IT’S THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING

By Linda Hawes Clever, MD

Born 21 years ago with staunch and thoughtful help, RENEW’s vision is to start a movement to help people gain or regain vitality and purpose. We want to strengthen individuals and, therefore, families, neighborhoods, organizations, professions. We want to go beyond “work” and “balance.” We adopted the goal that we all should have whole, healthy, fulfilled lives.

Early on, we established principles that would support our goal. Not surprisingly, the first principles emphasized the importance of values, those fundamentals by which we gauge good and bad, right and wrong. A RENEW friend, David Hill, polished the underlying principles. They are worth reviewing; they have aged well.

- Renewing begins by affirming values. Values define meaning in life and motivate action.
- Gaps between values and behavior are sources of depletion and signal that it’s time to renew.
- When people renew, they enhance the vitality of their work, families, friendships and communities.
- When people weave renewing into their daily lives, they gain resilience and add to their capacity to change and grow.
- Renewing is best done in good company. Conversations, sharing stories, encouraging and validating one another are powerful catalysts for positive change and growth.
- Renewing allows people to discover that they already possess many of the answers and much of the wisdom they seek.
- Renewing also allows people to discover that while they can’t always control their circumstances, they can choose their attitudes and responses.
- Renewing gives people greater access to the sizeable reservoirs of talent, courage and creativity that are within them.
- One’s sense of humor is a sensitive barometer. The more people are able to see the humor in life and to laugh at themselves, the less they need to renew. And vice versa.
- Rest, reflection, risk-taking, learning and exercise are essential ingredients of renewing.
- Speaking, writing and artistic expressions clarify values and make it easier to be true to them.

The Crew at StoryPeople recently posted this on its website. “There are times I think I’m doing things on principle, but mostly I just do what feels good—but that’s a principle, too.”

That’s the deal: aligning your values with feeling good and doing good. That’s the principle that matters most.
We say farewell and thank you to Lisa Hall, who has worked for RENEW for nearly three years. Lisa is looking forward to spending time with her darling new grandson, Axel Anthony, volunteering closer to home (near Fresno) and traveling. Many thanks to Lisa for her patience, astute instincts, and hard and sustained work in behalf of RENEW.

And hello and welcome to Caroline Caufield, RENEW’s new Program Manager. Caroline has spent her career working in health care, starting off in Public Health, and later leading program/product development teams, launching health care service and health care technology solutions. More recently she has been consulting with non-profits on a variety of management issues. She received a BS in Nutritional Science from UC Davis, a MPH from UCLA and a MBA from Stanford. After living in San Francisco for more than 20 years, she has fled to the sunny Peninsula, where she enjoys hiking.