

# The Genesis Therapy Center

WINTER 2017

## No More Resolutions

Charmaine Jake-Matthews, D.Min., LCPC

As 2017 begins, I notice that many of my friends are making New Year's Resolutions. Some are planning to lose weight. Others are gearing up to save money. Still others are vowing to improve their relationships. However, I have not made any resolutions for 2017. As a matter of fact, I have not made a New Year's resolution in over a decade. Why? I do not make resolutions, because they have never worked for me.

Interestingly, I am not alone. One source estimates that more than 90% of resolutions fail (Statistic Brain, 2016). Given this information, it is not surprising that 42% of people, like me, do not make resolutions (Statistic Brain, 2016). While these stats might seem discouraging, there is good news! You can still set and accomplish meaningful goals to help you improve your life. As a matter of fact, these goals can be set any time of the year, not just in January.

One formula for setting realistic goals can be remembered by using the abbreviation S.M.A.R.T.

**SPECIFIC:** Set goals that are specific and clearly articulated. For example, "I want to lose weight" is vague. However, "I want to lose 2 pounds per week" is a specific goal.

**MEASURABLE:** Set goals that can be measured using some objective tool or standard. For example, "I want my clothing to fit better" is a good goal, but not one that can be objectively measured. On-the-other-hand, "I want my waist to decrease by 4 inches in the next six months is measurable (in addition to being specific).

**ACHIEVABLE:** Set goals that you can realistically accomplish. For example, "I want to get rich this year" is neither specific, measurable nor achievable (for most people). However, "I want to save 10% of my income this year" is specific, measurable and, for most people, achievable.

**RELEVANT:** Set goals that are related to the current conditions and realities in your life. In other words, make sure that the goals are things that you really want AND that you can access the resources needed to accomplish them. For example, the goal of becoming a professional opera singer seemed very relevant to me 30 years ago. However, in 2017, I have a passion for my work as a counselor and I have significant respiratory difficulties. Therefore, a goal of increasing my vocal range by a half octave is much more relevant to my current condition.

**TIME-BASED:** When setting goals, include time frames. Doing so will help you to stay focused and directed toward completion of your goal by the deadlines you have established. It is a good idea to set several small goals to be achieved within brief time periods and use them as building blocks toward a larger, long-term goal. For example, "I want to pay-off one credit card bill per quarter" might be a small, short-term goal which can be a building block toward the larger, long-term goal of eliminating all credit card debt in two years. So, get S.M.A.R.T. and get started on the growth and improvement you want in your life!

### References

Statistic Brain. (2016). New year's resolution statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.statisticbrain.com/new-years-resolution-statistics/>

I think goals should never be easy, they should force you to work, even if they are uncomfortable at the time.

Michael Phelps

The Genesis Therapy  
Center's

14th Annual

KidPower Benefit

Sunday, Oct. 29, 2017

2 to 6pm at Gaelic Park in

Oak Forest

## A Nation Connected In Fear

Rachael Sytsma, Psy.D

During presidential elections, we feel a divide in our communities unlike any other. We become impassioned about our ideals and beliefs, and listen to others who feel similarly, feeling welcomed and supported. We hear opposing viewpoints and become dismissive, enraged, and even apathetic. Debating with others on the importance of the issues you hold near and dear to your heart, can reveal upsetting truths you may not have known about your loved ones. These truths may have had you reevaluating your previous opinion of them, your relationship, and your desire to remain close. Feeling these emotions and having these thoughts, can be distressing, and may even make you feel "crazy." You may have said to yourself "all this over an election?" And you were not alone.

One thing is clear, the 2016 Presidential Election showed the nation, and the world, that our country is afraid. No matter who you supported, or if you abstained from voting this year, this election highlighted the fears many Americans (on any side) hold. Some were afraid of losing their steady, reliable jobs they have held for decades. Others were afraid of losing their health insurance. Some felt afraid for their citizenship, their lives, their marriages. In the months leading up to November 8th, 2016, our fears were discussed and amplified by very powerful people; people who wanted our votes. Many citizens believed there was a clear choice for the best candidate, while others lamented on their choices, feeling no one fit the bill. At the end of it all, a president was elected, and we now know the path laid before us as a country.

Knowing that this election highlighted the fears our nation has, we can use those fears to reduce the distance between us. If you, a Trump voter, cannot understand how your cousin could support Clinton, ask them. If you a Clinton voter, could not fathom voting 3rd party during this election, listen to a 3rd party's voter plea for political change. You will discover that in reality, we are not so different. We all felt fear following change. We all know what it is like to worry about our future, our children, our homes. Fear is known far and wide and it is contagious.

Because fear is an emotion we have all felt, we can use it to create empathy for one another. Perhaps we can use our

own experience of fear to understand why someone would dismiss the seemingly glaring contradictions of their candidate, and continue to passionately support them anyway. Perhaps we can use fear to understand why some took to the streets following the election and protested, and why others became violent at campaign rallies and post-election celebrations. While it is difficult to understand violence, hate, and discrimination against others, fear is less difficult to understand.

Talking about emotions is hard, especially emotions our culture has associated with weakness or instability. Fear, at times, has been associated this way, but it is a natural response to danger. Fear protects us from harm by telling us to run, hide, or respond. If we are able to acknowledge our fear and cope with it, rather than try to hide or minimize it's importance, we are healthier in return. We can do this with one another by admitting to our fears and expressing them in a way that can be heard. Fear is powerful, but it becomes less powerful if we name it and use it to our advantage. If you believe that it is time for our nation to come together and heal, then use fear in your healing process, by discussing it with others who disagree with you, listening to those whom you disagree with, and understand the importance it had in the choices we have all made.

## Like us on Facebook

***We offer ongoing social skills groups for children ages 9-12 and 12-15.***

If interested, please contact Dr. Rachael Sytsma at 708-423-3361, ext. 35

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We're on the Web!

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### Other Locations:

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LaGrange, IL  
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Oak Lawn, IL  
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