

Getting rid of 'The Worries'

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 15 January 2010 14:37 -



“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you shall receive, and it shall come to you.”—Mark 11:23-24

Lighting a candle and confessing to family and friends a wish for 2010 was much more symbolic and satisfying than how and what I might have wished for in past years.

It's probably better I can't remember New Year wishes from chapters I've already lived but can gander a good guess—romance without problems which would mean finding the perfect man or a good grade on a college test when, instead of studying, I had been socializing.

Under a full moon this past New Year's Eve, none of that mattered as we hollowed out a snowdrift where we placed glowing candles.

We also scrawled, on tiny pieces of paper, what we wanted rid of in 2009.

I wrote “Worry” on mine to save me from that irrational pool of fear where I dive faster than you can shriek “Happy New Year.”

It's a place where horrible things happen to both human and furry loved ones, stemming—I believe—from bizarre behavior during my childhood which my parents called “The Worries.”

They still remember how I would awaken, dress in the middle of the night and sit in a rocking chair, immobilized by fear I would be late for school.

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Another night I remember watching gangrene set into my arm after someone earlier used that limb to demonstrate how a tourniquet stopped blood flow.

A week without sleep was the result of a spot on my tongue I convinced myself was cancer.

Last New Year's Eve, I realized "The Worries" never left. Instead, they burrowed somewhere deep inside only to bubble up at times throughout my life.

While thousands watched a silver ball drop in Times Square, I touched "The Worries" to flame and watched the white paper turn into black ash that sunk in the snow.

In Sister Karol's Book of Spells and Blessings, author and nun Karol Jackowski writes that what happens in the presence of God has everything to do with our being transformed and changed in some way, with our becoming more capable of living life differently—maybe kinder, more generous, braver, less angry, funnier.

Whether we wish upon a falling star or in the darkness of our homes or under the light of a full moon, something happens to us through the power of that prayer.

It may not become real immediately, Jackowski says, but if we believe, it will be granted in one form or the other.

I know that a "Worry-free" life is nearly impossible.

But I'll settle for "Worry" with a small "w" in 2010 and beyond, a wish buoyed through the universe on the wings of hopeful prayer.