

DIGGING DEEPER

with Allison LaMarr

Weekly e-column January 7, 2009

Happy New Year! Whether your Christmas decorations are all packed away or you're still staring at the remnants of another holiday season gone by, it's time to embrace and embark on the journey of this brand new year. This could very well be the best year of your entire life! You could do more, achieve more, become more, give more and receive more than ever before in the history of your existence. This could be the year when you shock yourself and everyone around you with your determination, drive, discipline, activity, work ethic and success. This could be the year when you finally move from knowing to doing...the turning point for the rest of your life...the season when you step into all that God created you to be...the time where you turn all of your dreams into reality!



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Or it could be just another year. Another year like all the years before...a year of setting goals with no expectation of achieving them...a year of mediocrity...a year of frustration, stagnation, and disappointment. Maybe you're one who has set and missed goals for so many years in a row that you can't even fake enough excitement to set another round of goals this year. Maybe you used to feel successful, but have become jaded and disheartened by a season of recent disappointment. Maybe your life has fallen so far apart that you wouldn't even know how to begin putting the pieces back together. Maybe you know what you want your life to look like, but the abyss separating your ideals from your reality seems too large to cross. Maybe you know you have the potential to create a great year, but you just can't seem to muster the energy to get started. What if you already know all of the "answers", but they just don't seem to be doing you any good? What if you've attended every personal growth seminar, read every self-help book, and tried every trick you know of to "get yourself out of the rut" to no avail? What if you started off January 1 with the best of intentions and promises to yourself, but somehow 7 days have already flown by and you haven't even managed to clean up the mess from last year, much less catch your breath long enough to start a new one with a clear head? What if every day you wake up with a genuine desire to make a change, but life seems absolutely determined to keep you stuck in maintenance mode? You really want to change—you even make plans to change—but you can't quite figure out how to move away from the reactionary approach of just dealing with what flies at you during the day into the proactive mode of working your plan in spite of what flies at you day to day.

If you can identify with any of the feelings or descriptions above, here is what I want you do: sit back in your chair, take a big relaxing breath, close your eyes, and imagine me sitting right beside you. I want you to imagine (with your eyes still closed) that I am giving you a huge hug...seriously! I know this sounds corny, but just go with me for a second. Imagine that I'm giving you a huge, giant, bear hug...one that only a good friend can give...one that lasts for a really long time. And then I want you to imagine that my hands are on your shoulders and I'm looking directly into your eyes, past all the junk, past all the fluff, down into the honest depths of your spirit. And only as a friend who has been there, who has experienced all of those same feelings as you are feeling right now could say, as we are standing face to face, eye to eye, I want you to hear me say as I grip your shoulders, "It's going to be OK."

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It's OK to feel that way. It's OK to acknowledge the fact that life isn't perfect, that you're not perfect, that your situation may be a mess. Whether you created the mess or you had absolutely no control over the mess that was handed to you...everything is going to be OK.

In fact, things can be better than OK, fine, or alright. Things can become great...better than great...truly phenomenal in your life, either once again, or for the first time ever. Even if you're feeling paralyzed by fear, apathy, or doubt. Even if you're having trouble believing that true, long-term change is even really possible because the speakers in your mind are blaring the same old defeating broken record of your past at such a loud volume that you can't even seem to concentrate on anything else. You can move on to a new song, a great song on the soundtrack of your life. But it's time to make lemonade.

It's time to take those lemons in your life and create a new recipe for the most delicious lemonade you've ever tasted in your life. In fact, this new lemonade recipe is going to be so good that you may be able to sell it for a fortune. What kind of lemons are you starting with? Are they some of the ones we've just discussed? Really evaluate your situation. There are several types of lemons out there that make absolutely legendary lemonade. Maybe you're starting with regret lemons—regret over a lost relationship or opportunity. You could be staring at lost-time lemons. You know the type...you're not exactly a spring chicken anymore and you're beating yourself up for not getting your act together sooner. Lonely lemons are a special hybrid, you could be absolutely all alone and want someone to share your life with more than anything on earth, or you could be surrounded by supportive loved-ones and still feel like a stranger in your own home. Then there are guilt-lemons—you're struggling with a sense of guilt over something you did, or something you should have done but didn't. Are you familiar with burden-lemons? These come when every thing is riding on whether you make this work...when everyone around you is counting on you to succeed. Or, you may have mourning-lemons—you've lost someone very close to you and the pain is so unbearable that you can hardly breathe. There are also anger-lemons. You may be consumed with anger—either at yourself or someone else for a terrible decision. Finally, there is a very special variety of lemon called the what's-wrong-with-me-lemon. If you're not familiar with this one, it's the one where everything is fine in your situation. There is literally nothing holding you back. It's the "there is no reason on this earth why I shouldn't be succeeding, but I just can't seem to make it happen" lemon.

Once you've identified the ingredients to your new earth-shattering lemonade recipe, then we can start to make the magic happen. So, here is what I want you to do. Between now and next Wednesday, I want you to make a list of the changes you want to create in yourself. Literally, starting from the inside-out...what would make you a better you? This isn't goal-setting; we're not making dream boards or envisioning what our perfect world would look like. We're deciding who we want to be and become within this less than perfect situation we're living in. We can't control the weather, the economy, or even the state of affairs in our own home all the time, but we can control who we are and how we respond to the world around us. And that will oftentimes become the catalyst to every other result that has seemed to elude us for so long. Here are a few examples to help you get started. Maybe you want to develop patience for people and situations. Perhaps you want to wean out judgment, negativity, and criticism of others and replace them with kindness, compassion, and genuine love. It may be time to stop taking your own frustrations out on the people you care about most. Are you getting the idea? Hopefully a few of your own are popping into your mind as well.

If you'll accept my challenge this week and really dig deep into who you want to become, then next week we'll do a little reverse-engineering. This is going to be fun. Making lemonade is always fun. We may get sticky, and it may sting a little in the open wounds, but the end result promises to be very profitable.

A. Allison

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[The critical inch between knowing & doing!](#)

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