

Of a certain age...

By Sue Stafford
Columnist

Ten... nine... eight... seven... here comes 2016, ready or not! A new year with new opportunities and challenges is right over the horizon.

I gave up making New Year’s resolutions a long time ago, so as to not disappoint myself around the end of January when I would lose the enthusiasm for whatever improvement I had thought would be good to make.

As the curtain goes down on 2015, I am aware of feeling a nudge to make some sort of commitment or plan for something in my life — but I haven’t known what. As often happens when it’s time to write a column, three different things happened today that brought the concept of “seeing with new eyes” to my attention.

“That’s it!” I thought. The answer to my nudge and the subject for my column — seeing with new eyes.

Perhaps the reason so many of us fail in our New Year’s resolutions is because we are trying to make changes while looking at our lives from the same perspective, with the same attitude, and same thought process. Not much likelihood for success there.

But by looking at the world and my situation with new eyes — from a different perspective, with a different attitude, and a new thought process — my chances of accomplishing whatever it is I am trying to do are much greater.

I’ve always liked the word “intention.” Somehow, saying “I intend to,” is kinder and gentler than, “I have to” or “I need to” or “I should.” Intention is more about allowing myself to choose to do something, whereas those other words are more like a command or order to do something, and I have a tendency to disregard orders.

Good intention is the positive driver behind an act of will, providing the impetus to move in a particular direction. “Should,” “ought,” and “have to” are more about coercion and

being guilt-driven. Being fully aware of my genuine intentions allows me to take responsibility for the consequences of my actions. I can’t blame anyone else if something goes awry.

I found a simple but effective technique for contemplating and discerning my genuine intentions, developed by Linda Curran. It has three parts: a guided imagery script, a follow-up worksheet, and an embodied commitment.

The process involves examining my values and successes, and then with compassion, understanding, and forgiveness for myself, considering how I might do a better job of living out my personal values.

What brings meaning to my life? What is my true purpose? How can I better fulfill that purpose? After considering those questions, there is a worksheet to fill out to help identify my intentions. I then pick one, perhaps the easiest to accomplish. Think about the opposite of the intention, or what might stand in the way. Carefully evaluate the obstacle and then choose to act despite there being an obstacle. It’s kind of like, being forewarned is forearmed so I won’t be easily derailed. I will also consider how much others and I might benefit if my intentions were realized.

There are several other steps that follow and when I am sure that my intentions are sound, I make the decision on what first step I will take.

I am looking forward to approaching the new year with my new eyes. I have been feeling pretty stuck the last six months and now I think I have found a way to be re-energized. I’m excited to do the exercise to discern my intentions for the coming year.

The first thing my new eyes have recognized is that it’s not a bad or scary thing that my abilities and desires are naturally changing as I age. I will simply accept the changes as part of life and embrace all the good and positive things I can still do and still enjoy.

Suspect had overcome adversity

By Sally Ho and Ken Ritter
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — It wasn’t long ago that the woman arrested in the deadly Las Vegas Strip sidewalk crash seemed to be doing well for herself. After a rough childhood that included a period of homelessness in high school, Lakeisha Holloway had become an award-winning high school graduate and caring mother.

That recent picture of success deepens the mystery of how the former Oregon woman wound up in a Las Vegas jail and on suicide watch. The 24-year-old Holloway faces murder charges after authorities said she plowed her Oldsmobile down a sidewalk of tourists Sunday night, killing one person and injuring three dozen others while her 3-year-old daughter sat in the back seat of the careening car.

After reviewing video surveillance footage, police said they believe Holloway drove up on the sidewalk deliberately.

They say she was homeless, and out of money, sleeping in her car in parking garages. She might have been on her way to Texas to meet with the father of her daughter after the pair had split up some time ago.

After her arrest, Holloway “described a stressful period today where she was trying to rest/sleep inside her vehicle with her daughter but kept getting run off by security of the properties she stopped at,” a police report states.

“She ended up on the Strip, ‘a place she did not want to be,’” the report quoted her as saying. “She would not explain why she drove onto the sidewalk but remembered a body bouncing off her windshield, breaking it.”

She parked at a casino a

few blocks away from the crash site, told a parking attendant that she had run down people and asked the valet to call 911, Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo said. Her daughter, who was in the backseat, was not hurt.

The sheriff said Holloway was stoic when police arrived, showed no resistance and spoke coherently about what happened.

Authorities declined to comment on a potential motive and said they were struggling to piece together Holloway’s background.

She had changed her name to Paris Paradise Morton in October, according to Oregon court records.

Several years ago, Holloway, a graduate of an alternative high school, received an award for overcoming adversity from the nonprofit Portland Opportunities Industrial Center.

In 2012, she told *The Scanner*, a newspaper that covers Portland’s African-American community, that she was homeless during her freshman year in high school.

Court records show she was charged in Oregon in 2011 with operating a vehicle without driving privileges and driving uninsured. She was convicted in March 2012.

Holloway’s cousin, Lashay Hardaway, told *The Oregonian* that Holloway worked hard to provide for her daughter.

“She’s just always thinking about her daughter or the next thing she needs to take care of,” Hardaway told the newspaper, adding her cousin was a working mother who “makes good money.”

The crash happened in front of the Paris and Planet Hollywood casino-hotels and across from dancing water fountains of the Bellagio hotel-casino. The Miss Universe pageant was being held at Planet Hollywood at the

time of the crash.

People jumped on the car and banged on its windows, but Holloway didn’t stop driving on the sidewalk, Lombardo said. The car was fully on the sidewalk twice, including once when it traveled for 200 feet, police said.

There was no evidence that Holloway had consumed alcohol, but a drug recognition expert at the scene determined that she was under the influence of some sort of stimulant, Lombardo said.

Holloway, who was being held without bail, will be charged with murder with a deadly weapon, said Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson, who anticipated “a great number” of additional charges.

Holloway was under suicide watch at jail, said Deputy Clark County Public Defender Scott Coffee said. A Clark County spokesman said the woman’s daughter was being cared for by child protective services.

At least 35 people injured in the crash were taken to hospitals, including three people still in critical condition with head injuries, officials said.

The crash killed Jessica Valenzuela, 32, of Buckeye, Arizona, who was visiting Las Vegas with her husband, according to the Clark County coroner.

Other victims were from Oregon, Florida, Colorado, California, Washington, Mexico, and Quebec, Canada. Five were Canadian citizens, and four were Oregon college students in town to compete in a wrestling tournament.

Justin Cochrane of Santa Barbara, California, said the car appeared to be going 30 to 40 mph when it struck the pedestrians.

“It was just massacring people,” said Cochrane, who was having dinner at a restaurant outside the Paris hotel.

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