

# Create Your Personal “Year In Review”

By Brian Jud

As we reflect on our actions during the past year, there are some things we probably did well and some not so well. If we analyze the “why” behind each, we can increase the likelihood of our success next year by doing more of what worked and changing the things that did not work.

An important first step is to take ownership of what happened – good and not-so-good. Our actions either created a successful conclusion, or not. If we do some self-analysis, we are less likely to make the same mistakes and more able to apply what we’ve learned going forward.

Seize this opportunity to rewind and reflect on the last 12 months to identify what worked and what didn’t. Then look ahead to apply those lessons. Here are some ideas to get your own “year in review” started:

## 1. Take some time to contemplate

At this time of year, we are frantically trying to take last-minute actions to reach our annual goals. It may seem counterintuitive, but slowing down often helps us speed up, and zooming out gives us the perspective that can propel us forward. When we identify what we have done well, we can apply our strengths even more in the future. When we spot the mistakes we’ve made, we learn from them rather than repeat them. Take a few minutes to meditate on your previous actions.

**Action:** Ask yourself these questions and write down the answers:

1. When have I learned the most this year?
2. What do I feel most proud of?
3. Who has helped me be at my best?
4. How have my strengths helped me succeed?
5. What is one weakness I need to correct?
6. What is one thing I wish I had done differently?

## 2. Get feedback from others

Our friends and peers often have insights that we can’t spot for ourselves. Ask a trusted colleague for feedback. These conversations work best when there is a high level of trust between both people in the discussion, with both parties listening to and learning from each other.

**Action:** Schedule time for you and your feedback partner to answer the following questions together.

- What three words would you use to describe the last year?

- What have you found most fulfilling — and most frustrating — over the last 12 months?
- When do you think you have been at your best this year?
- What negative beliefs have gotten in your way?

### 3. Visualize the “new you”

After evaluating your past, turn your new-found awareness into useful action for the future. Unrealistic resolutions or “to-do lists” become demotivating over time. Visualizing how you want to be helps you be specific about your commitment to your development.

**Action:** Focus on what is possible.

Identify the *most important* action you want to take in a few different areas. Use the words “I will” to commit. Write and keep your answers to these questions somewhere you will see them frequently as a regular reminder to act.

- One learning goal I will make progress on in the coming year:
- One habit I will commit to:
- One way I will support someone else:
- One mistake I won’t make again:

While the reality of recapitulation can feel overwhelming at the end of the year, it is the key to doing things differently in the year to come. Taking the time to review your past increases your self-awareness and provides insights to improve, which is perhaps the best gift you can give yourself.

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