

Themes and Dreams

A “NEW” New Year’s Ritual



By Cathleen O’Connor, PhD

Themes and Dreams:
A “New” New Year’s Ritual

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*“There is a vitality, a life-force, an energy,
a quickening that is translated through you into action
and because there is only one of you in all of time,
this expression is unique. And if you block it,
it will never exist through any other medium and be lost.”*

~~~ Martha Graham

**A** New Year remains a perfect time to take a step back and consider how the life you are creating is unfolding. Often you might not take the time to look at what you have accomplished in the year just ended. You might not take the time to review your experiences to see how you have grown as a person and whether or not you feel you are fulfilling your purpose in life.

You may have had a very difficult year (or few years). You may have suffered losses, faced illness or found change forced upon you in your career or living situation. You may have begun or ended a romantic relationship.

Whatever your year has brought you; there is something about that energy of new beginnings that carries with it the hope for positive change. So, this year work with that energy using intention and the Law of Attraction.

That is what this booklet is designed to do. Instead of making resolutions, this book will help you look at your life in terms of **Themes and Dreams**. **Dreams** are the vision you have for your life across the dimensions of your health (body, mind, emotion), your work (purpose), your relationships (family, friends, partners), your creativity (play, self-expression), your finances and your connection to spirit.

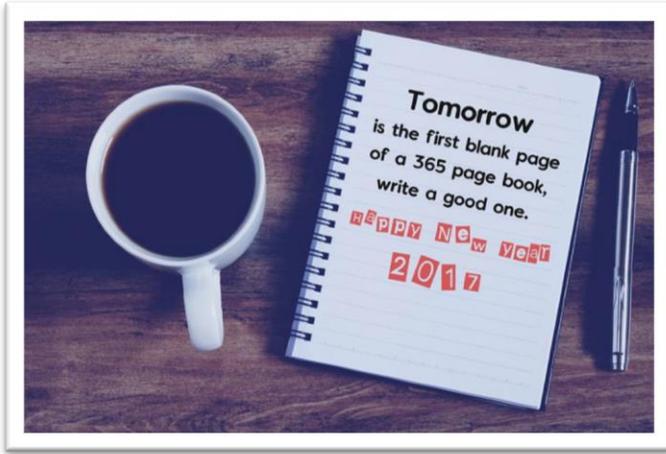
**Themes** support your Dreams. Often when resolutions are made, they are not connected in any meaningful way. That is one of the main reasons that they so often fall by the wayside. What a **Theme** does is connect the changes you want to make in the New Year under an over-arching concept. This allows you to align the action steps you want to take with that Theme. Then the New Year becomes about steady progress in a lot of small areas as you work with your Theme.

To a New Year of Blessings, Joy and Love,

**Cathleen**

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Have Fun!

Take Your Time!

Choose Only One Main Theme!

Choose Only 1-3 Actions in Each Section!

Remember to look at all areas of your life!

Keep the focus on YOU!

Good Luck!

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# CHAPTER ONE – TO A “NEW” NEW YEAR

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**W**elcome to the New Year – to a Life that is a process of dreams and themes. If you were to take a look back at different periods of your life you will perhaps begin to notice some themes emerging. The process of growth means that we evolve and learn in a repetitive way - so an early theme of money-making and career-building might shift over time to themes of motherhood, care-taking and perhaps even creative expression. Themes are different than resolutions because a theme is an overarching concept that guides your daily life.

Here's an example. My theme a few years back was about *simplifying my life*. That led to a very deliberate process of letting go of clutter, furniture, associations, memberships, debt, projects and even a couple of relationships.

## **Remember - A theme embraces all of who you are.**

Then I worked with a theme of "*completion – finishing what I start*." Now, for me, an idea person who gets really excited at the beginning of things but less enthusiastic as the grunt work of completion moves in, this was a worthy goal to have for a couple of years. And I want you to know that I completed a lot of projects that had been in various stages of progress. Just having that theme on my mind was all I needed to keep myself on track.

Then I chose a theme of "*I am enough*." I chose that theme because I wanted to step into all of who I am. My theme of *enough* challenged me on many levels while bringing myself and my work more visible in the world. It helped me say 'no' confidently and 'yes' enthusiastically. I am enough.

