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FEBRUARY 2009

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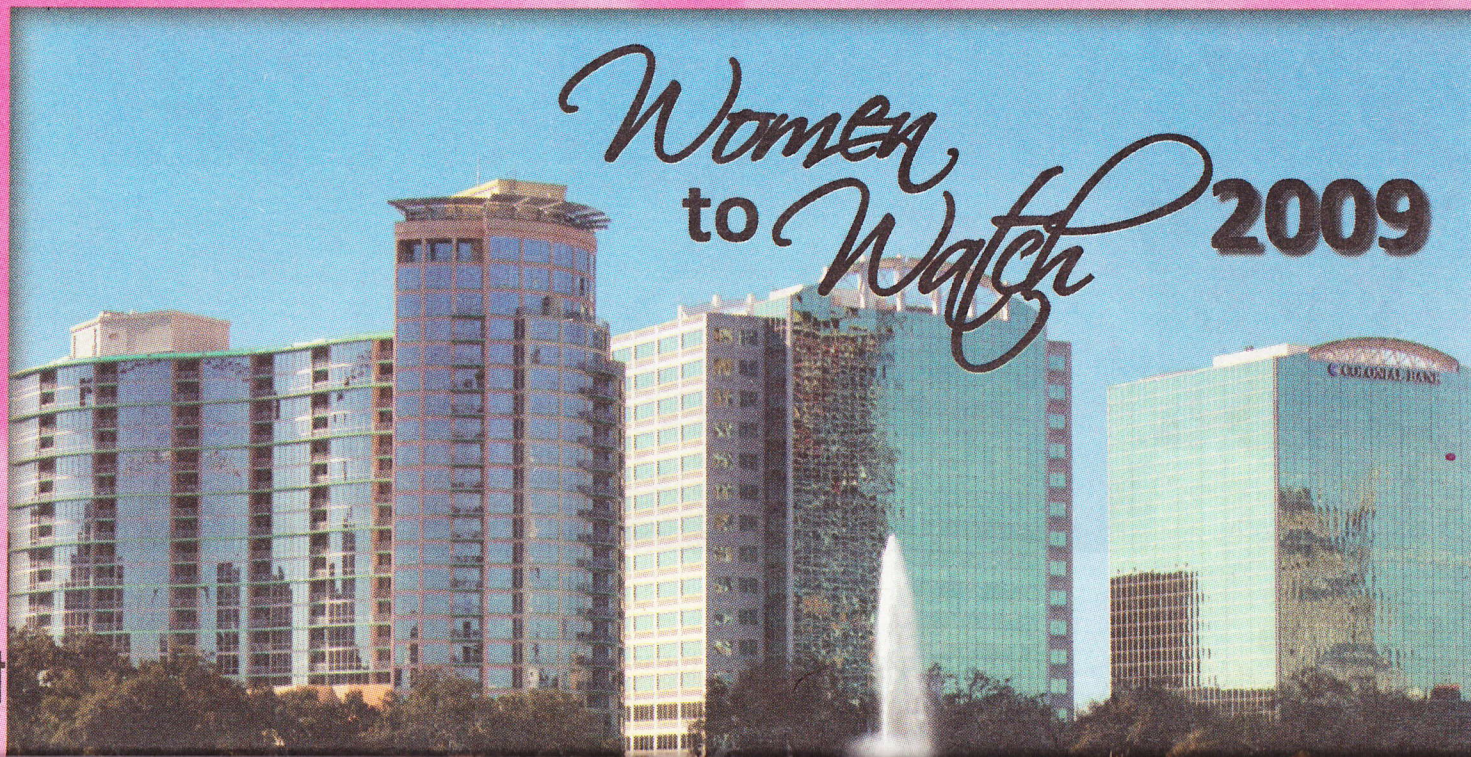
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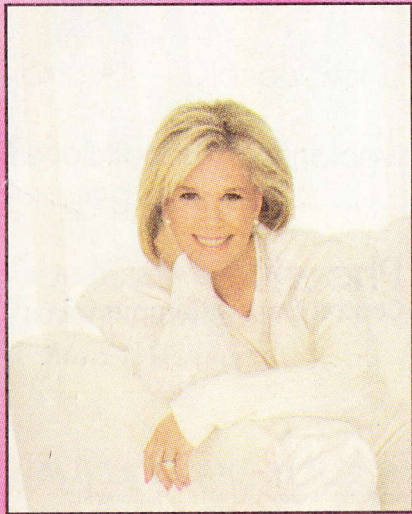
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with Joan Lunden**





Business & Finance

Exercise Your Right to Grow

Focus on Facts, Fat, and Freedom for the New Year

By Monica Wofford, CSP



Joyce always made resolutions, as did everyone else she knew. This year seemed different. She was determined to get out of some ruts, trim the fat in her life that wasn't serving her well, and worry less about her waistline and more about her mindset. There were things in

her life that just weren't working. She noticed that she kept having the same business problems year after year. She kept having the same relationship issues, boyfriend after boyfriend. And was still facing the same problems with some of her friends that she just couldn't figure out why she still hung out with. This year wasn't going to be filled with "lose ten pounds", "be debt free" and the like. This year was going to be different. She was going to face facts, trim the fat, and give herself the gift of freedom to take back the control in her life and make it what she knew she wanted, needed, and could have if she would just get out of her own way.

