

Couple's Meditation for January 1 Resolutions

Challenge

Our unscientific research (we are just making this part up) indicates that the average life expectancy of a solitary New Year's resolution is 7.5 days. If made with a solemn commitment to do it hand and hand with our mate, the expected life span of a joint resolution made on January 1st is 6 days. We have a difficult time maintaining resolutions in which it appears that we have some control. It is nearly impossible to remain committed to a resolution in which our adherence to it is dependent on the behavior of another person. In our recovery, when we resolved that were powerless over our destructive obsession/addiction and no human power could relieve it, the result was felt at once and we were set free. When we knew that we must quit or we would die, we generally kept on relapsing. A resolution, whether it is made on January 1st or April 1st, is only as good as our willingness to draw on a power greater than ourselves.

Reflection

If you have identified aspects of your life that you believe need changing, you must first ask yourself if you want to change. If you need to change and do not want to change, the commitment will not last long. If you are serious about change, examine what you have attempted in the past and why those attempts failed. When you have a clear picture of the history, bring that picture to a fellow sufferer and solicit his/her experience, strength, and hope. Share that picture with all who care for you and ask for their prayers. If one of your sources of support is your mate that is great, however, keep the support to the practice of shared prayer and meditation in the beginning. You do not want your partner to assume the responsibility for your recovery.

Prayer

God, help me to avoid the tendency to beat myself up with resolutions that I am not committed to. Life is influenced by pep rallies. I cannot cheer myself into change. I know that you are ready to carry me and I will let you.
Amen.

Couple's Meditation for January 2 A Rearview

Challenge

It is sometimes difficult to get a clear perspective when looking at life in the rearview mirror. However difficult, it is important for us as a couple to take regular inventory of how we have been living our lives together. The practice of taking an inventory on our active romantic relationship may seem unfamiliar at first, but when taken seriously the effort can be very rewarding. The model the two of you chose for such an inventory is quite optional. You can use 4th Step Guides, daily inventory formats, or spiritual writings. A decision to look at the relationship when it appears to be doing well may be the preventative action the two of you have been overlooking.

Reflection

A simple, yet intensely helpful method of taking the relationship's inventory is to examine a prayer such as the prayer of St. Francis. Read through the prayer together slowly so you can be united in the centering force which common prayer generates. The prayer presents a number of contrasting questions about the level of spiritual service the reader is practicing in his/her life. Use the questions St. Francis asks of his God to inventory how the two of you function with each other as well as the larger community you are involved in. Avoid finger pointing or justifying problems that you might identify. The two of you will be guided by the author's dialogue to the actions you will both need to take.

Prayer

God, make us a channel of your peace and remove from us the obstacles that make it difficult to accomplish that transformation.
Amen.

Couple's Meditation for January 3 The Courage It Took

Challenge

The courage it took most of us to commit to an intimate relationship based on honesty, openness, and spiritual service has required more faith than most of us ever thought ourselves capable of. Those of us who had prided ourselves in needing support from no one became willing to trust in our partner. Some of us who suspected that "true love" was a fairy tale made up for the young and inexperienced began to believe in the power of love and understood that there was no love other than "true love." Still others of us learned to run toward rather than away from people. We needed courage and it was there in abundance.

Reflection

The courage we sought to risk it all for love came from the same God that risked it all for us. We were told that romantic love was for newlyweds. That, we discovered, was a lie which someone had told to themselves to divert his/her attention from the work that needed to be undertaken. We were told that we only got to love once and if that was lost so was our chance at romantic happiness. That also was a hoax created by those who were afraid to move through the loss and risk openness. The courage it took to overcome the fears associated with these and other lies came from a God who is all about love.

Prayer

God, reveal to me your power so that I may claim it.

Amen.

Couple's Meditation for January 4 Our Unwritten Future

Challenge

We make a great many promises that we do not keep. Some of them are not kept because they are made to impress others or to convince them that we are truly sorry and ready to change. Some promises are not kept because they are made during a time when the object of our promise is an immature or unreasonable goal. Then there are promises that are made without the confirmation that God desires that particular goal for us. When our promises are out of sync with God's will for us, we are likely to encounter a great deal of distress.

Reflection

When we make promises for how we will behave in the future, we must remain aware that God's plan for us has yet to be fully revealed to us. We often fall into the misunderstanding that God's will for us today is going to be his will for us five years from now. When we make resolutions for change, it is wise to construct those resolutions after we have spent time discerning how God would have us serve him in all of our affairs. We can not keep a promise that is out of line with God's will for us if we first surrendered our will and our life over to his care.

Prayer

God, help me to reminder that your plan is dynamic and that I can not always see what is coming next. I know that you will give me direction and power when I ask.

Amen.

Couple's Meditation for January 5 The Power To Create Change

Challenge

The 11th Step of Alcoholics Anonymous encourages us to seek "... through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for the knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out." The focus for many of us falls on the dynamics of prayer and meditation and the great benefit of maintaining a fit spiritual condition. The path is clear. We are taught to pray. We learn to meditate with increasingly longer period of quiet. What more is there to learn from the 11th Step?

Reflection

The decision to live a life centered on service to God and our fellows creates a reliable spiritual foundation from which we can face the challenges as they come. Unfortunately we fall short of the spiritual goals that we have set for ourselves in our life in general and our romantic relationship in specific. The problem could be laziness, pride, gluttony or any number of other commonly understood defects of character. But, before you launch off on a complete rewrite of your 4th Step, consider this: The power to care out God's will is available from God. The promise of God's power is commonly overlooked in the practice of the 11th Step. Draw upon the power that God has promised in all of your effort to serve him and your fellows.

Prayer

God, help me to remember that you are a timeless source of power.

Amen.

Weekend Workshop for January 3 & 4

Promises We Can Keep

Nowadays New Year's Eve is a time to remember the accomplishments of the year that has just past. We look at the passing with fulfillment for we have done our very best. A few "24's ago" the night was spent doing things we would later regret and wish we could forget. Recovery has helped us to look honestly at what we have contributed to life. Today our memories, both new and old are not too painful to recall and share with others. This week's theme was intended to offer a few new tools for evaluating your past and planning for your future, but remember, embrace the moment.

Actions To Be Taken Alone

Make a list of New Year's resolutions from your life before recovery and compare it to the promises that you have made and kept since beginning to work the 12 Steps.

Actions To Be Taken With Your Partner

Spend time with your partner dreaming out loud about the hopes that you have for the coming year.

John & Elaine Leadem