This New Year my theme is *Releasing the Past*. This is a continuation of a theme of *self-love* that I am finally ready for after many years of my own healing journey. From 2015 into most of 2016 I released 40 pounds of excess weight and committed to my own regimen of self-care. This theme guides my actions and decisions around all aspects of my life – relationships, health, work, finances and spiritual connection. It means I am choosing myself and releasing patterns of over-giving and codependency that might deplete me. Like last year, I don't expect this will be the easiest year but I have learned that these themes work on a level than resolutions rarely do. My theme of *Releasing the Past* is about stepping into real *presence* in my life.

And remember that themes don't stand alone – mine flow from the dreams I have for my life and what I want to create and experience. My theme of "simplifying my life" grew out of wanting to have the freedom and flexibility to pursue my new writing and speaking career. That meant I had to pare down my expenses and that led to a whole lot of "letting go." As I went through this process, I moved more than once, each time letting go of more and more "stuff" that I didn't really need to take with me. I also worked to release mental and emotional "stuff" that held me back from pursuing the life I wanted to live.

I continue to simplify where possible – that theme was so successful and meaningful for me that it is now part of my psyche. It is present when the impulse to buy something rears its head. Now I buy what I need or truly, truly love. My home is comfortable, beautiful and a place that warms my heart but it is no longer the land of “stuff.” Now it is the land of the heart and soul and I just love it.

In 2014 I got my fiction writing out to a publisher and a publicity firm for launch. Hence “finishing what I start = *completion*.” Now taking on my completion theme meant that I had to make other choices in my life to support this theme. I had to rework my daily schedule; I had to say ‘NO’ to outside activities that would take time away from my goals. And that will continue to be the case. Themes bring up a lot of opportunities for growth and personal development.



This theme of the energy of both completion and my theme of *‘I am enough’* gave me the commitment to complete my book with Elizabeth Harper – [365 Days of Angel Prayers](#) and get it out into the world.

I will find many challenges as I continue my theme of *‘releasing the past’* into 2017 as this theme requires more presence than I have ever embodied before. Can I hold the vibration of *‘self-love as I release the past’* each and every day in every situation? I will continue to find out and discover much about myself that still needs healing and much that is ready to go out into the world with joy and love. My goal is that my theme will permeate each and every major decision I make this coming year.

What are you ready for in 2017? What might you choose as your major theme?

Here are some ideas to help you brainstorm:

- ∞ You might like my former theme so see if “Simplify My Life” or “Simplification” fits for you
- ∞ You might want to do something like “Create Balance”
- ∞ You might want to have a theme like “Love More”
- ∞ You might want to choose a theme of “Optimal Health”
- ∞ You might want to choose “Spiritual Growth”
- ∞ You might want to have a theme of “Speaking My Truth”
- ∞ You might want to have a theme of “Play”
- ∞ You might want to have a theme of “Positive Attitude”

I think you get the idea. So, let’s say that you choose “create balance” as your theme for 2017. If you do, then think about how to implement that theme across all the dimensions of who you are. You can do it! It will mean you will have to make some new decisions – you’ll have to decide what to say “yes” to and where to say “no.” You truly can do it. *Life isn't a job of perfection but progress and perseverance*. And each day brings the opportunity to again create what you want and become all that you want to be.

Think about your theme in relation to these six areas of life: work, relationships, health, creativity, finances and spiritual connection. In each one there will be actions you can take that align with your theme. Ok – here you go!!



# CHAPTER THREE – THEN THE THEME

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**C**ongratulations! That vision you created for your life was amazing! Now comes the theme part. This is the part that can get you to that vision you just made. Themes grow out of what needs to change in order for you to have all that you desire. And often, what needs to change, are old ways of thinking and being that don't align with the person you are becoming. Here's a simple exercise to get you understanding what your theme might be:

Imagine a person who has everything you just envisioned. What qualities or beliefs would she possess that would permit the life she created for herself. Really think about this.



Now write down beliefs or qualities you think this person has. Here's an example:

A person who is living my envisioned live would be self-confident, assertive, energetic, capable, organized . . . . She (or he) would believe she deserves all that she has. She would be a good receiver of abundance. She would know how to work with others to achieve her goals. . . . etc.

