

New Year - New You

Putting Yourself Back in Your Life

When the ball dropped at midnight on December 31, 2010, were you among the many who shouted a collective "Good riddance!?"

Good riddance, indeed, to a year of rising unemployment, big bank bailouts, increasing numbers of foreclosures, political sparring, and the economy, the economy, the economy. Enough already!!!

So let me ask you:

- Who's exhausted?
- Who's working too many hours?
- Who's been out of work too long?
- Who's not in the best shape they could be in?
- Whose life is controlled by their Blackberry, iPhone, or iPad?
- Who wants to laugh more and have more fun?



Karen Colligan

It's clear that 2010 was a tough year for many of us. And trying to take the high road and stay positive can be an enormous chore and, quite frankly, add to our exhaustion. But let's **get real**, are we going to continue to sit around and grumble and wait for some miraculous event to occur just because it's a new year? What's going to change? A big fat nothing unless we make a conscious effort to do things differently for ourselves.

I have a novel idea. As you plan what you want to do and accomplish in 2011, shift your focus from your work and your financials (these are a given, anyway) and concentrate on setting some goals in the areas of your life that you may have been neglecting recently – family, friends, health, laughter, fun. What makes you happy? Plan to do it. Where's your favorite place to go? Plan to go there. Who makes you laugh? Spend time with them. What makes you feel good? Just DO IT!

Consider what research has shown about laughter and happiness:

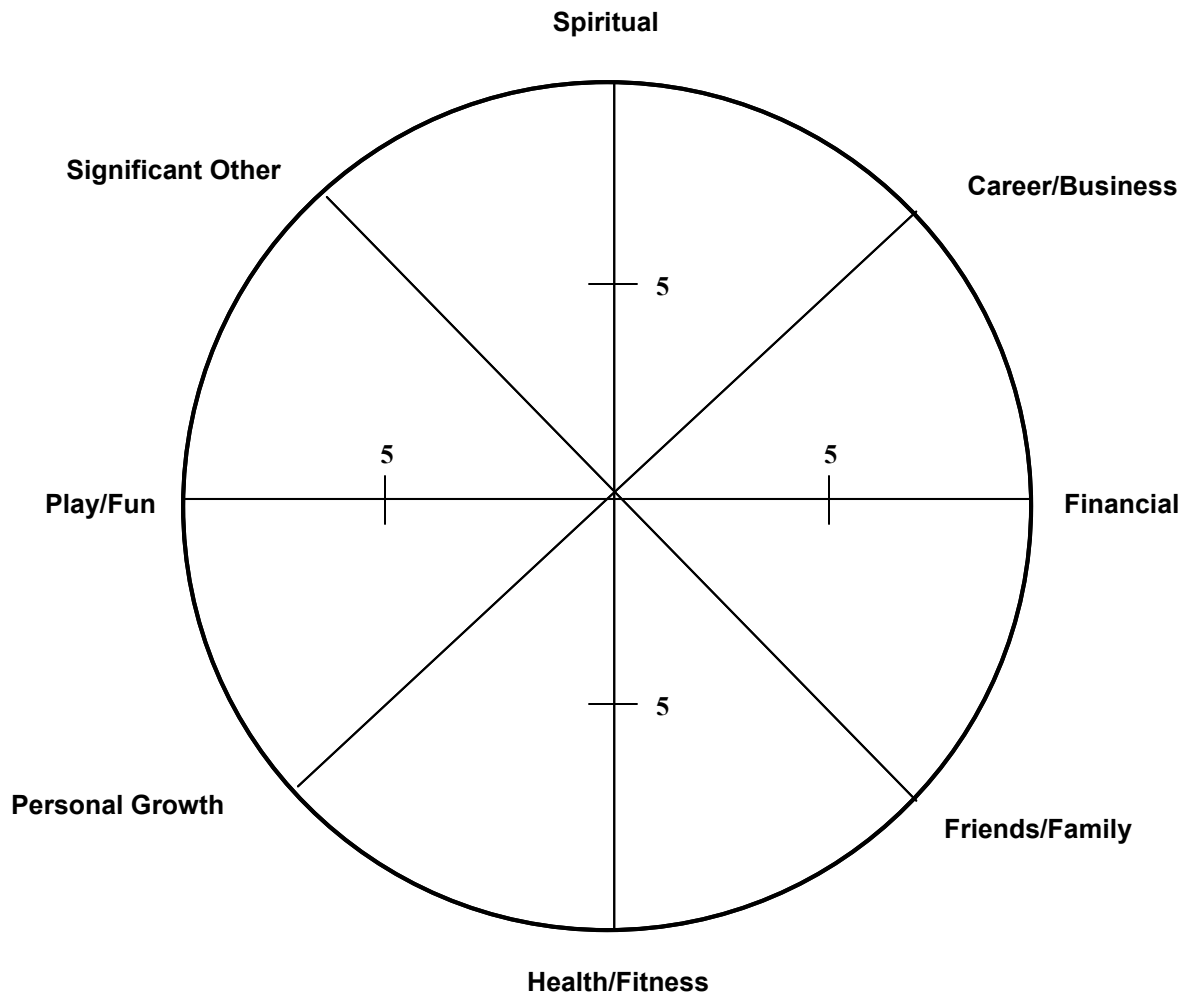
- A hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes afterwards.
- Laughter increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, which improves your resistance to disease.
- Twenty minutes of exercise, three times a week for six months will improve your general feeling of happiness by 10 – 20%.
- Happier people do better in their jobs. A recent study found that happy people make more money and obtain better job performance reviews than do unhappy people.

OK. So what do we do with this information? Here's a tool you can use to bring balance back into your life for 2011 and create a happier, healthier you. Read the instructions to rank your level of happiness in each area of your life (remember, focus on the non-career/financial areas). Then create one goal in each of two areas to improve your happiness. This should take you about 10 minutes. How hard is that?

When you are happier and healthier, the rest will take care of itself. Happy New Year, Happy New You!

*About the author: Karen Colligan, founder and principal of PeopleThink, popular career and leadership speaker, and author of **The Get Real Guide To Your Career**™ series of workbooks, is an industry-recognized leader in the field of career, leadership and team development. Contact Karen at kcolligan@peoplethink.biz.*

Circle of Life



Directions:

The 8 sections in the Circle of Life represent balance. Consider the center of the circle 0, and the outer edge as 10. Rank your level of satisfaction with each life area by placing an **X** on the line at the appropriate point between 0 and 10. Connect the **X**s to create a new outer edge, representing your current Circle of Life.