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Newsletter

The Gathering - A Celebration of Tao and Defiant Women Everywhere



Winter 2010

Welcome to 2010 – a new year, a new decade.

And, just how, I ask you, did this all happen so quickly? Wasn't it only a few months ago that we were ushering in a new millenium; worrying about computers crashing with the onset of Y2K?

Well, we did survive the onset of the 21st century.

And we did survive its first decade – one that was fraught with a multitude of challenges.

I have a very wise and dear friend, Donna Ferber <http://donnaferber.com> (From *Ex-Wife to Exceptional Life and Profileactics A Guide For The Prevention Of Ill-Conceived Personal Ads*) who speaks of A New Year, emphasizing the first letters of those three words: ANY. According to Donna, ANYthing is possible – and, with the onset of this new decade, this New Year, I intend to take those three words: anything is possible, and turn them into my mantra.

Will everything I strive for come to pass? Possibly not. But with every step forward I will be continuing on my path a bit stronger, a bit more knowledgeable, and with the ability to take what I have learned and apply it to my future growth.

With that in mind, our Tao and defiant Wisdom of the Week for the New Year was:

We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched.

Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives... not looking for flaws, but for potential.

Recently I asked you to respond to this question:

What potential do you see for yourself in the new year as you walk through the rooms of your life?

Here are some of your responses:

Potential. Seems to me I have worked darn hard to declutter mentally and physically. I have lots of potential to grow into all this new space I have created. I have also learned how important it is to be as compassionate with myself as I am with my friends. I also have the potential to find more time...by not watching as much TV!!! Except "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Ghost Adventures" -Marci T

Caryn,

My challenge has always been seeking balance. In every aspect of my life-work, fun, food, giving of myself, expectations of others-it's something I work on and then come back to time and again. The potential I see is to find contentment without balance. For folks who practice yoga it's like the tree pose-you are trying to stand on one leg, but of course you will sway a little here and there, but just



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like a tree you have a firm foundation.

- Mary DM

I have been successful at fully appreciating my solid relationships with my children and grandchild and friends. However, I need to find more things to like about certain family members. The best I have done so far, is to stay upset for shorter periods of time.

- anonymous

This question should be answered by people who look forward to future years hoping for the economy to change, and with hope that the world wars come to an end and that all families have good health, peace of mind, and their future will be fulfilled with their needs to continue and able to afford to live where money or health is no problem. That is what I see in the future .

- Tillie G

I see the potential to make every day more meaningful.
How successful I will be remains to be seen

- May R

Hi CJ,

Last week's message had a strong impact on me, and I forwarded it to a friend who often reminds me I am a human being, not a human doing... (I tend to try to muscle my way through all of life's challenges - I'm strong, I can handle it....) This year, I am going to try to accept myself as a human being. Less trying harder, more listening to the little voice I constantly trample over in my rush to "do" something else.....

- Maureen

OOOOO.....good question.....even if I can't come up with a coherent answer, it sure gives me pause for much thought and fodder for self-improvement.....Then again, if it were not for the "cracks" (as in crackpot), who would there be to shed light on so many things? Therefore, as a proud, self-proclaimed crackpot (and proud of it), I see myself as providing little giggles for those who have difficulty responding to tickling!

- Maryann S

My 2 resolutions for 2010 (yes, I make others than losing weight) are to be nicer--to anyone I can, everywhere I can, etc. It's a trait I deeply admire.

My 2nd is to be more and more honest re: people, places and things. No lies--even the white ones,(which will only be allowed if someone could genuinely be hurt).

- Diane R

I got the brainstorm this weekend that I would like to do 3-DAY WALK FOR BREAST CANCER. At age 69, overweight and out of shape, I am going to investigate the possibility of getting into shape to do it! Will keep you posted--I have a lot of groundwork to do!

- Marcia B

What an interesting question. It stopped me for quite a while. Not often enough do I allow for reflection and I realize it is within reflection where potential dwells. Maybe I hesitate and stop my own reflection because time and time again I have allowed potential in only to once again become unconscious and return to sleep.