Jot your thoughts down here:

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This exercise gets you started finding those aspects that you will want to adopt so you can work with the Law of Attraction to achieve your vision. Remember, the Law of Attraction says that *Like Attracts Like*. And what that means is that the vibration (or resonance) you create through your repetitive thoughts, emotions and actions is what brings your experience to you.

So, uncovering the qualities and beliefs of someone who already is living the vision you have for your life will let you know where changes are needed.

Take a look at each of the qualities and beliefs you wrote down. Where you possess qualities and beliefs that differ from the ones you wrote down means that you already are working off a theme for your life – it is just not a theme that will get you what you want. In this way, a theme is like a pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving – and patterns can be shifted!



Let’s go back to a theme of “create balance” as an example.

If your life today looks like that post-it covered ball of stress to the left, then what beliefs or qualities would this frazzled honey have to adopt to work with her theme?

Certainly she would have to learn how and when to say “NO.” No one gets covered in a massive ‘to do’ list without their own complicity. And what kind of woman can say ‘no’ to the demands on her time and resources by family, work and so much more? It just might be a woman who believes putting her needs first is truly a good thing. It just might also be a woman who has the inner strength to allow others to be disappointed when she can’t do everything they want. It might just be a woman who isn’t trying to fix everyone else’s problems. Instead she has set her priorities for whom and what she truly loves and is willing to let the rest go. As you can see, a woman who has created more balance in her life has made some difficult choices and adjustments in how she sees herself vis-à-vis the needs and demands of others. *And this theme is not just for women!* If this theme fits you then it is a good one to work with.

Your theme will require you to take a look at each of your life areas to decide what actions you can take to put your theme into action. This may not be a quick process so take the time you need with this. And realize that your theme may just span a few years (like my theme of “simplify my life” did). Allow yourself to change and grow a little bit at a time if that is what is required. Themes are about lasting shifts not quick fixes. But, aren’t lasting shifts the ones you want?

Write your theme here and add as much detail as you want but keep the actions for the next few pages. Just use this space to get clear on your theme. You may have a few to write down. That’s OK. Write down whatever themes showed up for you. And then pick the one that feels the most important – the one that would make the biggest difference in how you feel about yourself and your life. That is the one you will work with.

### My Theme

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Now put a big red circle around the one that you are going to work with this New Year. You will choose exactly the right one for you. Trust, choose and let go.

# CHAPTER FOUR – HEALTH WORKSHEET

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Now you are ready for some action steps. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. Under health, think about mind, body, and emotions. So here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about yourself. Here is where you might commit to a daily journal. Here is where you might get that book on organization you've been saying you need. Here is where you might choose an action of practicing more forgiveness. Here is where you might choose to work on your physical health or even just schedule a monthly massage.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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## CHAPTER FIVE – RELATIONSHIPS

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When you think relationships, think about the meaningful connections in your life. Think about your family, your friends, your romantic partners and the relationship you have to yourself. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. Here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about yourself. Here is where you might commit to a date night once a week. Here is where you might choose to cut back on your children's afterschool activities so you can spend more family time together. Here is where you might choose an action of practicing more forgiveness.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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## CHAPTER SIX – WORK/CAREER

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When you think about work, think about meaningful contribution. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. Think about the nature and setting of your work, your business partnerships if any, your challenges and joys. So here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about yourself or even someone you work with. Here is where you might commit to a daily schedule that works with the life you want to create. Here is where you might get some additional training or education. Here is where you might choose an action of practicing more forgiveness.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN – CREATIVITY

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When you think about creativity, think about your ability to express yourself. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. Creativity comes in many forms. You don't have to be an artist or musician to be creative. You are naturally a creative energy in the world. So here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about yourself. Here is where you might commit to a daily creative practice like having an idea journal. Here is where you might want to take some courses in art, pottery, drawing, music, singing – whatever you can imagine – see where you are naturally drawn. Here is where you might step out of an old mindset or behavior of comparing yourself with others.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT – FINANCES

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It might seem that finances belong under the Work heading and usually it would be there. However, in today's environment, finances present challenges of worthiness, belief and fiscal management that merit a clear focus. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. So here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about money. Here is where you might commit to a daily routine of monitoring your expenses. Here is where you might seek help for debt counseling. Here is where you might choose an action of practicing more forgiveness. Here is where you might open up to enhancing your ability to receive.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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# CHAPTER NINE – SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

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Connection to Spirit is an important part of life, however you experience that sense of being connected to something larger than yourself – Spirit can be Nature or the Divine. Take your chosen theme and on this page write three (no more than three!) actions you can take this year that are aligned with your theme. So here is where you might have an action of creating an affirmation to change an old belief about yourself. Here is where you might commit to a daily meditation practice. Here is where you might attend courses in spiritual development. Here is where you might choose an action of practicing more forgiveness. Here is where you might choose to add more prayer or gratitude into your daily life.