We've all been there and done that. We've made the usual, socially acceptable resolutions and where do they get us? The same place they get everyone else about mid-February: no longer going to the Weight Watchers meetings, no longer staying on our goals, no longer quitting all of our bad habits at once, and feeling like we've failed. This year it's time for some new growth and it may be time for us, myself included, to get out of our own way and exercise our right to grow. Here are some good first steps...

1. FOCUS ON FACTS

It is quite likely your world is not as bleak as the news would make it sound. Though if it is, face the music. Acknowledge (notice I didn't say whine, complain, and tell all your friends), just acknowledge where you are and what the facts are. Take a hard look at what you are doing to fix the problems and be grateful for the solutions, the advantages, and the benefits. Focusing on the judgment you give to the facts, will get you nothing more than what you feel. In this case, I am not asking you to feel anything about the facts. They are not good or bad, they just are and until we see them as such, we will continue to be in our way, and likely continue to repeat the situations and patterns that have created those facts.

2. TRIM THE FAT

Never mind what your dress size is, because frankly, who cares? What is the size of your dream? How big are your goals and are you one day going to fit in them again or is it time to realign? Trim the fat means let go of those things that are unrealistic, not too high a goal, but the things YOU really don't want to begin with. Let go of the expectations that you need to be size 2 or that you need to be all things to all people and pay attention only to what you want and need to be happy. So much of this "busy doing" that we engage in keeps us from paying attention to who we want to be and honestly, until my laptop crashed two days ago, I had forgotten that fact myself. When you can't DO at the speed of sound, you begin to look at what you want to BE instead. I highly recommend trimming out some of your activity and focusing on your much needed possible and positive reality.

3. GIVE YOURSELF SOME FREEDOM

Do you really have to cook every night for other people or is it a "should"? Do you really have to say yes to everything asked of you or is that a "should"? Do you really have to hang out with people who are well-meaning and you call friends, but do nothing but drag you down, or is that a "should" or "have to"? Let's be real. The only thing you HAVE to do is... well, you know, pay taxes and die, and some would argue you could not pay taxes. However, trite as the saying is, there are a lot of "shoulds" in our world that just aren't accurate, unless you make them that way. Maybe it's time for some freedom from others' opinions, social expectations, and obligatory things that take us away from our goals and direction. I am not saying never feed your kids and let them eat ding dongs all day. What I'm saying is that if you have always wanted to start a business quit asking those around you for "permission" and affirmation – go do something about it. Exercise your freedom to use your big ole brain and do with it what you are supposed to: figure out your life. Maybe it's time you hire someone to help you so that you get advice you pay for and that will get you where you want to go, as opposed to advice that is predicated on someone else's agenda or the latest drama of your best girlfriend. Give yourself the freedom to be you and do what you need for you and figure out how to help others in your world do the same.

Maybe it's time to teach those kids how to cook. If you had all the time in the world, I would say just keep on doing what everyone else does. Make resolutions, break resolutions, and wait until next year to start fresh and begin anew all those things that you think you "should" be doing. The reality is time is short, precious, and in limited supply. Yet, your talents, your goals, and hopefully your dreams are abundant. Unfortunately, so are the perceived obstacles that keep you from getting there. So what if you stopped being everyone else's caretaker and started doing for you? Do you really think their world would stop spinning or that they would figure out how to survive? I guarantee they would figure it out. Now is the time to reassess where YOU are going and how you are going to get there and what resources you need to surround yourself with and what skills you need to develop to make it all happen. If something has been a dream of yours for years, it is something you are supposed to do. Chase that dream. Begin to grow into the amazing, fabulous, and wonderful human being that you are supposed to be and officially, right now, let go of the need to run around like a hamster on a treadmill DOING all the things that up until this very minute have kept you from focusing on your direction. Now, right now, this very minute, this very second, this very day, is the time for you to exercise your right to grow into the you you've always wanted.

About the Author

Monica Wofford, MBA, CSP, is CEO of Contagious Companies and a coach, trainer, speaker and consultant, clearly crazy about letters! She has spent 19 years speaking to audiences and now shares her business wisdom and expertise in very large AND very small groups, with the recent addition of her individual coaching practice. Monica now also shares her skills with women business owners who wish to build revenue and profits in their business, but don't yet know how. For more information and to see if you qualify to join her one-on-one coaching program, contact her at Monica@monicawofford.com or 1-(866) 382-0121. You may also learn more at www.contagiouscompanies.com.

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