

Janus - Good bye and Hello!

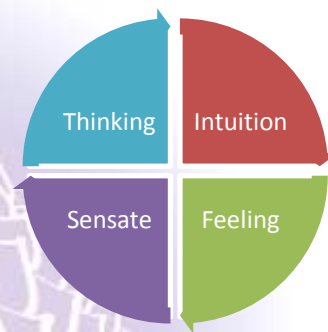
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In Roman mythology, **Janus** is the god of gates, doors, doorways, beginnings, endings and time. His most prominent remnant in modern culture is his namesake, the month of January, which begins the new year. Most often he is depicted as having two heads, facing opposite directions; one head looks back at the last year while the other looks forward to the new, simultaneously into the future and the past¹.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janus>

In Hindu mythology, the creator god Brahma has four heads, one for each of the four directions, a necessary prerequisite to the creation of the new consciousness. In Carl Jung's analytical psychology, it is advocated that any problem or project must be examined from the perspective of all of our four functions; thinking, feeling, intuition and sensate before a final decision is made.



In my clinical work, I generally advise my students and patients to incubate a relationship atleast for four seasons of encounter till they make a commitment. Of course there are exceptions to the rule.

The New Year is a time of endings and new beginnings. It is time to review the year past; its gifts and grievances. It is time to learn from the year past so that this wisdom may guide us in the year ahead that beckons us. If we do not learn from the errors of the past, we are very likely to repeat these. Freud would call this the return of the repressed with a vengeance. However, if we learn from our past, we are better equipped to navigate the future, we adapt, we survive, we master the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

I call this process *Kenosis* or emptying the cup of the past to make room for the future. In my clinical experience over thirty five years, here is a list of things we may consider cataloguing about ourselves, learning from them and then letting go.

1. Our complexes, our hang ups,
2. Our character defects – including perfectionism, narcissism, histrionics, avoidance, self defeating character, paranoia, withdrawal, intrusiveness, dependency,
3. Our medical and psychiatric symptoms, our obsessions and our compulsions,
4. Addictive behaviors; whether these involve alcohol, drugs, food, sexuality, gambling, internet pornography,

8. Old attitudes and beliefs,
9. Old attachments and enmeshed and dysfunctional relationships,
10. Our codependency on another for self esteem regulation,
11. redundant life goals which have outlived their purpose in our life.

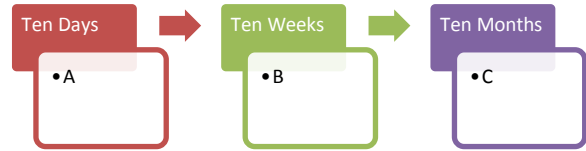
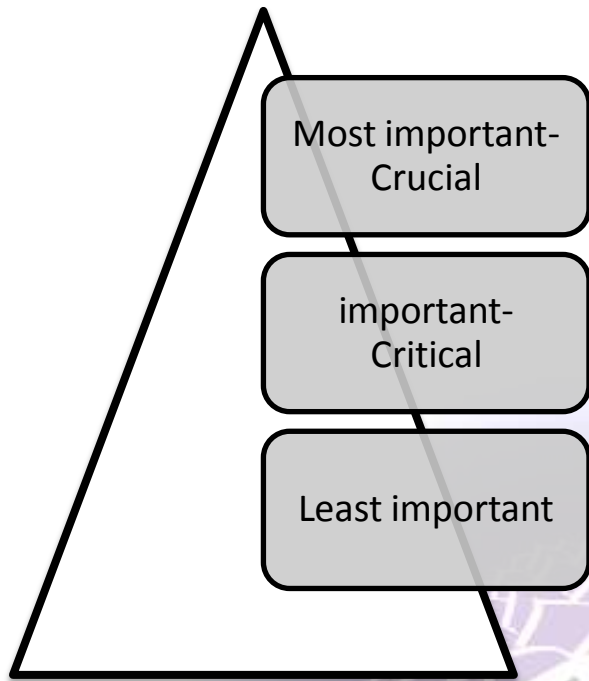
Once we learn and let go of the past, we now can make room for the emerging future. Here, I am guided by the Check List Manifesto; based on my favorite book by the Harvard surgeon Atul Guwande². I invite the readers to make a checklist of three things that are most important to them in their life in their life in

5. Old grudges and resentments,
6. Grief over old losses,
7. Envy,

² A. Gawande's *The Checklist Manifesto (The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right)* by A. Gawande, Metropolitan Books (2009)

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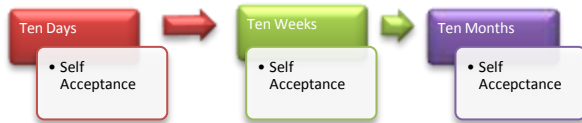
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When I applied this exercise to some of my students and patients, I found something very fascinating. Most individuals could boil down the major change in the next 12 months to just one crucial issue and there was only one major change they needed to make over ten days, ten weeks and ten months.

