

Message: Envisioning a Year by Rev. “Twinkle” Marie Manning

In addition to being an interfaith minister, I am a semi-retired television producer.

Having the honor over the years to have interviewed such ones as Nobel Peace Laurette **Betty Williams**;
NBA AllStar **Vince Carter**;
4-Time World Champion Pro-Surfer **Lisa Andersen**;
And produced many interviews with
Best Selling Authors including: *Anita Diamant*, *Abby Seixas*, *Halé Sofia Schatz* and Terry Real.

To name just a few from various backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Each of them have something very unique in common.
And it has helped them manifest much success in their work.

That commonality is:
Visualization!

Though their techniques are different from one to the next,
Indeed, some may not really even look like visualization
to a casual onlooker, nor potentially called so by them.
Yet, visualization it is.

For instance,

An interview I recall with **great fondness** is one with **pro-surf legend** Lisa Andersen, who is known as *the woman who changed the face of surfing forever*.

Up until she paddled out onto the scene in the 1980s, surfing was a sport dominated by men. While she certainly had noteworthy predecessors and impressive successors have followed her, Lisa was the one to break through the gender barrier and pave the way as competently as she carves a wave.

Early on in her surfing days in Florida she headed for ***Surf City USA: Huntington Beach***.

Her goal was to learn from the best of the best. Lisa said she spent most of her time hanging out in surf shops In her words:

“So I would meet them!”
“Them” being “professional surfers.”

Meeting legends is one thing.
Finding success as a pro surfer was quite another.

Lisa spent several frustrating years grasping at her dream but without her desired results.

Sure, she enjoyed the surf lifestyle, and was a fabulous surfer, but when it came time to compete she felt such an enormous amount of pressure to win and she would falter.

She said that traveling and the party scene became more fun than the surfing sometimes and she couldn't focus on surfing.

After failing at a competition she would go back down to the beach, catch a ***perfect wave*** and someone would inevitably ask why she didn't just do that in her heat. She didn't know the answer.

Finally after more than five years she started getting results, *not always winning, but making progress.*

In time, she became **world champion**. And held that title for four successive years. (1994-1997)

What secret did she attribute to her success?
What was **her** *visualization technique*?

She cut out photos in magazines that inspired her, pictures of the professionals surfing captured doing a turn she really wanted to perfect, and looking the way she wanted to emulate when **she** caught her waves.

Lisa tirelessly studied surfers from the beach and in the line-up. Endless hours focusing on exactly how she wanted to be, the kind of style she wanted to master. and she says,
“I seemed to pick out ones that had a really smooth, graceful style,”

She also watched them wipeout, and learned from their mistakes. And her own.

On and off the water.

She continued by saying that in as much as that period may have been a struggle for her, she said:

*“It was an amazing time for me because I met a lot of pros and learned what **not to do** and **how not to be.**”*

Along with **what to do** and **how to be**.

Then, **she practiced** all she had learned.
The result was that she accomplished
what no woman before her was able to do
in the evolution of surfing
—to balance the playing field **on the water**
*and with **the sponsors*** for women,
all while raising two young children.

That was what she was working on when I met her in 2004.
As a result of her efforts, and others like her, female surfers
gained equal pay in 2018.

Lisa is an **inspiration** to women and to single mothers around
the world.

She said an important part of this process was to “always be
happy and friendly” to others.

She attributes her ability to secure her place in the **line-up**
(the spot in the ocean where surfers line up to catch waves,
just behind the breaking zone)

She attributes her ability to secure her place
being welcomed there alongside skeptical, and often times
territorial, seasoned surfers,
*“was to always be in a good mood and keep smiling
and joking around with people,”*
She said, *“because they were more likely to want to share
the waves than if I tried to paddle out and control the situation.”*

Additionally, she said, *“I want people to know that
I do what I do because I love it,*

*and not because I was made to do it or ... because I had to do it,
but this is something **I totally believe in** and care about.
I'm just a passionate surfer and always will be.
I will surf forever!"*

During another interview - this one with
NBA AllStar **Vince Carter**
he recalled how for years he used to write on his sneakers,
signing his name with the determination that *one day* he would
reach the level he desired in the NBA
so as to have a **shoe** sponsored in his name.

That's right - every single sneaker he bought,
he immediately wrote his name on it.

He was devoted to this practice.
Visualizing how he would feel when the day **finally came**
and his dream came true.

