

## **Listen to Life**

*Wisdom in Life's Stories*

December 31, 2006

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A free newsletter about learning and getting more from life by paying attention to our own stories and the stories of others, based on the presentations, writings, photography and workshops by Dion McInnis ([www.dionmcinnis.com](http://www.dionmcinnis.com)).  
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Check out my new blog at [blog.myspace.com/dionmcinnis](http://blog.myspace.com/dionmcinnis) for poetry, rambles and musings

### **NEW YEAR'S GOALS**

New Years: The time to set goals, reflect on the past and establish resolutions. How about simply setting resolve?

The new year should not be the time to set goals for acquisition or perfection as much as for re-establishing hope and resolve to the long term.

I consider the advertisements, slogans and the other sticks that poke us where it hurts: our weight, shape, size, bank account, health, and more...all in hopes of selling us a chance for a better year and a better self. Then I consider comments my son heard several years ago when he participated in a mission trip to a small town in a poor, nearly forgotten part of America that very closely resembled the origins of his two grandfathers. Poor. Hard working. Eyes set forward. And upward.

The poor town sat in the bottom of the hills, in a valley of sorts. Chickens ran loose in the yards and houses, calluses were more numerous than teeth for many of the citizens, and their hearts and hopes exceeded the breadth of the valley in which they resided. Absent was any sense of entitlement. Atop the hill were homes that my son described as modest, but standing straight, at least, and fairly new. He stood with the patriarch and members of a family, and the elder pointed upwards, toward the hill top. "Someday, we'll have us a house like that."

"Someday" in that culture didn't mean next week, month or year. Hard work and an eye on the goal might mean that a generation or two hence would live in a house like that. And that's okay, they figured. Hope was buttressed by faith and fueled by labor; it was tempered by humility and held together with resolve.

Tonight, in the quiet of the passing into the new year, my fiancé at my side, and my sons on the phone with me, I'll think of all of them, and of the couple in the Appalachians. I'll think of how far my kin have come from very humble beginnings and put my "year's" hopes into larger perspectives that involve improving my self and my world day by day. I'll seek the resolve of the many generations before me and the humility to set my goals for houses on the hill before the mansions in the clouds. I'll continue to put my back into the labor of goals instead of into fretting over "fairness."

New Years: A time to find your own house on the hill, to find the resolve to get there for yourself or for those who come after you, and to help others on their journeys uphill.

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Listen to Life is an electronic newsletter that presents lessons for living by listening to life, based on the writing, poetry, photography, presentations and workshops of Dion McInnis. Stories such as these inspired the book, "Listen to Life: Wisdom in Life's Stories," published in 2005, available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon and Borders. Dion's next

book will share his views of being father and son.

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