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## Rekindle Your Inner Spark in the New Year

By **Debbie DeAngelo**  
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Let's face it. The past three years have been tough ones, and you may feel like they have taken an emotional toll. The good news is that we can reestablish our mental equilibrium and replenish our energy and vitality. Believe it or not, your inner spark isn't gone. It may have died down, but it's never fully extinguished. With enough attention, you can recapture that inner glow.

Inner glow may be tough to describe but I bet you know it when you see it. I think kids naturally exude this glow. Their sense of enthusiasm and wonder emanates in the form of excitement, joy, and love. While most adults find the radiance of childhood enviable, they find it elusive within themselves. Here are a few ideas to fan the flame of your va-va-voom!

**Find your center.** Are you wondering what your center is and how you lost it? You're not alone. Although there are a variety of subjective definitions, I think of it in the simplest of terms. Your center is what keeps you grounded and reminds you of what's truly important. Operating from your center enables you to remain calm no matter where you're at in your life. Of course, that's easier said than done. It's when we're in the midst of chaos that we tend to stray from our center.

Finding your center within yourself means recognizing that distressing circumstances will pass, and inevitably come around again, but what you believe to be your purpose in life and the essence of who you are will remain the same. Some people connect with this sense of feeling grounded through prayer, meditation, nature, or their family. It's especially important to retreat to your inner calm zone when your inner critic shifts into overdrive. As soon as your mental chatter – or anyone else's for that matter – leaves you feeling scared,

angry, frustrated, or unworthy, switch off those thoughts and retreat to your calm zone. This transition won't occur overnight. As with anything that's worth the effort, it takes practice.

**Check your ego at the door.** Taking yourself too seriously is a sure-fire way to suppress your vitality. Sometimes this stems from being worried about what others think of you. When you're imprisoned by this fear, your behavior becomes so restricted that there isn't any room for creativity or fun. Realize that there's a difference between taking issues seriously and taking yourself seriously. I'm fairly sure no one else takes us as seriously as we take ourselves.

The ability to lighten up about your flaws and foibles and understand that no one is perfect will unlock the emotional shackles that you impose upon yourself. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Think of failure as feedback. It's the greatest teacher in the world. I've certainly learned more from my failures than my successes, and I bet you have too. Learning to release the fear surrounding mistakes and looking foolish is very liberating. Loosening up will saturate you with a sense of buoyancy and energy that will be visible to others. It will also allow your sense of humor to shine.

**Seek happiness.** Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, "Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." Each day you have a choice. You can decide to be happy, or you can decide to be miserable. I'm not saying that there isn't plenty to gripe about in life, but if you're waiting for your life to be problem-free before you can be happy, then you never will be.

Remember that small improvements in mood have a profound impact on overall joy. When was the last time you did something that nourishes your joy? Our days are so filled with the endless items on our "to-do" list that we barely spend any time having fun. What activities make you laugh and feel care-free? Think of ways to make time for these pursuits. Keep in mind that others' happiness is equally important. Every day ask yourself what you've done to improve someone's life.

As we usher in a new year, make reclaiming your inner spark a priority. With a little nurturing, you'll soon be basking in the glow

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie DeAngelo, RNC, BSN, is a holistic health coach, health correspondent for JET-TV and FOX 66 in Erie, Pennsylvania, and author of “Sudden Menopause.” She is also a ballroom dance instructor. Debbie can be reached at [debbie@healthonheels.com](mailto:debbie@healthonheels.com).



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