My take on New Year’s resolutions

Why not try being happy in 2017?

Mable Hastings

Don’t believe in judging other people’s rituals but I am taking this opportunity to express my opinion on the annual New Year’s resolutions that many choose to make as an old year limps back into the shadows and a new fresh year presents itself before us. In writing this article, I asked a variety of individuals in varied age groups, “are you making a New Year’s resolution and if yes, do you mind sharing it?” I got many of the usual answers with the same favourites topping the list: jog a gym, get fit, lose weight, eat better, find love, get out of a bad relationship and someone even said that they hoped to find a job. Some people told me they did not believe in resolutions and preferred to live life and make choices as situations unfold before them. “Mimi” who resides at the Potton apartments and someone even said that they hoped the same favourites topping the list: join gym and if yes, do you mind sharing it?” “are you making a New Year’s resolution for Christmas to come to life.” A little boy said he hoped to be better this year so that Santa would bring him more presents. Next. My personal favourite was a ten year old girl who said, “I don’t think so that Santa would bring him more presents.” I want to make any “revolutions,” I’m not so good at keeping promises.” As adults, we have been programmed to be flawed and therefore need fixing. It is hard not to acknowledge our flaws as human beings when every store, website and television commercial is telling us to get out and buy a Fitbit. Store flyers that only a week ago busted Christmas goodties and toys are now decked with elliptical trainers, stationery bikes and treadmills. Relationships are taking a beating too as every doctor on television is focusing on “family Christmas nightmares.” My advice? Don’t make a resolution just because everybody else is. Don’t make some big plan to change if you are not ready to see it through and set yourself up for failure. Don’t dwell on all you aren’t, don’t have, wish you had, wish you were, and all of the impossibility in life. Life itself tends to beat us all up enough don’t you think? If you want to make a resolution, why don’t you commit to loving yourself a little more, appreciating those who love you and are loved by you and take a moment to count the blessings you have rather than dwell on those you don’t? See the glass as being half full rather than half empty. This just may improve your self-worth, it may affirm the importance of your loved ones and all of that positivity may get you out exercising and feeling good physically.

Give the old year a final nod and a handshake in appreciation for all you learned and lived. Embrace 2017 and the possibility it brings. Most importantly, find a place within yourself to resolve to live by that ever popular Serenity Prayer authored by American Theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And wisdom to know the difference.” Be a little kinder to yourself, likely change, if necessary, will follow.

Freeland sees opportunity for Canada amid rising protectionism, nationalism abroad

The Canadian Press

International Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland sees a silver lining for Canada in 2017 despite an increasingly complex economic situation worldwide.

Freeland says there is enormous opportunity for Canada even amid growing protectionist and nationalist movements in the United States and elsewhere. She was speaking today to about 300 people at a Montreal Council on Foreign Relations luncheon in Montreal. Freeland believes Canada is bucking the trend in the face of populist movements seeking easy targets such as immigrants and trade agreements. And that open and inviting environment, she adds, will translate into unique opportunities ahead.

Freeland said there is strong public and cross-party support in Canada for international trade agreements that places the country in a unique situation compared to other nations. The ongoing softwood lumber dispute with the United States and a vow by president-elect Donald Trump to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement loom large on a packed horizon.

But Freeland told the gathering there are also positives, including the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which is expected to be ratified this year.

“At a time when so many other countries are closing their doors, are they not interested in foreign investment, are they saying they are not interested in trade, you can come to Canada and be assured that we understand and believe in trade and investing in the global economy,” she told reporters later. “And yes, I do think that represents very significant and distinctive opportunities for our country in 2017.”