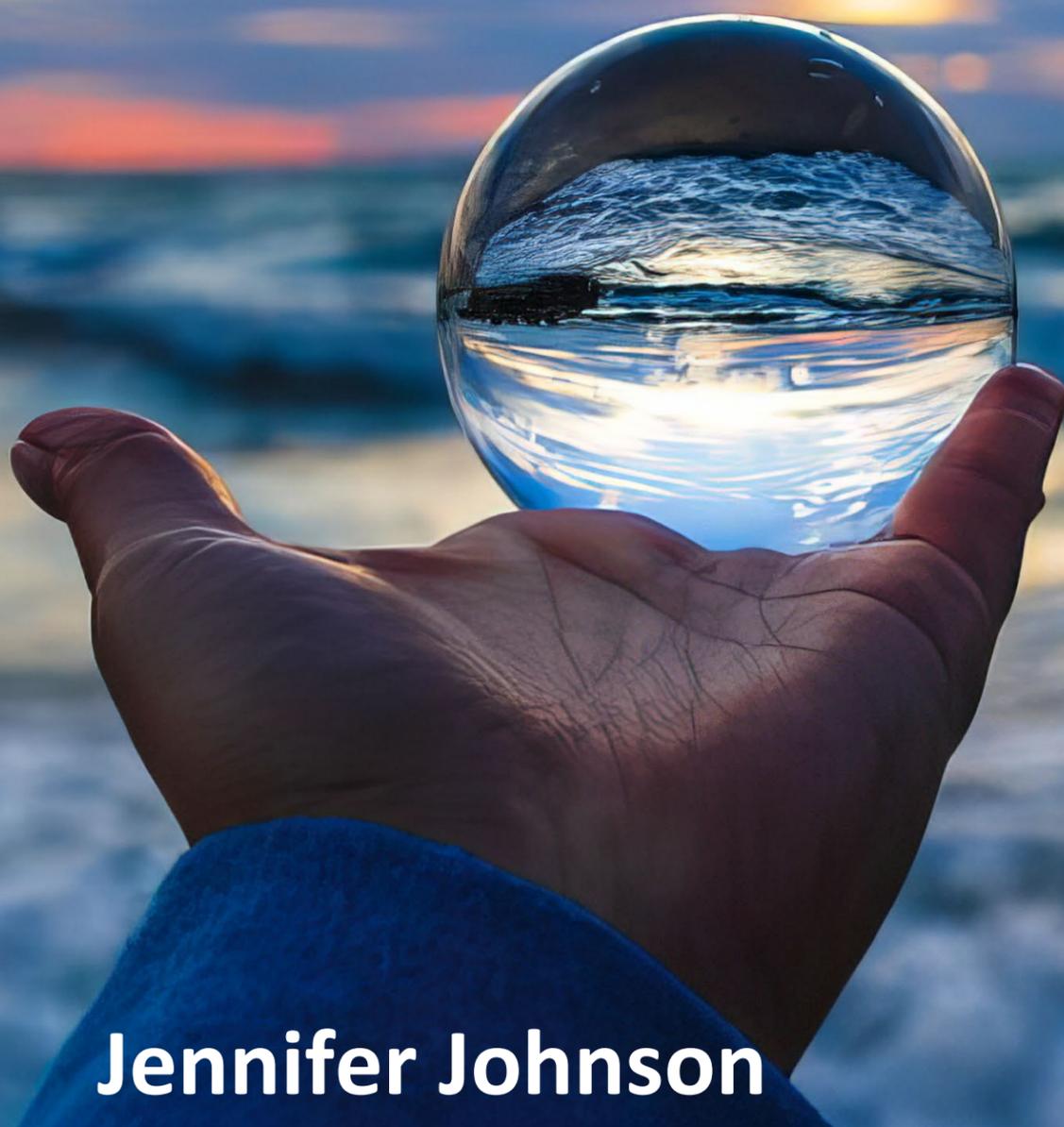


**WINTER 2026**

# **LEGACY**

**TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION**

**From Resolutions to Revolution: Creating Your Best Year Yet with Your Inner Captain and Poet**



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**The Worthy Educator**

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## From Resolutions to Revolution: Creating Your Best Year Yet with Your Inner Captain and Poet

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Educators are, by nature, lifelong learners. And when a new year invites a fresh start, one where we grow – not through external expectations and demands – but through inner expansion, we want to ensure we hit those personal learning outcomes. It's not just about what we want to accomplish, but who we want to become as educators and leaders navigating an evolving educational landscape.

In a world marked by change and challenge, the most powerful leadership you can offer is not the leadership bestowed by a title, but the leadership that emerges from within. **The educator who believes they are still becoming, still evolving, still learning is the essence of the lifelong learner. And perhaps this is the greatest thing we can model for students in a complex world.**

In the context of the Captain and Poet, lifelong learning isn't a commitment to mastering more content or skills. It's a commitment to yourself. To your ongoing growth, self-awareness, and agency. To your willingness to meet each moment with curiosity, courage, and presence. And it is this inner work – quiet, personal, and deeply human – that has the potential to fuel transformation in our schools.