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But you say not to look at the flaws and so I will choose once again to turn my reflection toward its awareness.

Potential to create is what comes to mind, to continue to create myself in ways that I have not yet come to learn. My potential will unfold when I welcome silence, not force the silence, but just permit it, rest into it and know the quiet for the direction it will offer.

There is great potential within me, I know it, I dream it, and cultivating self-love will foster potential's presence to be known.

I have everything I need to welcome my potential, it waits on me to allow it in, and as I walk through my indwelling rooms, *potential to create* in ways I can only imagine awaits.

-Eileen J

Hi CJ,

First of all, thanks for the thought provoking question. I spent the weekend pondering the answer to this one.

I remember having an email conversation with you at some point in which we discussed new year's resolutions. You might remember that I don't do that particular exercise because I found it disappointed me too much to make and then quickly break them. Many past resolutions were weight loss slanted. So as you might imagine the weight did not come off when resolutions were broken and I remained disappointed in my self, which most definitely is not a good frame of mind to help me accomplish that resolution.

Your question helped me to switch my perspective and concentrate on the good qualities I might possess that will help me to achieve my goals of a healthier me. SO... as I sit here eating my oatmeal (which I hope will help lower my cholesterol) I have come up with the potentials of respect and determination on my part.

Those are definitely qualities I have relied on to help me reshape my post divorce life. I will try to respect and honor my authentic self by eating healthy and exercising. By not concentrating on the number but on respecting myself perhaps my weight loss goals may be met this year. Determination has most assuredly helped me to stay focused, to explore my emotions and to grow closer into becoming the me I want to be.

Hopefully that same determination will continue to help me to reach the healthier lifestyle goals I have for myself.

Thanks again for the chance to reflect and shift perspective. I am gonna run now --have to get ready for yoga class!!!

- Maria M

I guess the thought that we can always learn no matter what our age. That we can always grow and be a productive member of society, that we can take responsibility for our own actions and not blame others for what we need to fix in ourselves and trust in God.

- Jeanne M.

I thank you for your responses – some serious, some “lighter” and all meaningful.

So, let us, dear Tao and defiant girlfriends, enter 2010 on a positive note, follow our dreams and remember Donna Ferber's wisdom: **ANY**thing is possible! Happy, healthy and successful New Year to you all.

WINTER WISDOM

**"I think in terms of the day's resolutions,
not the year's"**

-Henry Moore

TAO AND DEFIANT NEWS

I'm excited to be contributing to four websites (three brand new) two for women of all ages, one for girls and one for moms.

Independent Girls, was recently started by Julie Simons that speaks to teen and pre-teen girls everywhere. My first article will appear within the next month and, again, I will be pleased to let you know when it is posted. The site is up and running at <http://www.independentgirls.org/>. What a wonderful site for the young girls in your life to visit!

Womenxchange will see the light of day, I'm told, on February 1st. Its creator is an energetic young woman named Isabel Diaz with whom I am very excited to be working. You will certainly receive an email from me when the site goes live. This promises to be a wonderful place for us to all visit – often!

Diva Toolbox, <http://www.divatoolbox.com/> has something for all of us, whether we want information about our careers, family, sports, home – and much more – it's all there. Even grocery coupons!

And Janet Powers, the "chief executive diva" broadcasts interviews with some pretty exciting folks on a variety of topics.

I don't know how "exciting" I am, but I will be the guest on her show Monday, February 15 at 4:00. <http://www.divatoolbox.com/diva-toolbox-radio-/hosts/1836-janet-powers-across-the-kitchen-table-with-janet.html>

Conscious Moms, where moms can go to teach, learn and connect is a new site and, when my first post goes up, I'll be sure to send you an email!

In the meantime, check it out – I think it is fabulous:

<http://www.consciousmoms.org/>

Here are three invitations for you:

The Unconceivable Choice®

I am looking to interview women for a book I am writing about women who chose, for whatever the reason, not to have children. The goal is to interview 100 women who have made this choice. The interview will take about 15 minutes and your answers will be held in strictest confidence. The only requirement is that you are at least 35 years of age. If you are interested in sharing your story, please [e-mail me](mailto:Donna@donnaferber.com) at Donna@donnaferber.com and I will contact you to set up a telephone interview. If you know someone who might be interested in sharing their story, please pass this on.

