

Title: New Year Resolution # 1- Find yourself a retreat
By Chris Marek

Word count 1027

The holiday hustle and bustle is behind us and the New Year with all good intentions has arrived. It is the perfect time to reorganize and evaluate what the past has provided and what is sought for the future.

Some find resolutions are a good way to discover what to improve or change for the future. Others find the need to go one-step further than making lists of goals. These are the growing number of people who put aside time for a retreat.

The term retreat can describe a place to which anyone retires; a place of privacy or safety; a refuge. A retreat is, in this matter, is not a military withdraw of troops or a religious engagement of devotion.

Today, when you hear about someone experiencing a retreat it can mean choosing any number of activities that are not necessarily about combat or religion.

When you look to find information about the retreats on the internet there are hundreds listed all over the world that offer a place and activity for any topic imaginable.

Retreat Facilitator, Sedena C. Cappannelli advises anyone seeking a retreat "to view it as a time to renew, refresh, and pull back from the harried pace of life and take the time for a personal journey of self-awareness and renewed connection to oneself. A good

retreat offers skills for incorporating these things into our lives and answers our heart's longing for a greater purpose and meaning."

Sedena, who presents retreats in beautiful locations around the country says "each activity that is part of the retreat program is an invitation to person discovery and intimacy. It is important to bring your openness and awareness to each event, whether it is rock climbing, cooking, group interaction or a new learning technique, there is always some new awareness that shows up and inevitably, much like life, each person receives the benefits in proportion to their openness to the process."

*Sedena is a also the co-author of the books, **Say Yes To Change and Authenticity**. Over the years she has offered many retreats, seminars and circles and most recently launched a retreat, **For the Love Of Your Life**, designed for people who want to make the best of the 2nd half of life.*

“When I attended Sedena’s retreat I found that it inspires a person to go for their brass ring,” said Val Breazeale.

Karie Montague, CEO of Montague and Company Marketing Communications has been a Retreat Facilitator for the Women’s Presidents Organization (WPO) for several years. She describes how the WPO retreats address the greatest challenges women business owners face, particularly those who also are mothers and wives. Those challenges include recognizing the feelings of isolation and never taking the time for themselves to step back

and look at the big picture. Karie explains that a WPO retreat offers these women a relaxing and creative environment so that they are able to disengage from their daily lives, spend time in reflective thought, learn from each others, feel supported and determine how they want to lead their lives, families and companies.

“It’s amazing what a powerful impact the format of this retreat makes on these women, said Karie. “They leave the retreat with a vision of how they want to move forward, energized for doing so and knowing that they have a huge support system in each other.”

The duration of most retreats is generally more than three days and depending on airfare, lodging, and meals can begin at \$300.

“Selecting a reputable retreat is best achieved when hearing about it from someone who has experienced it first hand,” said Jane Fendelman, a well-known masters level therapist in Phoenix.

If you wish to go on a retreat and you do not know anyone who has attended it before, then for assurances, ask the organizers for references. A great reference would be to call the retreat location and ask them questions about the participants’ responses to this event. Other things to look for are how long has the retreat been provided and what expert background do the organizers of the retreat have. These are all important questions to begin with to determine the quality and commitment to value.

As in life, there are no guarantees that every retreat will be perfect for you. Jane suggests that explaining your expectations to the organizers before you attend and commit can help greatly. Once you are there, she added, keep an open-mind attitude for the experience to develop as it is intended.

Jane's most recently organized retreat planned for Valentine's weekend has been created for couples "Beloved Relationships". But, most often, during her 15 years of group facilitation, Jane provides "circles" for people to explore self-enhancement and personal development such as her women circle which focuses on the "Celebration of Femininity".

Those who would like to explore a topic on a shorter period of time than a retreat can experience what is termed a "circle".

The circle involves a designated time where individuals unite in a purpose or set out to achieve goals.

Book clubs, make-up or Tupperware parties, even bunco nights could all be referred to as a circle.

A unique circle recently formed by Tammy Kaatz, a certified adventure fitness trainer, is the Phoenix Boot Camp, a four-week program of fitness instruction that includes more than 20 women.

Women of all ages and abilities are welcome to participate in the 4-week camp, Monday thru Friday, from 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. Each day the boot camp slightly increases in

intensity. Awards and certificates are given to those who inspire others and improve the most.

Phoenix Boot Camp participant Ilene Bullis, describes this circle as extremely motivational and filled with much camaraderie. “I’ve been re-enlisting for Tammy’s boot camp for more than six months because I love it so much,” said Ilene who is a 57 year old grandmother of two and an international business instructor at Western International University. “During those six months I have seen everyone involved lose inches and gain friendships. In the past, I just haven’t kept my fitness goals but now with the support of the camp and its members I am sticking with it, losing 4 dress sizes and improving my health.”

Retreats or circles, whatever the choice is, seek out a theme that moves you, make it a priority to set the time aside and enjoy. You only live once. Happy New Year.