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The New Millennium and You

What should be our philosophy as we approach not only a new year or decade, but also a new millennium?" To help answer that question read this classic article

by **Jim Rohn**

plus ATTACHMENT

2141 words | 8 pages

As I travel around the country lecturing, one of the most frequently asked questions is what do I expect to happen over the next 6-12 months with Y2k and the beginning of not only a new century, but a new millennium? What should people do? Will all the rules change? Well, I'm no expert, but I can share with you my thoughts. Whether it is preparing for a new year, a decade or even a millennium, I still believe there are overriding principals that we should follow and be led by. So with such an emphasis on Jan. 1, 2000 and beyond, I'd like to devote the next few weeks to my view of the period of history we're in now and how it relates to words I wrote over 20 years ago in my book *"The Seasons Of Life"*. Forgive me in advance if I sound a bit philosophical, but as you know by now, I do believe your philosophy is critical to your life's success.

> ***First, let me say that life is about constant, predictable patterns of change.***

For the six thousand years of recorded history, as humans have entered this world, received parental instruction, classroom instruction, and gathered the experience of life; many have set for themselves ambitious goals, and dreamed lofty dreams. As the wheel of life continues its constant turning, all human emotions appear, disappear, and appear once again.

As we approach this new millennium, for all of us, the only constant factor in life is our feelings and attitudes toward life. A major challenge faced by us all is that we must learn to experience the changing of life's cycles without being changed by them; to make a constant and conscious effort to improve ourselves in the face of changing circumstances.

That is why I believe in the power and value of attitude. As I read, ponder and speculate about people, their deeds and their destiny, I become more deeply convinced that it is our natural destiny to grow, to succeed, to prosper, and to find happiness while we are here. But, it does take effort to continue when our results, as well as our friends, tell us to give up trying. It does not, however, take effort to fail. It requires little more than a slowly deteriorating attitude about our present, our future, and about ourselves.

> ***It is ironic that one of the few things in this life that we have total control over is our own attitudes, and yet most of us live our entire life behaving as though we had no control whatsoever.***

By our attitude, we decide to read, or not to read. By our attitude, we decide to try or give up. By our attitude, we blame ourselves for our failure, or we blame others. Our attitude determines whether we tell the truth or lie, act or procrastinate, advance or recede, and by our own attitude we and we alone actually decide whether to succeed or fail.

How incredibly unique that a God who would create the complex and immense universe would create the human race and give to those humans the free choice that would permit them to select their own achievement or their own destruction.

This strange, but all-knowing God gave to us a delicately balanced sphere called earth. On it, he placed the intelligent human who would either develop it or destroy it. How terribly fascinating that a God would leave both projects - earth as well as humans - unfinished! Across the

rivers and streams he built no bridges; he left the pictures unpainted, the songs unsung, the books unwritten, and space unexplored. For the accomplishment of those things, God created the unfinished human who, within his heart and mind, had the capacity to do all these things and more, depending upon his own choice.

> ***Attitude determines choice, and choice determines results.***

All that we are, and all that we can become has indeed been left unto us. For as long as you continue to draw breath, you have the chance to complete the work in and for the earth and for yourself that God has begun for you. In the cycles and seasons of life, attitude is everything!

Consider two things.

> ***First, life and business are like the changing seasons. That's one of the best ways to illustrate life: it's like the seasons that change.***

> ***Second, you cannot change the seasons, but you can change yourself.***

Now with those two key phrases in mind, let's look at what I consider to be the first major lesson in life to learn, and that is how to handle the winters. They come regularly, right after autumn. Some are long, some are short, some are difficult, some are easy, but they always come right after autumn. That is never going to change.

There are all kinds of winters— the "winter" when you can't figure it out, the "winter" when everything seems to go haywire. There are economic winters, social winters and personal winters.

Wintertime can bring disappointment, and disappointment is common to all of us. So you must learn how to handle the winters. Just like you must learn how to handle the nights; they come right after days.

> ***You must learn how to handle difficulty; it always comes after opportunity.***

You must learn to handle recessions; they come right after expansions. That isn't going to change.

The big question is, what do you do about winters? You can't get rid of January simply by tearing it off the calendar. But here is what you can do: you can get stronger; you can get wiser; and you can get better.

Remember that trio of words: stronger, wiser, better. The winters won't change, but you can.

Before I understood this, I used to wish it were summer when it was winter. When things were difficult, I used to wish they were easy. I didn't know any better. Then Mr. Shoaff gave me the answer from a part of his very unique philosophy when he said, "Don't wish it were easier, wish you were better. Don't wish for fewer problems, wish for more skills. Don't wish for less challenge, wish for more wisdom."

Fortunately, following the turbulence of winter comes the season of activity and opportunity called springtime. It is the season for entering the fertile fields of life with seed, knowledge, commitment, and a determined effort.