Many Thanks,

Donna Ferber, LPC, LADC

From Stacey and Eitan Battat, editors of *Thin Threads*, a series of books brimming with uplifting, true stories submitted by real folks – just like us. These "thin threads" tell of moments or encounters that connected the story-teller to a person or opportunity that changes her life for the better.

Recently I received this letter from Stacey:

Hi CJ,

One of the quotes I love most which so relates to both of our missions is:

"Sometimes in the Wind of Change we Find our True Direction."

This story shows the triumphant nature of moms and captures the true spirit of this giving season... beautiful for your TAO & DEFIANT women and girls out there!

We welcome the Tao Girls (and women) community to submit Thin Thread stories, as we continue to collect stories on Thin Thread Life-Changing Moments of Holidays, Teachers & Mentors, Teens & Young Adults, Motherhood & (our newest collection) Money & Financial Hardship. We are excited to participate in your community and share your stories, as we invite you to read inspirational stories – along with our Thin Threads community. Visit www.thinthreads.com <http://www.thinthreads.com/samples/xmas.html>

Bloom in Italy:

Barbara Scala and Bloom On –Line info@bloomonline.com has a very special retreat planned: coming up - April 10-17, 2010

Join Barb for her spring retreat in breathtaking Tuscany!



Imagine an 800 year old picturesque farmhouse ("Ebbio") in a magical place surrounded by an evergreen forest that's inviting, rustic and beautiful. (Think Under The Tuscan Sun!). Now imagine time to savor a stroll through the woods, the smell of fragrant air, the delightful company of wonderful women and all the other magnificent sites and flavors of Tuscany.

With an emphasis on living a balanced, happy, and fulfilled lifestyle (sounds ideal!), we'll start each day with yoga and a breakfast chat about the "seeds" you can plant to sprout your dreams and grow your life.

Bloom with la dolce vita!

If you are interested and would like more information, email Barb at info@bloomonline.com or call 203-521-1129. Ciao!

As for me...

...well, I'm excited to say that I have many upcoming events – some scheduled and some in the works. I'll keep my "appearance schedule" updated on this website and will certainly let you know where I'll be and when I'll be there. It's always such great fun to see you all as I travel around the country.

Scheduled for winter and spring:

On Thursday, February 4, at 3:00 - I will be participating in a radio show on Barbara Scala's Bloom On-Line with my good friend Prill Boyle (Defying Gravity) To listen in go to <http://bloomonline.com/?cat=122>

On Monday, February 15, 4:00 PM – I'll be the guest on Janet Powers' radio show on Diva Toolbox <http://www.divatoolbox.com/diva-toolbox-radio-hosts/1836-janet-powers-across-the-kitchen-table-with-janet.html>

On Thursday, February 25, 12:00 – I'll be speaking at a luncheon sponsored by Bernard's of Ridgefield at 20 West Lane Road, Ridgefield, CT. To make your reservation, please go to their website <http://www.bernardsridgefield.com/>

On Saturday, April 10 9:30 AM – I will be with the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts delivering the opening speech at their annual Thank You to the Volunteers Day. And, in the afternoon I'll be giving a workshop on Tao and dynamic – how to mentor girls to be Tao-Girls.

In the works:

Hartford High School – working with the girls in their after school program

Madison, NJ – Sages Pages Book Store – working with parents and teaching professionals as we all help our teen and pre-teen girls find confidence and self-esteem

Madison, NJ – working with the Madison Alliance Against Substance Abuse

And, more to come!

I hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of The Gathering, and look forward to receiving your comments along with your own stories and news (which will only be published with your approval).

As for the next Gathering, well it will come out in the spring, with Tao and defiant updates to continue when I have news to share with you all.

CJ

For information, or to share your thoughts and wisdom with us: thepath@taogirl.com
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