work backwards, to work out the time and resources needed and gives you the best chance at success.

It has been proven that if one bothers to set goals, the chances of success are 10x than those without objectives. Even better, if one goes further and writes the goals down, the chances of success are 3x more than those who keep their goals only in their mind.

Goals hold you accountable and become the yardstick of achievement. They are there to help you achieve and exceed your expectations. They serve to remind you what is important every day. So HAVE GOALS!