As you step into 2026, I invite you to engage your inner Captain, your inner Poet, and ultimately, your Leader Within – the integrated self who can ignite transformation from the inside out. They are right there waiting for you!

### **The Captain and the Poet: Your Pathways to Becoming**

Within each of us lives a dynamic partnership: Your Captain leads with action, direction, and courage. Your Poet leads with meaning, imagination, and heart.

Your Captain is the part of you that takes charge. It helps you step forward when things feel uncertain. It organizes, plans, motivates, and perseveres. It thrives on purpose, momentum, and a sense of direction. It constantly stretches you out of your comfort zone to become the next best version of you.

Your Poet is the part of you that holds your vision and values. It feels deeply and finds new and expanding ways to connect



with the world around you. It fuels your imagination and reminds you of the values that led you into this profession. The Poet is where your humanity lives: your compassion, your creativity, your ideals, your intuition.

Together, the Captain and the Poet form a dynamic partnership. The Captain brings your Poet's dreams to life. The Poet guides your Captain's actions. When they're in sync, you feel it – you are energized, focused, connected. And when they're out of balance you feel it, too. The language of Captain and Poet enables us to reorient ourselves toward what is in front of us to see the challenges in front of us as opportunities for self-expression and thriving.

The Captain moves you forward. The Poet helps you understand where you're going and why. Together, they form the architecture of the Leader Within – your most authentic, aligned, and impactful self.

In 2026, these inner guides can help you deepen your lifelong learning journey and shape the transformation you wish to see in yourself, in your school and in your community. The only resolution they prescribe is a more energized version of you.

But first, let's examine why resolutions don't work and how the Captain and Poet can help with that!



## Why Resolutions Don't Work (and What Does)

Every January, many of us set resolutions with the hope that a new year will inspire new habits, or at least new motivation. But traditional resolutions rarely lead to lasting change. In fact, research shows that most resolutions fade within weeks, not because we lack willpower, but because resolutions are simply *not designed* for how humans grow.

Resolutions focus on OUTCOMES, not IDENTITY. They tell us what we should *do*, but not who we are becoming. They tend to be too big, vague, or unrealistic. And they often emerge from pressure – comparison, guilt, or a sense of “not enough” – rather than from purpose or alignment.

Most importantly, resolutions ask for rigid consistency in a world that is dynamic and unpredictable. They offer no room for recalibration, reflection, or self-compassion – traits that are essential for authentic growth, especially in a profession as emotionally demanding as education.

*“Resolutions are often Captain-only: task-oriented, ambitious, externally focused. But lasting transformation requires the Poet, too—meaning, intuition, imagination, emotional courage.”*



When we engage only one part of ourselves, our efforts become imbalanced and unsustainable. But when the Captain and Poet work in partnership, something deeper emerges: the *Leader Within* – our integrated, grounded, and resilient self who can initiate meaningful change from a place of alignment rather than obligation.

This is why, instead of setting traditional resolutions in 2026, we are inviting you to set **INTENTIONS** – to cultivate inner guidelines that help us grow from the inside out. Change that begins within is change that lasts. It is more human, authentic, and sustainable. It honors who we are and who we are becoming. Instead of drawing from extrinsic motivators like pressure, it draws from intrinsic motivators like possibility.

Let's explore the biggest reasons resolutions tend to fall flat:

### *They Focus on Outcomes, Not Identity*

Most resolutions sound like this:

- “I will...”
- “I should...”
- “I need to...”

But lasting change doesn't come from behavior alone. It comes from **identity shifts**. People don't stick with “I will exercise more.” They stick with “I am someone who prioritizes my wellbeing.” When resolutions don't connect to who we *are becoming*, we relate to them as external demands rather than internal commitments.

- It is the interplay between Captain and Poet that forms our identity. As Dr. Jean Clinton says, “the doing follows the being.”

### *They're Usually Built on Pressure, Not Purpose*

Many resolutions come from a sense of not being enough. But pressure creates resistance. Purpose creates momentum. Without a deep “why,” a resolution has no anchor.

- As Elias from our [youth documentary](#) captures, “If I’m a car, my Poet is the gas. It’s the fuel that drives my passions. It’s the fuel that actually keeps me going internally. It’s not the thing that you see every day, but it is the thing that you constantly need. It’s the thing that you constantly need to add to keep going.”

### *They're Too Big, Too Vague, or Too Unrealistic*

Resolutions like “be healthier,” “be more patient,” or “get organized” aren’t goals—they’re *wishes*. Without clarity, the brain doesn’t know what to do with them. And the more unrealistic they are, the more they trigger self-criticism rather than growth.

