

years, I have been struck by the incredible love, hope, strength, courage, support, inspiration, and wisdom that we women have to offer one another. Life can be so much better and problems so much less difficult when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and to ask for and to receive the help and support of others. Let this be the year where you decide to invest more of yourself in developing truly sustaining, nourishing, mutually satisfying relationships with other women.

**6. Learn to live with "loose ends" and to accept imperfection, your own and others'.** Life can drive us crazy when we have to have everything in order or done just "right." The better we can accept life's ambiguities as well as our own and others' limits, the more resilient and content we can be. Learn the "Serenity Prayer" and say it often: "God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

**7. Recognize, value, and affirm your own unique talents and gifts.** Resist the temptation to measure your "success" or

value in life by the standards or achievements of others. Accomplishments that bring us social approval and recognition are nice, but these are not everything in life. When I am tempted to compare myself to others, I affirm my efforts to live life with a good heart and take comfort in the words of the Middle Ages mystic St. John of the Cross: "In the evening of life, we shall be judged on love alone."

**8. Seek to develop and to strengthen strong religious and spiritual beliefs.** When we have a strong faith in God and a set of transcendent values and beliefs by which we live, we can find tremendous meaning, strength, comfort, and peace in our daily lives. When we have a more eternal perspective, our everyday stresses and challenges seem more manageable, and we are more likely to persevere and to have hope in our future.

**9. Choose to see life as an adventure and as a gift.** Life is too short and too precious to waste. If you resolve to get something out of every experience, good or bad, you will be a winner in life no matter what happens to you. No one else

can live your life for you, so be bold---be willing to take risks, to challenge convention, to pursue your dreams, to try something different. "If you keep doing what you have always done, you will get what you have always gotten." You may not always achieve that for which you aspire, but you will certainly feel stronger, more alive, and more authentic for having made the attempt. "Carpe diem!" Savor your gift of life!

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