

'Tis the Season for Setting Goals

By Marilyn Allen, Editor

The new year is here! It is time to review the goals you set at the beginning of last year, goals, count up all of your accomplishments, and look ahead to what you'd like to accomplish this year.

Now is the time to turn on the "dream machine," so to speak, and think about the possibilities 2005 holds.

Buddha said, "Action follows thought as a cart follows an ox." Napoleon Hill, who wrote *Think and Grow Rich*, among other books, said, "If you believe it, you can achieve it." These sayings all help us to understand that the first step in accomplishing anything is the mental activity of deciding what we want, how we want it to be and when we want it.

Accomplishing something is a process, and one of the first steps in that process is to go through the mental activity of wanting something and setting a goal. When that activity is started, it will allow you to clarify what you want and write down your goals. Writing down what you dream about and want is the second necessary step in helping to manage your behavior, prioritizing your actions and motivating yourself to achieve your dreams. Just as we have new dreams in the new year, we must also look back over the last year and count the goals that we have completed, as well as what needs to be carried over to the current year.

When we think about writing down our goals, we always seem to focus on work, business opportunities, improving our practices, and so on. There is an old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Life is short, though - so this year, I think that some of your goals should focus on your health, social activities, having fun, and your spiritual well-being. There is more to life than seeing patients and filling out paperwork. I know that, and you know that, but sometimes, we need to be reminded of it just the same. So, what would you like to achieve for yourself in these areas of your life in 2005?

When the word "goal" is mentioned in conversation, it usually generates a variety of feelings in people - some good, some bad. Some people feel uneasy about it, because they don't know what their goals are -

they don't have a particular goal in mind, or worse yet, they don't have **any** goals. They don't plan or think ahead; they just sort of "go with the flow" and take what life brings them. When the question arises as to whether these goals are written down somewhere, even more people tune out of the conversation. Some people actually avoid writing down their goals, because they're afraid of not achieving them and being disappointed later on.

The reality is, it doesn't have to be that way. To take it a step further, it shouldn't be that way; there's nothing to be afraid of. The power of goal-setting is very strong. A goal helps to focus your thoughts and your intentions. The power of writing down your goals puts that information and your intent out into the universe. It's sort of like building a house that you've imagined. An architect takes your ideas and puts them down on paper in the form of blueprints. It is imperative to have blueprints if you're going to build a house. The same is true when you are going to build your dreams and ideas into reality.

Please dream along with me for a moment. How do we want the profession to progress?

Where do we want to be by 2006?

These are some of my dreams:

- I want to see one million new patients in the offices of Oriental medicine providers by 2006.
- I want to see more articles about Oriental medicine and herbs in the mainstream media (daily newspapers and magazines, television programs, etc.).
- I want to see acupuncture practitioners giving more services to patients.
- I want to see more insurance companies reimbursing for acupuncture treatments.
- I want to see more acupuncturists using the new CPT codes for billing services.

I want you to have a wonderful holiday this New Year season. Take this opportunity to tie a giant satin bow around your everyday life by finding ingenious ways to be more generous, by having more joyous experiences, and by treating and referring more well-educated patients than ever before. This is the season of intimate gift giving and brilliant excitement. Let's keep those feelings all year long.

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