

DAWN of ANOTHER YEAR BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES TO BEGIN ANEW

1/1/2015

DEAR READERS: Welcome to 2015!

If the last year was challenging for some of us, a new one has arrived, bringing with it our chance for a new beginning. Today is the day we have an opportunity to discard destructive old habits for healthy new ones, and with that in mind, I will share Dear Abby's often-requested list of New Year's Resolutions, which were adapted by my late mother, Pauline Phillips, from the original credo of Al-Anon:

JUST FOR TODAY: I will live through this day only. I will not brood about yesterday or obsess about tomorrow. I will not set far-reaching goals or try to overcome all of my problems at once.

I know that I can do something for 24 hours that would overwhelm me if I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be happy. I will not dwell on thoughts that depress me. If my mind fills with clouds, I will chase them away and fill it with sunshine.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will accept what is. I will face reality. I will correct those things that I can correct and accept those I cannot.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will improve my mind. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration. I will not be a mental loafer.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will make a conscious effort to be agreeable. I will be kind and courteous to those who cross my path, and I'll not speak ill of others. I will improve my appearance, speak softly, and not interrupt when someone else is talking.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will refrain from improving anybody but myself.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will do something positive to improve my health. If I'm a smoker, I'll quit. If I am overweight, I will eat healthfully -- if only just for today. And not only that, I will get off the couch and take a brisk walk, even if it's only around the block.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will gather the courage to do what is right and take responsibility for my own actions.

And now, Dear Readers, I would like to share an item that was sent to me by L.J. Bhatia, a reader from New Delhi, India:

DEAR ABBY: This year, no resolutions, only some guidelines. The Holy Vedas say, "Man has subjected himself to thousands of self-inflicted bondages. Wisdom comes to a man who lives according to the true eternal laws of nature."

The prayer of St. Francis (of which there are several versions) contains a powerful message:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

"Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

"Where there is injury, pardon;

"Where there is doubt, faith;

"Where there is despair, hope;

"Where there is darkness, light;

"And where there is sadness, joy.

"O Divine Master,

"Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

"To be understood, as to understand;

"To be loved, as to love;

"For it is in giving that we receive,

"It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

"And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

And so, Dear Readers, may this new year bring with it good health, peace and joy to all of you. -- LOVE, ABBY