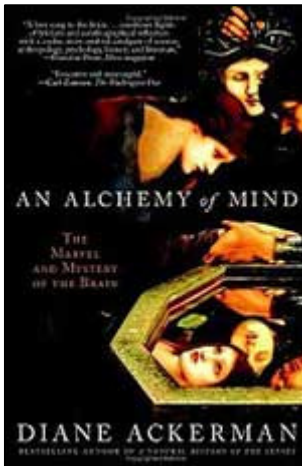


Readin' & Writin' with Lauraine- January 2011



Today I am in shock. 2010 is really gone and we are now in 2011, or as I wrote on the checks today, 1-1-11.

Yes, I understand that New Years comes after Christmas, but then I wasn't ready for Christmas either. Interesting how things keep on going, whether you are ready for them or not.

One of my goals for last year was to meet deadlines and although I have been fairly successful, I plan to keep working on it this year, too. But what other goals are waiting for my attention?

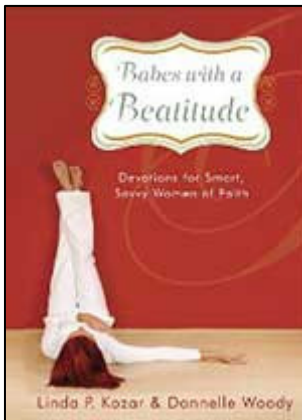
On January 1, I always write out the goals for all areas of my life. Not just business goals or financial goals, but areas like health, my spiritual life, and my relationships. Obviously setting goals is not to be taken lightly.

One of my goals is to continue learning. I've reviewed books by Diane Ackerman before. She is a naturalist, who writes for *The New Yorker*, *National Geographic* and other high powered magazines and is the author of many books, my favorite being *Moon by Whale Light*. I am now reading her *An Alchemy of Mind*, about the human brain. I've heard it said that the brain is the big frontier and that our brain is so complex that no one knows what still lies ahead.

Ackerman has the gift of taking something complex and writing about it in such a way that readers not only grow in their understanding, but enjoy the reading, too. But, I can

never just sit down and read one of her books straight through; my mind isn't able to concentrate for that long. Besides, I need time to think about what she has to say and to understand the terms she uses. The question of why do people do things the way they do has confused scientists and medical professionals since the beginning of time and Diane offers us a possible answer.

One endorser calls *An Alchemy of Mind*, "a love song to the brain." I wholeheartedly agree. Weaving in history, literature, art, scientific studies, anthropology, and many other 'ologies', Diane leaves me with a feeling of awe and gratitude for this brain I have. One of my goals is to learn to use mine more dynamically. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have and pick up more of her books at your favorite bookstore.



A friend of mine recommended *Babes with a Beatitude* to me, its title grabbing my attention immediately. I actually met one of the authors at a writer's meeting. Linda P. Kozar is not only an author but hosts a radio program. She collaborated with Dannelle Woody, another writer and friend of hers, and together they came up with the sub title, "Devotions for smart, savvy women of faith."

Before I even left the bookstore, I flipped through the book with its bright red cover. Some places made me laugh, others made me blink back tears, and others made me go beyond thinking to pondering. With a one-page devotion for each day of the year, it's a good way to get yourself going in the morning or a fine topic to think on just before going to sleep.

Each page is titled, includes a Bible verse along with an anecdote to provoke thought, and ends with a beatitude check at the bottom. *Babes with a Beatitude* will make a great gift for someone, or better yet, for yourself.

Together these two books will help me on my journey from my goal setting to goal getting. I hope this helps your New Year be happier and more successful.

Now I'm off to continue to writing my newest novel, titled *Valley of Dreams*.

Until next time,

Happy readin' & writin' from Lauraine