

## A Resolution for Excellence By Dr. Tanja Haley

*“We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.”*  
- Aristotle

January is typically the time of year when we pledge ourselves to all kinds of New Year’s resolutions designed to make our lives better. There are common themes to these resolutions like losing weight, quitting smoking, or getting healthy. During the first few weeks, efforts to change are usually very strong. Gradually the motivation slows down and eventually wanes away to a distant memory in the backs of our minds. Instead of participating in this frustrating cycle, make the commitment to become the best person that you can be – a commitment to excellence.

The difference of committing to excellence is that you are changing more than just the surface; there is a shift in how you approach everything that you do. Excellence can be defined in many different ways for many different people. It depends on what your priorities are and what you value in your life. Maybe it’s the relationships you have, or the work that you do, or the people that you help. Whatever it is, dedicate yourself to being the best that you can be regardless of other people’s standards. Remember also, that this is a change you will make from this point forward. Excellence is not defined by a single act, but by consistent behavior.

There are many ways that you can approach this commitment, but I would recommend formalizing the process. Writing your ideas down on paper can help you to sort out your thoughts and make it more concrete. Some simple steps might include:

- 1) List all the things that you value, and that give your life importance
- 2) Prioritize the items on the list
- 3) On a scale from 1 – 10 (1 = I am not doing my best and 10 = I am doing the best that I can) rank how you think you are doing in each area
- 4) Take an honest look at your list, and make a commitment to dedicate your energies to making improvements where needed

Committing to excellence will also change the language that you use. Instead of thinking to yourself “I will survive” or “I can make it through”, say instead, “I’m going to get the most out of this” or “I’ll do the very best that I can”. Focusing on what you are doing when you are doing it will ignite your spirit and fire your energy. Surround yourself with people who inspire you, and share your inspiration with others. Aspire to reach beyond. Live excellence.

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