



KARYN SHANKS MD

Heart, Hope, Healing

New Year's Resolution: Be Soft, Be Gentle, Be Kind (and start with yourself!)

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | JANUARY 1, 2018



We all know how hard it is to get our New Year's resolutions off the ground. Or harder still—sustain them for the long haul.

Why is that? Why is it so dang hard to create positive change in our lives? Change that we want? Change that we know will lead to better lives?

Maybe we start too big. We're better at small changes—even the small things lead to big shifts in our lives.

Or maybe our stories get in the way. You know, those stories we carry around with us constantly. That define us, and place limits on what is possible...

Like:

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"I don't have time to sleep more, eat well, or relax." (In favor of what *they all* need from us—are we making assumptions here?)

"This (insert your problem) *will never* change—I'm just like my mother (or father)—this is my destiny." (Never heard of neuroplasticity? Yes, we're *wired* to change!)

"I've been this way my whole life. This is my story." (How's it working for you?)

"This new lifestyle plan is too hard. I can't learn it." (Come on, put your grit on!)

"I'm too old to change." (You're changing anyway—become the master of your destiny at any age.)

"I'm too tired to change." (You can make small changes—and you don't have to do it alone.)

Do you recognize any of these stories? We *all* have them—I do!

This year, join me for a softer, gentler, kinder approach. This year, consider:

- You *can* change. (Change is the only certainty in life—you're changing *in spite* of what you believe—might as well be intentional about it).
- Your stories *can* change—all of them. (Your brain possesses the power of neuroplasticity—you can train it to do anything—even change long held beliefs.)
- Acknowledge the stories getting in the way of the change you desire.
- Breathe. Let it Be. Don't judge.
- No solutions for *how* to change? No worries... Don't need 'em. Carry on:
- Affirm the change you desire (whether you believe it or not): "I can change." "I can be at peace." "I can become healthy." "I can have more energy."
- Ask for help. Ask family, friends, healthcare providers, or the Universe (she listens).
- Take the smallest, most infinitesimally small steps—less is more.
- Be soft. Be gentle. Be kind—to yourself—start there.
- Breathe.
- Say, "thanks." Always say, "thanks."

Wishing you a Beautiful, and Soft, Gentle, Kind 2018...

Karyn

p.s. From my archives:

[Celebrate the New Year With Self-Love.](#) 2016.

[Simple is Better: the "Rule of Threes."](#) 2017.

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KARYN SHANKS MD

Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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