Describing his elation the day his Signature Shoe was launched,
Vince said,
*"You can't beat that!
My name is there
and you can't rub it off;
it's permanent!"*

He conveyed with sincerity to viewers his optimism
about the **possibilities** open to all of us,
regardless of where we come from
or our current circumstances, that
when we allow ourselves to focus on
what we want to bring into our life,
we can achieve our goals and dreams.

When asked what advice he had for those pursuing a dream and how to stay on course, he answered,
“Whatever you choose, stick with it and be confident in it and be willing to hold your head up high with your decision.”

It is that kind of **conviction**, Vince’s and Lisa’s, in following one’s inner voice that makes the **visualization process** possible.

It ensures conscious connection to Source or Higher Power or Internal Determination; and maintains a high energy level.

The resulting vibration emanating from the individual **yields** positive, sought-after results of matching frequency.

It is no surprise that many other people who have successfully achieved their dreams credit their success with the power of intentional visualization.

Setting goals is something I think it is safe to assume all of us have done.

Each year all around the globe people begin the new year with a new goal and an intention.

Many offer up a *New Year’s Resolution*.

Often it is centered around something they would like to change or improve:

Repair relationships,
Fix money problems or otherwise
enhance their financial situations,
Stop eating in unhealthy ways,
Lose weight,
And so on.

A survey conducted by NPR in 2019 showed that it was approximately **44%** of American adults who made **New Year's Resolutions** - and of those, **13% set out** with some form of exercising being top of their resolution list, making it the most popular resolution in the United States.

Add to that the third and fourth most popular resolutions were weight loss and healthier eating - **3 of the 4 top** priorities were health-related goals.

Fantastic news for the fitness industry who often receive a boon in member increase in January.

Yet, by the month of May, they will see an **80%** membership decline.

Across the board, from the local gyms to martial arts and yoga studios, most people's **enthusiasm** about their newly set goal **wanes** within a few months.

Contrasting those abysmal statistics of New Year's Resolutions with another more recent trend is that of the ***Word of the Year*** practice.

And to clarify I am not referring to Webster's or Google's most popular word searches!

Rather, the Word-of-the-Year **manifesting** technique - where practitioners select an individual word or phrase as a presiding **theme** for the year.

A **Word of the Year** or **Theme of the Year** places the focus on the positive aspects of what one would like to draw into their lives.

A manifestation tool, that, unlike most *New Year's Resolutions*, tends to gain more traction as the year progresses.

Word-of-the-Year practitioners have been found to have greater successes than typical New Year's Resolutions.

Some will randomly select a word, finding serendipity in such a process.

Others will engage in writing processes and rituals to discover which word or phrase **most resonates** with them.

Whichever method used, the Word or Phrase is **indelibly placed** on your radar throughout the year.

You'd be surprised how often you notice it throughout your day, in your reading material, in media, television, movies and casual conversation.

A key as well is to place your **chosen** word or phrase where it is readily available to you as a check point.

Taped on your computer screen, or placed on your fridge and other places around your work and home you frequent.

Some will even have have special items bought or made with the Word of intention or sentiment on them:

Book marks

Rings

Charms

Cards

Paintings

Sculptures

Some incorporate a Journaling practice that, like a gratitude journal, **focuses the intent** of the daily writing practice on the chosen Word or Phrase.

Curating a playlist of music that supports your word or theme and playing it often throughout the week.

Likewise with the books you select to read each month.

Gathering things that are already part of your lifestyle and tuning the focus of them **to align** with your intention all go towards creating positive results.

Having a presiding word helps you to stay focused on that which you most wish to manifest in **your inner and outer worlds**.

It helps you to pay attention when **the universe** provides nudges and confirmations and synchronicities.

It gives you a touchstone in good times and in bad as a **method** and measure of how to respond.

And...it calls upon you to practice what you believe in

as it **inevitably presents lessons** within the context of the word throughout the year.

So, choose carefully :)

Perhaps the word or phrase on the Intention Card you received at the beginning of the service, resonates with you.

If it does, and, for those of you who do choose to employ the Word-of-the-Year practice, as you go throughout your days and weeks and months of the new year, as are guided to shape that which you wish to manifest, remember the famed response when Michelangelo was asked, *'How did you ever create David?'* he answered, "I didn't create David. I **saw David** and then took away everything that wasn't him."

See that which you intend to create.

Focus on that.

Other things will vie for your attention.

Draw yourself back to your practice, see that which you envision **as if it has already** come into existence. ***Feel*** how it feels.

