

Small Group Ministry Session  
*The New Year's Resolution Dilemma*  
By [Tara Gross](#) \* January 2005

**Opening Words:**

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? ...Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you...As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

From Marianne Williamson's "A Return to Love", used in Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech (1994).

**Check-in**

**Focus/Topic:** The New Year's Resolution Dilemma

While it's an admittedly arbitrary tradition, making a New Year's resolution is as good a way as any to do some self evaluation and decide on ways you can create more joy, authenticity, balance, and fulfillment in your life. Who doesn't see aspects of themselves and their life that could use improvement? So, we make a resolution. We enjoy the early-January high of adrenalin pumping I-can-do-it, this-is-**MY**-year kind of invigorating inspiration. But, often come mid-February, that resolution lingers only as an adrenaline hangover and faint memory.

Many of us, when the next year rolls around, set a similar, yet slightly less audacious, resolution and deem it "more realistic"? "This way," we say, "I'm not setting myself up for failure." Or, maybe we become a disgruntled New Year's humbug and decide to stop making resolutions all together!

So often our rational skills are put to use in irrational ways! Sometimes we actually convince ourselves that lowering our standards is somehow an act of self-kindness!

This year, why not raise the bar on what's "realistic". Why not set a goal for your powerful-beyond-measure-greater-than-you've-ever-imagined Self, and make the commitment? If doing this feels awkward, Congratulations! You're off to a great start!

1. What's your New Year's resolution?
2. What standards for yourself does this resolution reflect?
3. In what ways do you think fulfilling your resolution would affect your life?
4. In sharing your resolution with our group, how can we help hold you to it?  
If you want help, for how long? A month, a year, a lifetime?

**Likes & Wishes**

**Closing Words:**

"You do not have to be good. You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting. You only have to let the soft animal of your body Love what it Loves."

~ from "Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver