

RESOLVING TO BE COMPETENT

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Here we are with a “new” year upon us once again, and for some reason it seems a good time for many of us to “resolve” to be better than we were last year by making some kind of “resolution”. I would like to propose that being “better” in our work, which usually means striving toward a level of competence that satisfies us and the workplace, can be a matter of resolve. As we move into next year, let’s all make a resolve – or earnest decision and expression of intention – to be the CYC worker we want to be and that our kids deserve.

Resolutions are often accompanied by some level of anxiety, as we wonder how long we can make good on our resolve before falling into familiar patterns. Some level of anxiety is actually okay, as it serves as a motivator. Motivation – being both willing and able to do something – is something we need in our work every day of every year. I would like to suggest that both willingness and ability are a product of decision making. Being a “good”, that is competent, worker is not a talent, or a gift, or a matter of luck or fortune but rather a decision we can make. Anyone can be “good” for our kids; we only have to decide to be.

It has been said that the secret of good decision making is having good information and good intuition. So, how about **deciding**, or “resolving”, to gather information during the year to help with daily dilemmas. Read books, rent videos, go to workshops, talk to respected friends and colleagues, pray. Resolve to polish your “intuitive” skills. Intuition is the thought process that combines knowledge and world experience with an awareness of self. It relies on the nonverbal side of the brain to bring together everything you know about a situation and identify possibilities for action. When your intuition recognizes the right option, it sends your brain a

signal that tells you what to do. Of course, we will be in a much better position to trust our intuition if it is informed by our accumulated knowledge. We want to balance our intuition with our awareness of concrete reality. Mix your intuition and knowledge together with your values – those beliefs you hold dear that brought you into this place of helping those who may not want your help, and loving those who may not know how to recognize or accept love. Your values will enable you to sort through information and find the path that feels “right”.

Decide to tap into your creativity when you feel “stuck”. Decide to stretch. Try something outside of your usual array of guidelines; consult with people and resources you don’t ordinarily use. Give yourself time. Accept without anger or guilt the frustration, tension, and discomfort associated with having no clear path from which to choose. Try to look at your situation from different perspectives; reformulate it in a way that lets new solutions emerge. Tolerate controversy. Try something bizarre. Generate many – even “off the wall” possible solutions to a problem. If it doesn’t work, go back to the drawing board and try something else. Nobody has all the answers to the challenges our young people present.

Decide to give yourself, and your kids, a break! The day-to-day decisions required in care are difficult and complex, and often there is no-one who can really help you. It’s issue to issue, problem to problem, moment to moment. But all decisions will be easier if you have made the **big** decision: what kind of Worker do you want to be?

Decide what each child is worth to you. Not lip service, but a real decision. How much of your time? How much worry? How much commitment? Once you decide on the real worth of your children and teens to you, you will find it easier to determine what kind of resolutions you need

or want to make with regard to how they are treated by you, how much they are given by you, how completely you will let them into your heart.

Even if you're quite wonderful now, we can always be better. It's a new year with a new opportunity to be as good as we can be with the opportunities for good we are blessed to have. We can decide to be good, and to do good. Good means we have decided to take seriously our opportunity for helping and healing another human being. Good means we will buy up the chances to share the values we hold dear, to model the behaviors we believe will result in consequences that are positive, to give our kids the emotional, social, and moral skills to be successful, and content people. Good means that we did our very best; that mistakes were not made because of carelessness or thoughtlessness, but only because we are less than perfect and cannot always do as we want to do. Good means that we will **decide** to try to improve on our mistakes, to do better next time. It's nice to have time at the beginning of each new year to make good decisions; good resolutions. Happy "resolving". Happy New Year.

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