- Notice the emphasis on the state you want to achieve and not the action. The Poet represents the *being* side of us but the Captain activates the *doing* side. We need both in balance to show up as our best selves.

### *They Don't Account for the Reality of Being Human*

Sustainable change intersects with:

- messy days
- low-energy seasons
- imperfect effort
- flexibility

We need to have more compassion for ourselves. Enter the Poet. Resolutions tend to be rigid. Humans are not. We can master something one day and fail the next. When we inevitably slip, we interpret it as failure rather than feedback.

- Our Captain and Poet are there to remind us that when we go too far one way or the other, we can come back to centre again and balance the two. None of us will truly master any one skill in our lives. We are human.

### *They Don't Integrate Reflection and Evolution*

A resolution is static. Life is not. Resolutions rarely invite this ongoing relationship with growth. Change happens when we allow space to:

- check in
- recalibrate
- adjust
- pivot
- respond to what’s happening as we go along

Without the Poet’s input the Captain loses steam.



## They Rely on Willpower Instead of Systems and Support

Willpower is short-lived. Systems are sustainable. Resolutions collapse when:

- routines aren't aligned
- environments don't support the change
- stress overrides intentions

The brain defaults to what's easiest, not what's ideal.

- Here we can lean on the Captain to bring structure and discipline.

## The Bottom Line: Resolutions Aren't Effective Because They're Not Designed for How Humans Grow

Without the Poet – meaning, reflection, imagination, emotional resonance – there is no depth, no internal alignment, no sense of *why this matters*.

We grow through:

- identity shifts
- meaningful purpose
- aligned action
- self-awareness
- curiosity
- self-compassion
- ongoing reflection
- small, consistent steps
- supportive environments
- inner integration of experience

Not through one big annual declaration.



This is why the Captain & Poet lens is so powerful.

Instead of “resolutions,” the Captain and Poet enable us to:

- listen inward
- align purpose with action
- embrace lifelong learning
- evolve who we are
- grow from within
- choose identity over obligation
- integrate heart and courage

This is the kind of change that sticks. Because it's not a resolution. It's an evolution.

A Captain-only resolution burns out quickly. A Captain + Poet intention leads us to transformation.

## Top 10 Lists!

To support your growth this year, here are three “Top Ten Lists” to choose from: one from your Captain, one from your Poet, and one from the integrated *Leader Within* who emerges when they work in harmony. Try using them as a checklist to assess where you are out of balance and where you can take more ground on your learning journey of personal mastery and self-expression in the year ahead.



## Top 10 Resolutions of Your Inner Captain

### 1. Set a Clear North Star

- Choose one defining goal for the year and commit to it wholeheartedly. Measure progress along the way.

### 2. Take Bold, Decisive Action

- Identify where hesitation holds you back and take a step that moves you forward with purpose. It is usually the small ones that are the hardest.

### 3. Strengthen Your Boundaries

- Protect your energy, time, and focus. Say “yes” to things that energize you and “no” where you feel you are compromising your path or diluting your impact by spreading yourself thin. Remember, someone else’s Leader Within may be perfect for that other initiative. 😊

### 4. Build What Matters Most

- Channel effort into projects and relationships that align with your values and long-term vision.

### 5. Lead with Confidence

- Trust your competence. Let your voice and choices reflect your inner authority.

### 6. Practice Strategic Discipline

- Create routines and systems that support consistency without rigidity. Sometimes your Captain needs to take a detour.

### 7. Speak Truth with Clarity

- Communicate directly and firmly (with a little dose of Poet in their for kindness).

### 8. Move Through Fear

- Fear will only dissipate when you move through it. That’s what your Captain is there for. Draw on what’s in your (Poet’s) heart for fuel.

### 9. Strengthen Your Physical Vessel

- Leadership begins with self-leadership. Foster healthy habits that build your strength and resilience when you encounter stormy seas.

### 10. Celebrate Small Achievements Boldly

- Give yourself a gold star on the little things. Acknowledge what you accomplish as you go to stay grounded in your mission. Live from inspired action as you choose the actions and activities that move you forward amidst the noise.



## Top 10 Resolutions of Your Inner Poet

### 1. Make Room for Wonder

- It's the start of a new year. Pay attention to what sparks awe in you and let it round out your days.

### 2. Listen to Your Inner Voice

- Prioritize intuitive knowing. Let quiet truth guide your choices. We never regret those decisions. Also, the truth doesn't need to be spoken loudly to resonate.

### 3. Entertain Your Emotions

- Feel what arises without judgement instead of pushing it aside (the formula for burnout). Emotions are energy in motion. What is surfacing (especially if it is a repeated emotion) is often a clue to your next learning edge. What action do you need to take? What needs to change?