Remember – no more than three!! That way you will have the best chance of success.

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## CHAPTER TEN – LIVING THE THEME

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**W**HEW! You probably feel like you need a good rest right about now! You've just done an amazing amount of self-reflection and creation. You have a theme for this New Year and you have actions in each area of your multi-dimensional life that support your theme. Some of these actions might be daily, some might be experiences in awareness as you begin to change long-held beliefs or behaviors and some might be individual decisions you will be making as the year unfolds and you keep your theme in high focus.

If you want you can take your theme and your vision for your life and create a VISION BOARD – a visual reminder of what it is you are creating each and every day. A VISION BOARD is a fun, creative, intuitive exercise that helps you further clarify what you truly want in life. Whether or not you do a VISION BOARD, you want to let go of the outcome – the vision. What you are going to be focusing on are the theme and actions. If you do that, the vision will begin to come into being. There is no need to force it. In fact, the sooner you let go of expectations, the sooner the universe can work with you to make things happen.

So, here is how to make sure you are living your theme:

1. Frame or create a nice laminate of your theme (the words you've chosen). Make it colorful and reflective of your self-expression.
2. Use one of the many online print services to put your theme on your daily coffee mug.
3. Take your theme with you on a key chain.
4. Put your theme on a magnet on the refrigerator.
5. Get a theme journal and write your theme on the outside. Use the journal to jot down your progress or ideas you have about implementing your theme.
6. Tell at least three friends what your theme is and ask for their support.
7. Make a new business card (whether you are in business or not) with just your name and underneath your theme.

**Cathleen O'Connor 2017**

**♥ Releasing the Past ♥**

In other words, have fun – put your theme anywhere and everywhere you want. Love it into being and you will be amazed what you will shift this year.

**C**athleen O'Connor is first and foremost a writer who loves to help other creative people get their inspired creations out into the world. An inspirational speaker, author, life/business coach and entrepreneur with a PhD in Metaphysical Counseling, Cathleen also teaches workshops and classes on creative writing and spiritual living.



*"I LOVE writing – all kinds. My first works were poems published in an anthology in the 1980s. Lately I'm working on fiction (a screenplay and novel) as that is what is calling to me now."*

Cathleen's books include the 2014 best-seller, [High Heels on the Hamster Wheel: A Fable for the Modern Woman](#) (Balboa Press, 2013) and the international best-seller, [365 Days of Angel Prayers \(Spiritual Living, 2014\)](#) and [The Everything Law of Attraction Dream Dictionary: An A to Z guide to using your dreams to attract success, prosperity, and love](#) (Adams Media, 2010, now a Kindle book).

Cathleen has a CD entitled **From Stress to Serenity** featuring guided imagery meditations designed to take you through the work day, including a 3-minute "De-stress at the desk" that can be done anytime workplace stress threatens to overwhelm.

With celebrity psychotherapist Sherry Gaba, Cathleen co-hosted CBS Sky Radio's "A Moment of Change" radio show interviewing many spiritual luminaries, authors and healing experts.

Cathleen sees private clients out of her home office and lectures and speaks at various venues throughout the United States. Cathleen's books, CD and events can be found on her website of <http://www.cathleenconnor.com>. She can be reached through her website or via email at [cathleen@cathleenconnor.com](mailto:cathleen@cathleenconnor.com).

