

What Choices Will You Make In 2024? - Regrets of the Dying

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At the beginning of this new year, there are many articles, blogs and advertisements that encourage us to think of our New Year's Resolutions. According to an article on Forbes.com, less than 25% of people who make resolutions stay committed after 1 month and only 8% accomplish them. The article recommends having specific attainable goals instead, ones that have actionable steps that you can track each day/week. As you think about goals that you would like to work on in the new year, I would like to suggest that you do some thinking about areas of your life in which you want to make different choices.

In college, I had a class assignment to write my own eulogy. We were asked to think what we wanted to be remembered for at the end of our lives. I have forgotten what I wrote but looking at my life now, I want to be remembered as someone who was a good friend, who knew how to listen, who was authentic and enjoyed life immensely.

In her book, "Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing," Bronnie Ware shares about the wisdom she learned

from her patients while working in palliative care. bronnieware.com/blog/regrets-of-the-dying/#

Here is what she discovered:

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.

"This was the most common regret of all. When people realize that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people had not honored even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made. Health brings a freedom very few realize, until they no longer have it."

2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.

"This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret, but as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.

"Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result."

4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

"Often they would not truly realize the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving

friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying."

5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

"This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realize until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to their selves, that they were content, when deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again."

After reading this, I want to make different choices about my relationships in the new year. Below are some of them in the New Year. What areas of your life do you want to make new choices?

- Communicate with my parents, siblings, children and friends regularly.
- Make time to reflect, meditate and be present to myself daily. Put it in my schedule as I do with other appointments
- Practice telling the truth about myself in every situation
- Find creative ways to show my husband how much I love him
- Do something at least once every day that makes me happy

To purchase my book on
Amazon: www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH

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