

The Easiest New Year's Resolution You'll Ever Make

The twinkling colored lights that cover the trees and frame the houses in the neighborhood. The sweet smell of mom's ginger cookies baking in the oven. Eating a succulent turkey roasted to perfection. The divine light of a dozen white candles filling a room. Hugging every loved one as hard as you can. Placing a little something extra in the church's donation box. Making a gift box for a child without a family. Hearing angelic voices of the holiday choir. Champagne popping at the new year. Wishing good cheer to everyone you meet.

Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's are all holidays about love, fellowship, goodwill, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, communion, so many good things. These feelings are more intense, more vibrant, more palpable around this time of year. Then start to wane a bit as we get back into our regular lives, facing our daily challenges, taking our knocks, fighting our battles.

However, you can use the felt sense of holiday joy to help you feel better during the difficult times throughout the year. How? By "savoring the goodness" of the holidays, moment by moment.

There are three steps that you can do to "savor the goodness" of any moment:

1. Be consciously alert, aware of a joyous moment as it unfolds before you.
2. Stop and notice what it is about that moment that feels good to you. Focus your attention for 20-30 seconds.
3. Imagine the experience being absorbed into your mind and body. Like a sponge, you are taking in the thoughts, emotions and sensations of that particular time.

You do this throughout the holidays to build a storehouse of positive memories that you can call upon to soothe emotional moments that will come later in the year. Think of it as creating a relationship with an internal friend that you can call upon to reassure you when you need it. So, when someone is rejecting you, recall the love you felt when you shared a big New Year's Eve hug with your best friend.

The other benefit of "savoring the good" is that when you do it often enough, it becomes a habit that will rewire your brain to go towards what is positive versus what is negative.

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year." –Ralph Waldo Emerson {eoa}

Author's Note: You can learn more about "savoring the good" from the teachings of Dr. Rick Hanson, a neuropsychologist and senior fellow at the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California Berkeley.

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