

Happy New Year from the Smart Life Institute!

I am not really sure what inspires people to select a rather arbitrary day (January 1) to suddenly decide that certain things in their lives have to change. It's always been fascinating to me how January 1 holds so much weight - when the natural day to ponder our own internal evolution would most certainly be our birthday.

But with that said, a new year is upon us. Another year has passed with many ups and downs for all of us. I am sure you've all had difficult challenges ... and many positive experiences ... throughout the past year. I consider all of these experiences - up AND down - the opportunity for learning and growth.

A number of years ago, I read a book entitled "Mastery" by George Leonard. This book got me thinking about what is entailed with the process of self-mastery. There are some interesting trends that we see on a regular daily basis. For example - most of us are pleased when we see forward progress - the upward movement on the graph that indicates that something is changing for the better. But what happens when the graph turns downward? Or when it plateaus?

Many people look at that as a negative. We've been socialized to believe that a downturn is in fact something negative - and that being on a plateau is about the same. It's all about "moving forward" and moving upward. For many, the plateaus are hard to manage as they signify "no change at all".

But either way - if we're open to it - we're moving forward in the process of self-mastery and personal growth. These are times when we are presented with an *opportunity* for learning and growth. A very powerful opportunity awaits - if we seize the moment and take it.

Growth is a process. Your cellular make-up is different today than it was yesterday. Your DNA may not change, but your body's adaptations to the world around it change on a daily basis. The thoughts inside your head impact you on a moment-to-moment basis and have a direct effect on your cellular function, just like exercise and diet - the two things that just about everyone wants to address as a New Year's resolution.

Personal growth and evolution are wonderful things, aren't they?

To this end, the Smart Life Institute's mission encompasses five core elements:

1. Build a global community of clients and clinicians committed to the shared vision of competent self-care. The core values of this community are that knowledge and self-responsibility are the ultimate keys to personal power and self-mastery and that personal transformation occurs through learning. This represents a new paradigm in health - a (R)evolution in Health.
2. Promote and deliver effective strategies for competent self-care in both clinical and non-clinical environments.
3. Create a client-centered and educationally-based community that fosters personal and

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systemic transformation via mentorship in all aspects of clinical and coaching practice.

4. Embrace a synergistic relationship between client and clinician to foster the growth and learning of each and every community member.

5. Define new standards in outcomes-based self-care and commitment to systemic health care reform such that it reflects these core premises.

A new year is upon us - full of growth, learning, and personal transformation. I wish everyone a fantastic 2008. May it be your best year ever!!

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