

CULTIVATING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE ©
Renée Canali, Life Coach Vol.1, Issue 3 March 2004

The winter weather appears to be losing its grip, giving way to little increases in sunlight and playing tug-of-war with the warmer air of spring. It's an exhilarating change! It is always tempting to open a window or two when the air first flaunts a hint of warmth.

I love to open the windows when it begins to warm outside. The new spring air clears out the stale and musty air inside, leaving lingering scents of daffodils and hyacinths. I love the surprise of entering a room and catching the scent of some newly blooming tree or flower. Opening the windows allows me to send out the old, musty air and bring in the new, refreshing air. It also allows me to see things in a new light; it's a great way to start a new season!

Spring is a time of growth and of new beginnings. It is a perfect time to take an introspective look inside. Are there any unfinished projects in your life? What unresolved matters need attention? Do you give your best at all you do or do you do enough to get by? Many of us experience the exhaustion of trying to keep up with the overload of responsibilities, obligations and duties. Clearly, many of us would benefit from removing some obligations from our list. Having fewer obligations frees time to pay more attention to the obligations you choose to keep and allows you to experience a deeper satisfaction from meeting those obligations.

I like to "air" myself out by clearing out the clutter in my life. Just as I clear out the oak leaves and twigs from my gardens to make room for new growth, I go through my inner garden and notice what is cluttering my thoughts and my actions and holding back my growth. It is a time for me to focus completely on things I no longer want as part of my life. I pluck the weeds of guilt and envy from my garden to make room for more joy. I choose things I've been tolerating in my life and make a conscious decision as to how to handle them. If I have a co-worker that is always negative and needy, I can choose not to allow that co-worker to drain my energy by limiting the time I spend with them. If we are collaborating and spending less time together is not feasible, I can choose to set a boundary with them about how our work time would be spent. I may also decide to ask another family member to take over a chore that I do out of a sense of obligation, not because I'm the only one that can perform the task. I find that by focusing on eliminating things that nag at me and keep me from taking action, I accomplish more, create more energy and have more of myself to share with others.

I invite you to awaken your inner self, sip steaming coffee as you wander in your garden early in the day, when the morning air is clear and fresh. Listen to the stirrings inside you- the flutters of joy you feel as you think about the things you really want to accomplish today, tomorrow, this season. Hear the rumblings of the things you feel you "have" to or "should" do. Decide which of the noisy "have" to's you can clear out of the garden. Which can you take care of quickly and completely, to make room for the things that give you the most joy?

Allow new beginnings to take hold within you. Open your windows and flush out stale and unnecessary duties and obligations. Put a stop to things you have been tolerating in your life: allow the promise of spring to win the tug-of-war with the tolerations of winters past. Clear the ground of clutter and allow the sun to warm the earth. You'll be amazed at what varieties your garden will grow!

Contact me by email: Renee@landofpossibility.com to explore the possibilities of Life Coaching. I offer a sample 30-minute session to allow you to experience what coaching is about.

GARDENER'S ACTION PLAN FOR MARCH 2004

Renée Canali, Personal Life Coach

In the March issue of **Cultivating The Seeds Of Change**, I talked to you about creating an opportunity to take an introspective look at how you are living your life. What obligations are cluttering your life, taking time away from the things you want to do but never seem to have time for?

- Cleaning out your closets, pantry, and garage?
- Baking for church, although you volunteer in the Sunday nursery care already?
- Saying yes to school activities even though it takes you away from quality time with your children?

What habits have you formed that prevent you from accomplishing more in your life?

- Putting off doing necessary upkeep around the home because there are too many things to do?
- Watching television for hours to relax, but not taking time to exercise and “distress”?
- Collect piles of papers and mail for when you have time to look through everything?

I challenge you to take one thing from your growing list of obligations this coming month and ease into saying “no”. “No” is a choice to spend your time focused on what brings you joy. It allows you freedom from guilt. “No” does not come with excuses. It can be a sentence by itself. “No. I am not available for the extra project, Mr. Boss.” “No. Thank you for asking.” “No, Ms. Telemarketer. I appreciate the call.” No can be delivered without emotional attachment after practicing a few times.

The next challenge I have for you is to begin to change one habit that no longer serves you. Pick up the first inch of that growing pile of papers. Vow to sort through each item, one by one and make a decision as to whether or not you could retrieve a copy from the source easily in the future. Is it important enough to take space away from your kitchen, family room, den, home office? When sorting, there is no pile for “I’ll decide about this one later” or “I don’t know, let me just set this aside for now.” Allow yourself to make a decision on any new item that you would be inclined to add to the pile. The focus is to work at what is already there until the pile is eliminated and while doing so, replace the “piling” syndrome with decisive action.

It takes anywhere from 21 to 30 days to create a new habit. Allow yourself to falter occasionally, but keep working at it. You are worth spending more time on and more time with. Create a vision of what you will spend your free time doing. Hear the sounds of kids laughing as they chase you in the yard. Imagine the places you and your dog can explore together. Decide which life long interest you want to revive. Focus on the benefits you will reap once the new habits replace the old. It’s amazing what you can do if you focus.

"One definition of insanity is to do something for twenty years that has not worked, and then do it again as if it will work." Dick Olney (excerpted from *Walking in Beauty: A Collection of the Psychological Insights and Spiritual Wisdom of Dick Olney*, edited by Roslyn Moore. To order, contact DO Publishing, P.O. Box 103, Mendocino, California 95460):

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