### 4. Nurture Soulful Connections

- Invest in relationships that invite depth, meaning, and presence and reflect the things you love most about yourself.

### 5. Cultivate Stillness and Reflection

- Allow pauses. Let rest, beauty, and attention become sacred practices – even if it's just on your daily commute! Make time for journaling, meditation, or quiet observation.

### 6. Express Yourself Authentically

- Write, speak, dress, move, or create in ways that reflect your inner landscape and who you want to become. It's the new "dress for success".

### 7. Practice Compassion – for Self and Others

- Choose gentleness. Soften criticism. Offer yourself and others grace. We are all on a learning journey.

### 8. Tap into the Vision you have for our World

- Create a vision board for yourself and find ways to share your vision with others. If we can imagine it, it's possible and when we share it it becomes more real.

### 9. Honor Your Sensitivity as Strength

- See your attunement as wisdom, not fragility. See your overwhelm as a thwarted desire to be an active agent in change. See your deep feeling as an inner knowing that we have the ability to create a better world and that it's already in us.

### 10. Celebrate Your Becoming with Grace

- Recognize your growth in subtle shifts, changes in mindsets, and deepening of conviction – not just big changes. Acknowledge yourself the way you do your students to validate and empower them. Find opportunities, and the emotional courage, to be seen more.



## Top 10 Resolutions of Your Leader Within

The *Leader Within* is the powerful, aligned expression of both archetypes – your inner compass for 2026.

### 1. Live From Inner Alignment

- Before acting, pause long enough to check: *Is this true to who I am?* Let your choices arise from inner coherence, not external pressure.

### 2. Lead With Presence, Not Performance

- Show up as your authentic self. Presence inspires trust more deeply than perfection ever could.

### 3. Honor Both Decisiveness and Discernment

- Make decisions from both logic and intuition. And when the answers aren't outside of you, go within to get anchored in what matters.

### 4. Cultivate Emotional Intelligence as a Daily Practice

- Notice your emotions. Name them to tame them. See them as clues and learn from them. Respond rather than react, and let empathy inform your leadership.

### 5. Move With Courage, Even When the Path Isn't Fully Lit

- You don't need the entire map, just the next step. Lean in and the path will get clearer because you are creating it.

### 6. Build Relationships Rooted in Respect and Reciprocity

- Lead in ways that promote others' strengths. Make it a priority to make people feel seen. Then watch the magic happen.

### 7. Hold Boundaries as Acts of Integrity

- Boundaries aren't walls, they are clarity. Lead with a strong yes and an honest no.

### 8. Integrate Reflection and Action

- The *Leader Within* learns, adjusts, and evolves in an iterative way. You don't have to have all the answers before exploring what is possible.

### 9. Replace Burnout with Regeneration

- The burnout cycle is predictable. Your Captain and Poet are out of synch in these situations. Instead, keep your inner flame alive. Notice what you are engaging in that is NOT energizing you. Be selfish to have the most impact. Protect the energy that fuels your vision.

### 10. Lead and Live from Purpose

- When you operate from your *Leader Within* and share your gifts with the world you will be naturally fulfilling your purpose. View the challenges in front of you as happening “for you and not to you” to refine and hone who you are becoming. Leadership is not just your role or what you achieve or even where you fail – it's who you become along the way.

*“Most of all, be inspired by all you have to offer the world. 2026 has the potential to be a year of new beginnings, planting seeds, and reinventing yourself in authentic ways. Here’s to a year of learning, becoming, and igniting transformation from within!”*



*Jennifer Johnson is the CEO and Co-Founder of Captains & Poets. As a parent, former educator, entrepreneur, and passionate change-maker, Jennifer is on a mission to empower young people, and the adults who serve them, to be their best selves. She holds an M.A. in Education in Curriculum, Teaching, and Organizational Learning from OISE, is a seasoned leader in both education and the corporate world, a former Board Member of Resilient Kids Canada, a CTI-trained coach, and holds a leadership certificate from Harvard Business School. As a parent of two, Jennifer is committed to nurturing self-leadership skills and the ability to navigate an increasingly dynamic world with authenticity, compassion, and resilience. A proud hockey mom, she is also invested in fostering positive cultures in sports for athletes, coaches, and parents—creating environments that promote Positive Youth Development in challenging times.*  

Legacy is the official journal of The Worthy Educator, elevating the good work being done by leaders in education who are working to change the narrative on the profession and actively plan for impact that transforms its future to serve the needs of a diverse, decentralized, global society that is inclusive, equitable and open to all people as next generations adapt, evolve and contribute by solving problems and creating solutions that meet the needs of a world we have yet to envision.

Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis from educators who are implementing new and innovative approaches in the classroom and at the building and district levels. Information on specifications and instructions to submit can be found online at [theworthyeducator.com/journal](http://theworthyeducator.com/journal).