

## **Be Your Best**

### **By Caterina Rando**

You probably have been giving a lot of thought to what you want to do this year. Perhaps you have been creating some goals, figuring out how to attract more clients or job offers or romantic dates. You may be planning to change your hair or your house—maybe even your housekeeper. This year, instead of only figuring out what you want to do in the next 12 months, I suggest you reflect and make some choices about how you want to be. How do you want to be with yourself? How do you want to be with the people you love? How do you want to be with the circumstances of your life and the world? Take some time to ponder the beingness of your life. Even though you do a lot, you "be" even more. Make how you be even better. Look at these five areas and see how your life would change if how you were being changed.

#### **Trust**

Is trusting people a challenge for you? If you do not trust others easily, that is an indicator that you do not trust yourself and your ability to call upon your personal power to get through the real and imagined challenges of your life. Begin to say yes to the opportunities that make you uncomfortable. Expand your perception of what you are capable of. Find ways to build your trust in yourself: tell the truth, keep yourself safe, speak your mind, and keep your agreements. The more you trust yourself, the easier you'll find it will be to trust the people you bring into your life.

#### **Love**

Do you consider yourself warm and loving? Do you express your love? Do the people you love know how special they are to you? Can others feel your love when you are with them, by your mood, your smile and your vitality? If not, it might be time for a love tune-up.

Like trust, love flows to others when it is already flowing for ourselves within ourselves. To fill your life with more love, begin to be more loving to yourself. Ask yourself: "What can I do to be more loving to me?" Maybe you could slow down so you are not always rushing yourself around—or simply forgive yourself on those days when you sleep in. Maybe you could begin to say no to engagements that you would go to out of a sense of obligation, and actually take the time to soak in the tub. Love yourself more, and you'll be more loving with others—and will experience having that love returned.

#### **Gratitude**

If you are feeling a bit blue, you may be low on gratitude. Begin to acknowledge all your blessings, every day. You have so much to be grateful for—do you remember that every day? Don't see a half-empty or a half-full glass, see a full glass. Your life is full. Be grateful for all the abundance in your life. Reflect on your riches daily; acknowledge all the gifts all around you. When you want to make room for more, get rid of whatever is less than wonderful in your life—and be grateful for that, too.

#### **Criticism**

Many of us were raised on a daily dose of criticism from our parents and siblings, teachers and peers. That early and repeated exposure to criticism has made many of us ignorant about the detrimental effects of both giving and receiving criticism. Criticism is

a sophisticated word for cruelty. The next time you inadvertently criticize someone, notice how terrible it feels in your body—and watch the debilitating effects it has on the other person. It is time to replace criticism with compassion whenever you feel compelled to criticize others. Ask yourself: What is it that you have an issue with? Jealousy, envy, pain, insecurity, fear and other unpleasant emotions whose presence we do not wish to acknowledge can all often wear a costume of criticism. Let things go; don't make a comment about every insignificant mistake or misstep others make. The world and even the people in your life do not need to know what you think or would do differently about everything that goes on. Live and let live, and replace any desire to criticize with compassion. Compassion feels better, takes less energy and brings joy, not pain. I know you can use more of that.

### **Authenticity**

A big source of struggle in our lives is trying to be something or someone we are not. This is not to take away from the never-ending journey of growing as a person. Being authentic is honoring who you are, once you have a good idea of who that is. When we are being inauthentic, we are not honoring our true nature. If all your friends want to sunbathe on the beach during their vacation and that does not appeal to you, do not go. If someone asks you to do a quick project and you know that doing so will stress you out—that you do not work well under pressure—then don't take the job. Part of being authentic is increasing your awareness of the way you are.

Pick one of the above ways of being to focus on, choose how you want to begin to be in that area, and put your attention on making that change. As the weeks pass, you will like how you are being more—and you will be enjoying your life more. When you feel inclined, add another way of being to focus on. Soon you will be your best.

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