

# Goalaholic

Contributed by Karen Woodward

"I'm making a new years resolution this year: Lay Off The Ambition. Which is not to say that I will have no ambition, but I vow to stop worrying so much. "Where do I want to be in 5 years?" "Where do I want to be in 1 year?" etc. No more. I'm going to live in the present. Like, right now. This week. No worrying about next week."

That's my new year's resolution. Hopeless or pathetic? Is it a cop-out way of thinking? I've always believed that it was important to set decisive goals. Call it the Tony Robbins school of self-help thought; if you can imagine it, articulate it, and write it down, then you can and will achieve it. But when I took stock of my life at the end of the year, I realized that the things that I am most proud of I never set out to do. They just kind of happened. Now, I am a cynic at heart. I hate those people who "just kind of fell into" their fantastic life. Those people must be liars - surely they always knew what they wanted to do. Either that or they were the luckiest people on Earth. What the hell was their secret? My old Professor (Hi Dubin if you're reading) sent me a link to the website Goalfree.com, which perhaps will help me figure this out. The website is actually promoting a book by Stephen M. Shapiro called "Goal Free Living: How to live the life you want," and when I saw that, I thought "uh oh," because I'm a self-help book junkie, much to my sister's horror. But I continued reading: "We are taught from a young age that in order to achieve great success we must set and achieve our goals. However in doing so, we become focused on where we are going rather than enjoying where we are right now. We sacrifice today in the hope that a better future will emerge, only to discover that achievement rarely leads to true joy." Ok, that sounds like me. "Goal-Free Living presents an alternative philosophy - that we can have an extraordinary life now, all without goals and detailed plans. By living for each moment, it's possible to have a successful life and follow your passions at the same time." Ok, I'm game. I scrolled down and took the "Are you a goalaholic?" quiz. Holy mother of god. "Your goalaholic score was 76 out of 90 (ideal range is between 15 and 29). Perhaps it's time to check yourself into rehab." Is there such a thing as Goalaholic rehab? Goalaholics Anonymous? "Goals have a stranglehold on your life. You have elected to put your happiness on hold for the promise of a better tomorrow, but often find that tomorrow never comes." Well, now that was very interesting, because it sure did sound familiar. "You have chosen success over happiness, tomorrow over today, mediocrity over miraculous." Gulp. Is that true? Could that be true? I emailed my Professor that I had failed the quiz. Or did spectacularly on it, depending on your point of view. He responded that he figured I was a "holic of some sort" and suggested I become a "choice-a-holic." I told him that I didn't think that was a good idea either because then I'd never make any decisions. But maybe I don't have to make any decisions. I think I'll become one of those go-with-the flow types. Usually those people baffle me, but I'm beginning to see the benefit. I'm going to really try and stick to my new year's resolution. No worrying about where I'll be in five years, or one year, or even next month. This will be my own Goalaholic rehab: choose happiness over worry.