

Intentional Living

The arrival of 2009 caught me in a reflective mode. Turn-of-the-year and birthday celebrations do that for me.

Unfortunately, reflecting on this past year I got a little hung up on some things I didn't accomplish. I camped out with my discontent a couple days. But, the warmth of Sovereign acceptance promptly seeped in to lift the groping fog of failure.

A 17th Century French monk penetrated the mist. I learned when Brother Lawrence, an uncomplicated man who entered a Paris monastery at mid-life, failed at anything he simply confessed to God, "I shall never do otherwise, if You leave me to myself."

It's true. Short of God's graceful intervention, my failures would forever outweigh my successes.

Peering forward into the coming year, I'm now feeling a bit Alice in Wonderland-esque: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

I need wisdom.

My proverbial cat, from Lewis Carroll's whimsical story, steps in about now and speaks up. "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

Where do I want to get to this year? And, what am I going to have to do to get there?

Ruth Haley Barton, in her book *Sacred Rhythms*, contemplates the answer. She presents two simple questions: "Who do I want to be?" and "How do I want to live?" Barton suggests we ask ourselves, "How do I want to live so that I can be who I want to be?"

Then, she cinches it with a question it all boils down to: "How bad do I want it?"

How bad do I want it?

My goal for 2009 is to live intentional. To arrange my life in an intentional manner, based on the person I want to be --the person God made me to be.

A simple decision: Live life intentionally. Simple, but not easy.

Each day, I'm faced with new choices--choices which impact my quality of life. If I veer off track, I must refocus on my list of priorities for this season.

Will the seeds I plant (my investment of time) reap the harvest I desire?

Sometimes, I'm forced to reprioritize.

Much like you, I imagine, I have several things I petition God for on a regular basis. But God, in His wisdom, does a little spiritual weed control, plucking the overrun or virulent from my field. Some of my desires bloom only as another seed fails to root.

I'm currently working on a book that offers soul-wounded women practical tools to reconcile a painful past with God's purpose for their lives. This book marries expressive writing and Biblical truths, carrying women on an interactive healing journey.

By its nature, this book required a large investment of time and emotional energy. Yet, I had another project, dear to my heart, I repeatedly petitioned God for.



The blanket of the two projects, an ongoing battle with chronic illness, my beautiful new grandchild, Lacey, and ever blooming freelance projects neutralized me. Nothing received the true attention it deserved.

I had to choose. I rearranged my life around what is important during this season. And, that required that I give up some things.

Beth Moore, in *Believing God Day by Day*, lays it on the line.

God knows my absolute priorities--my A list of prayer requests. Therefore, if something on my A list temporarily or even permanently (ouch!) might have to cancel out something on my B list, so be it.

I water my A list first, my heart's desires, and I grow from there --weeding out my B list as needed.

And, with God's graceful intervention, the next turn of the year will materialize in rays of warm sunlight. ■

©2009 Jo Ann Fore is a Certified Life Purpose Coach® and freelance writer. Visit Jo Ann at www.JoAnnFore.com or www.shoutlife.com/joannfore