However, the mere arrival of spring is no sign that things are going to look good in the fall. You must do something with the spring. In fact, everyone has to get good at one of two things: planting in the spring or begging in the fall. Take advantage of the day and the opportunities that spring can bring.

It is the promise of spring that as we sow, so shall we also reap. Faith further provides to us an irrevocable law decreed in heaven which assures that for every disciplined human effort we will receive a multiple

reward. For each cup planted, a bushel reaped, for every good idea given to another, many shall be given to us in return. For every demonstrated act of faith, a multiplicity of the rewards, and for every act of love given, a life of love in return.

> ***Just remember it is a natural characteristic of springtime to present itself ever so briefly, or to lull us into inactivity with its bounteous beauty.***

Do not pause too long to soak in the aroma of the blossoming flowers, lest you awaken to find springtime gone with your seed still in your sack.

With the intelligence, wisdom, and freedom of choice given to us as humans, exercise the discipline to plant in spite of the rocks, weeds, or other obstacles before us. The rocks, weeds, and thorns of the world cannot destroy all your seeds if you plant massively enough and intelligently enough. My suggestion is to choose action, not rest. Choose truth, not fantasy. Choose a smile, not a frown. Choose love, not animosity. Choose the good in life in all things, and choose the opportunity as well as the chance to work when springtime smiles on your life.

Spring shows us that life is truly a constant beginning, a constant opportunity, a constant springtime. We need only to learn to look once again at life as we did as children, letting fascination and curiosity give us welcome cause to look for the miraculous hidden among the common.

Get busy quickly on your springs, your opportunities. There are just a handful of springs that have been handed to each of us. Life is brief, even at its longest.

> ***Whatever you are going to do with your life, get at it.***

Don't just let the seasons pass by.

There is a third major lesson in life to learn; how to nourish and protect your crops all summer. Sure enough, as soon as you've planted, the busy bugs and noxious weeds are out to take things over. Here is the next bit of truth: they will take it, unless you prevent it.

There are two key phrases to consider with the third major lesson. The first is "all good will be attacked." Don't press me for a reason. I was not in on some of the early decisions, so I don't know why. I just know that it's true. Let reality be your best beginning. Every garden will be invaded.

The second phrase is "all values must be defended." Social values, political values, friendship values, business values— all must be defended. Every garden must be tended all summer. If you don't develop this skill, you'll never wind up with anything of value.

> ***But for those who make diligent efforts to plant, protect, and preserve there are not enough birds, bugs, or other obstacles to destroy all the efforts of last spring.***

Now, we will talk about fall, the time of harvesting the fruits of our springtime labor. Fall also presents us with our fourth major lesson to learn in life, and that is to learn how to reap in the fall without apology if you have done well and without complaint if you have not.

For nothing is more exciting than a bounteous crop and nothing more dreadful than a barren field in the fall. We must remember that in all areas of the human existence, what we put into this world, we get back from it. It is nature's way of evening the score. So regardless of the results, take full responsibility for your crop.

One of the highest forms of human maturity is accepting full responsibility for our lives.

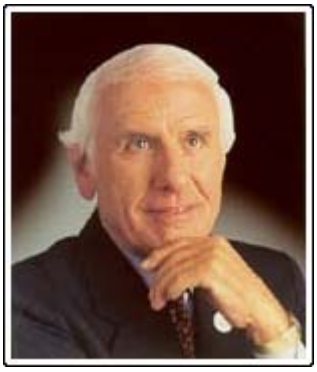
Which brings me back to our beginning questions about the new millennium and all the predicted changes. Many voices speak of major changes and the need to be able to quickly adapt. I don't dispute that, in fact I agree with it in part. But we must also remember that life is constantly recycling itself. Much of life is about the balancing of two opposites; like the positive and negative charge on a battery. Life's balancing of opposites totally surrounds our lives; man/woman, day/night, good/evil, life/death, water/land, summer/winter, recession/expansion, joy/sorrow, etc.

Yes, I believe we will have major changes, but I also believe we will continue to have just one winter, spring, summer and fall each year. Much of our success will lie in our ability and philosophy to plant in the springtime of opportunity. To weed and cultivate in the testing time of summer, to harvest without apology and/or complaint in the results time of fall and to get stronger, wiser, better in the transition and learning times of winter.

Remember it is not what happens to you that determines your future, it is what you do about it.

So here's to a great, faith filled and prosperous new millennium.

To Your Success,
Jim Rohn



Jim Rohn is considered to be "America's Foremost Business Philosopher". He's been delivering his life and work-changing seminars for over 39 years... addressed over 6,000 audiences and four million people worldwide... he's the recipient of the 1985 National Speakers Association CPAE Award... authored 17 different books, audio and video programs... and, Mr. Rohn is internationally hailed as one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

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