

## The Open Hand

By Faith Monson

What are you holding onto? By that I mean, on what in your life do you have a white-knuckled grip, either trying to steer or trying to hang on?

You might be in a career transition, and using all of your energy to hang onto a job or a career track that you have nurtured for a long time. Or maybe you have a dream that you've been seeking for many years, and you're pursuing it with all your might, holding onto it so tightly your fingers cramp.

Sound familiar? While it's comforting to hold onto what's safe, and we are afraid of losing out by letting go, sometimes, the only way to accept the new opportunities life has for us is to unclench our fist and open our palm.

With the recession economy, a lot of businesses are holding on with a tight fist to cash reserves instead of investing in training, replacing equipment or spending on essentials like marketing or staff development. This closes off new possibilities for those companies to grow and position themselves for future success. The fist is closed, so the palm can't receive.

Sometimes, it's the mind instead of the fist that can't let go. Whether it's old failures, insecurities or old limitations, make the New Year the time when you let go. Open yourself to new possibilities by making a conscious commitment to being optimistic and positive. Refuse to repeat negatives: about the economy, about other people or about yourself. Instead, look for what's good, even if it's small, and comment on that—to others and in your own mind. You'll see more of what you focus on, and when you focus on good things and open doors, you start to notice brand new possibilities right before your eyes.

Instead of resolutions this year, how about making a list of possibilities? What is your vision for yourself, personally and professionally, in the New Year? What are your intentions? Don't frame these as "if" statements; instead, make them "I can" statements. While you're at it, take the time to celebrate your successes in the year just past. Write them down. Read them out loud. Congratulate yourself. Too often, we breeze past the accomplishments on the way down our list of things to do. Acknowledge and appreciate your own achievements.

Make 2010 your "year of the open hand." Open your hand and heart to new possibilities, and open your mind to new ways of seeing and interpreting the life that unfolds around you. Wonder. Dream. Create. Ponder. Most of all, be. Just be.

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