



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

Choose to Change Your Life in the New Year

Live the Lesson

2008 was filled with a number of economical and societal changes that were, for the most part, out of our control. But I imagine most of us can name several personal choices we regret. Perhaps you wish you could take back certain words, actions or decisions you made. It's important we do not forget lessons learned from past mistakes. Do not let your own guilt dominate your behavior in the new year. Instead, be determined to apply lessons learned to each new day, and remember the price you paid to learn those lessons.

Redeem Your Rewards

2008 may rank first as your worst year personally, financially, health wise or all of the above. Despite your misfortunes, it is essential to pause and focus on the many blessings, rewards and positive events that occurred in 2008. Make a list of events, outcomes and relationships that were successful throughout the year. The key to a joyous day and new year is to make gratitude your default emotion.

Give When Grieving

Kick-start the new year by contributing to the success of other people's resolutions. It is easy to wallow in our own tough times, but we don't have to look far to recognize and meet the needs of others. The greatest gift you can give is yourself. Volunteer. Donate. Give something of yourself to others, especially during times of grief. You will feel immediate delight in each new day.

Organize your Outlook

The end of the year is an ideal time for reflecting on the direction of your life. It is easy to get caught up in the business of our lives and others and forget the purposeful path we intended to follow. Organizing your outlook involves refocusing your highest priorities, values and passions. Schedule your priorities into your day. This critical choice will bring a new year that will change your life.

Decide for a Day

For me, long-term planning means thinking about next Tuesday. A year-long goal is simply overwhelming. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, decide each day which choices will help move you toward your personal definition of success. For example, I know I can take a 15 walk after lunch today, and I can run by the grocery to pick up something healthy for dinner. Resolutions often seem final, and the pressure causes most people to give up. Just think about daily decisions, and worry about tomorrow tomorrow.

Move from Comfort to Courage

It is easy to find comfort in a routine life. Courage is resistance to fear, not absence of fear. Every day is a test of courage. What aspect of your life could benefit from courageous new choices? Life is hard often unfair, but that doesn't mean we have to let it defeat us. Decide to make 2009 a year of confidence and courage, and begin now. It is your decision to say "yes" to life. Make that resolution today!

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), a not-for-profit organization is the nation's largest provider of community-based behavioral healthcare. With a history that spans over fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to more than 69,000 individuals of all ages and their families annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 120 facilities and 150 partnership locations in Tennessee and Indiana. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Tennessee and The Joint Commission in Indiana. For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.