

No More New Years Resolutions

I have given up on New Year's resolutions. The same ones keep popping back up year after year, and even when I achieve one, I am still often left feeling vaguely dissatisfied.

Self-reflection with an eye to improvement is an admirable aim, but there's something subtly self-aggressive about serially making lists of semi-arbitrary goals and striving to wrest them into existence.

Isn't there a way to ease into our aspirations, enlisting the support of the universe in bringing them to pass?

There is, I think.

Two years ago I was diagnosed with Stage III arthritis: the connective cushioning in my left knee was in shreds; I could no longer run, and even walking was painful at times. It felt like being lobbed from a lifetime of agility and athleticism directly onto the slag heap of useless old age.

Following my mantra that there are natural alternatives to invasive procedures, I began a year-long yoga intensive, resolving to heal my knee.

A year later, I am an RYT (Registered Yoga Trainer) who is stronger and more flexible, more balanced mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Then (on my birthday, December 21) an X-ray showed that my knee had graduated, too— to Stage IV arthritis, bone grinding on bone. The doctor said that without joint replacement, I would face steadily sharper pain and eventual immobilization.

The Winter Solstice—the longest night of the year—was truly a dark night of the soul for me. With the dawn, however, came a ringing reminder: we can plan plans, but not results. Disappointment dissipated as I realized I'd almost missed my miracle, since it had been disguised as a problem.

Showing up daily on my yoga mat did its job. It has opened me to the present moment so that instead of wishing and working at *becoming* kinder, more energetic or more enlightened, I could just *be* that person on the inside right *now*—just for a moment—then let it go. Instead of striving to change myself, I could just be conscious in my own aliveness—without attaching some woe-is-me story to it.

My knee will need surgery, but there's no rush. And there are newer, less-invasive, biologically-based joint replacements available nowadays—in different time and economic zones from my own at present.

But that could change. I've relaxed into a space in which all things are possible.

In the roominess of that space, I am no longer imprisoned at the center of my own universe. When I'm in pain, I am at one with everyone else who hurts. When I'm exulting in the strength and range-of-motion I continue to build on my mat, I share that aliveness with all sentient beings. I can connect with that energy on the spot—not in some fuzzy future. And by expanding my field of yearning to include all that is, I am building a bridge to better destinations—a mojo that multiplies the power of my wishes.

By Azna Amira