And, focus on that.

Let's try. Just for a moment.

Look at the word or phrase on the Intention Card in-front of you.

What would your world look like if that were the presiding theme?

What would you **feel** in your heart?

How would you interact with others if this word took the lead?

What rituals can you see yourself **realistically** implementing,
daily, weekly
to honor your **wish** to make this theme manifest in your life?

Set your rituals, ornate or mundane, with your vision in mind.
Remember as **Nora Naranjo-Morse** said in her poem,

*“These seemingly ordinary rituals
add to my day,
figuring prominently
into the larger scheme
of things,
for me.”*

Relish in the time you give to yourself for **daydreaming about**
the fruition of your vision.

When your mind wanders, **usher it back**, even if only for
a few precious moments each day.

Remember too, Elizabeth Lessers words of affirmation.

“You are your own best authority.

As you work to know and love yourself,
you discover how to live a spiritual life.”

If the word-of-the-year style practice *resonates* with you - **try it!**
If it doesn't, find something else that does enhance your daily life.
And, do it daily!

Better still, whether using a word-of-the-year or some other
method, do it with **someone who cherishes the practice** as
much as you do.

For there is power in being *accompanied* on one's journey.

Author **Anita Diamant** speaks about the importance of being supported in co-creating a vision of success.

During her interview on **TV for Your Soul's Empowering Women TV** show, she told host Suzanne Roth the story about the success of her book, ***The Red Tent***.

When talking about its initial release, Anita said, "It was received with ***thunderous silence!***"

Her book was not advertised or reviewed.

Her Editor had left the publishing company at the same time her book was released.

It almost didn't make it into paperback.

The publisher was ready to pulp the hardbacks. (As it is in our throw-away society, is monetarily cheaper to destroy the books than warehouse them).

Anita got creative and asked the publisher to **not pulp them** and requested if they could send them out to some groups she's connected with.

Such as groups of Rabbinical friends of hers - one who was president of the reformed movements women's rabbis and another friend was president of the re-constructionist rabbis. Her friends sent them to all the members of their large groups to start. With letters endorsing the book.

And then it was shared through a vast network of **women's book groups**.

These groups rallied to support her work.

Anita credits ***The Red Tent*** being a best selling phenomena because of this grass-roots effort.

Women liking it and recommending it word-of-mouth to other women's book groups.

Essentially, her success was directly because of relationships.

The same can be true for most anything we wish to accomplish.

Anita **asked for help**.

She shared her dream with her close friends, who then shared it with others. They told two friends, who told two friends, who told *more* friends.

Now, not all our dreams are not meant to be shared so widely and so publicly.

Yet, most of them, most of what we envision for our lives, can benefit from and help be made manifest when we share them with at least one or a few other persons who can champion and cheerlead alongside us.

Admittedly, that can be hard to do, if those for who you reside with, or those closest to you do not have similar goals, or who do not wish to participate in such practices.

If that is the case, try searching for other like-minded and

like-spirited, people who are likely also seeking someone to share their dreams with.

There are groups and gatherings and circles for most any kind of **creative, artistic and intellectual** adventures.

Join one.

In-person if you can.

Online if you can't find anyone close, **or if** mobility is an issue.

There are Master Mind circles for those who seek a more **rigorous practice** in the company of others at similar thresholds on their paths.

Give yourself permission to attend a workshop or go on a retreat that features your given *word-of-the-year* or a theme that resonates with you.

You will meet others with similar vision there.

What ever it is you envision for your year, and for your life, **now** is the time to “*listen within*” and allow your “*deeper longings*” to be the “*compass*” you follow.

May you find the happiness, harmony, freedom and peace you seek.

May it be so.

Amen.

Closing Words

Oprah Winfrey tells us that
“Your life isn’t about a big break.
It’s about taking one significant
life-transforming step at a time.”

The Path Made Clear:
Discovering Your Life's Direction and Purpose – March 26, 2019

May each step and prayer and ritual and practice
you take this year bring you closer
to what you envision.

Blessed Be.

Interviews cited in this message originally appeared in the following:
Lisa Anderson - Celebrity Profiles TV show and Conversations with Twinkle article
in Island Voice Magazine; Vince Carter - Conversations TV show on PBS in Daytona
Beach and Conversations with Twinkle article in Island Voice Magazine; Anita
Diamant - Empowering Women Signature Event produced by TV for Your Soul.