Initially I offered a checklist of three priorities to my group. However, I found that for majority of individuals, it ultimately boiled down to one BIG issue. Next I invite you to focus on the crucial priority and come with the following plan of implementation. In this plan, you must focus on one intervention that you will make in next ten days, ten weeks and ten months to achieve your objective.

One individual was struggling to deal with chronic relationship issue with his significant other. Nothing he did to deepen the relationship felt enough; he always tried to do more. His goal was to feel good about this relationship. It emerged that the only intervention he needed to make was SELF ACCEPTANCE. He had a narcissistic mother who was never satisfied with any of his achievements. He kept raising the bar of self expectation higher and higher till impossible heights. His partner was very happy in the relationship; but somehow he felt unloved. When he challenged his mother complex and started to work of honoring his integrity and accept himself, things would change. For him, the chart would look as follows:



Another individual had struggled with optimal adaptation to his work. A super trained professional with multiple Ph.D.s to his credit, he had difficulty in optimizing his work tenure. His goal for the next 12 months is to successfully adapt to his new job. His 10-10-10 plan is to let go of CONTROL. Like his father, he has introjected a perfectionist, controlling style of management, which often gets him in conflict at work. His father complex mediates his work difficulties. His mantra for next 12 months is to RELINQUISH CONTROL. This has worked better for him in recent times. This calls for HUMILITY. His chart would look something like this:



Another individual was a soulful woman who was deeply committed to her

husband and family. However the couple continued to struggle with their intimacy block. Her goal for 2011 is to make her marriage joyful and peaceful. Her core issue is fear of abandonment. Her father abandoned her and the family when she was a child. This was extremely traumatic to her. In spite of her husband's commitment to her she was afraid of abandonment. Consequently, she behaved as if he had already abandoned her and was constantly feeling wounded and angry in response to unconsciously perceived fear of abandonment. She could not trust him. Her interventions for the next 12 months look as follows:



The result of my mini experiment is that for 2011, each one of us may consider a checklist of one priority and choose one core intervention to attend to our priority. Keep it SIMPLE.

In the Janus mode; we must look at our past to pinpoint our Achilles heel psychologically and look to future to heal it with a core strategic intervention: one thing at a time. I wish all my readers a

peaceful, plentiful and spiritually prosperous New Year.

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Dr Bedi is a Diplomat Jungian psychoanalyst and a board certified psychiatrist. He is a member of the Royal College of psychiatrists of Great Britain, a diplomat in Psychological Medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of England, a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is a Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and the President Elect, a Training Analyst and a faculty member at the Analyst Training Program at the Carl G. Jung Institute of Chicago. He is Honorary Psychiatrist at the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital and the Aurora Health Care Network. He has been a psychiatric consultant to several agencies in Metro Milwaukee. Presently he is the consultant for the Sexual Assault treatment center at the Aurora Sinai Samaritan Hospital, Dewey Center at the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital for treatment of Addictions and the Pastoral Counseling Service of Greater Milwaukee.

Trained in India, Great Britain and the US, he is interested in the emerging frontiers of Spirituality and Healing and the synapses of the Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit. He is author of the book, Path to the Soul, Weiser Books, 2000, Awaken the Slumbering Goddess: The Latent Code of the Hindu Goddess Archetypes, Booksurge Publishers, 2007 and the coauthor of Retire Your Family Karma, Nicholas-Hays, Inc. 2003, These and his other upcoming presentations can be previewed at his website

www.pathtothesoul.com



Ashok Bedi has been in practice in Milwaukee for over thirty years and specializes in Adult Psychotherapy and Jungian Psychoanalysis. He regularly presents lectures and seminars in India, Great Britain, Ireland and USA on the topic of the Spiritual and analytic dimensions of

treatment, healing and personal growth. Over the last several years, he has been the International Association of Analytical Psychologists liaison person for developing Jungian training programs in India and travels annually to India to teach, train the consult with the Jungian Developing groups at several centers in India including Ahmedabad &, Bangalore. He leads the annual “In the Footsteps of Carl Jung in India” study group to several centers in India under the auspices of the New York Jung Foundation.

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Seventh Chakra