

## Reviewing the Year

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There is a saying: “To know where you’re going, you need to know where you’ve been and how you arrived at your present place,” for the simple reason that if you don’t, you are likely to make choices in the future without knowing why, instead of advancing yourself and your life with awareness and deliberation.

If you had set goals at the beginning of the year and have not accomplished them, it’s also a good practice to review why this happened instead of dismissing it and telling yourself to try again next year. They’d only end up on your new list of goals as a convenience, and you’ll be likely to repeat the same habit patterns of not accomplishing them for another year. That’s a sure way to undermine your best intentions.

While you look forward to the New Year, it is important to review how you lived the past year and reap the wisdom from your experiences, whether positive or negative. You could sit down with your calendar or diary and do a month-by-month reflection of what happened, wrap up the year completely, and then move on without bringing any undesirable lingering thoughts or feelings into the next year.

Your reflections could include the following points:

## 1. List your highlights for the year

What achievements, wins, and positive experiences did you accomplish in the past year? Name them specifically and write them down. For example: "I published my book, sold 10,000 copies, and donated 50% of the proceeds to building schools in Africa. Through this initiative I made a lot of new friends (at least 30) and met like-minded people who share my dream."

Some of us are shy about talking about accomplishments, but that's where we derive our confidence to move to the next level. Remember to be specific about them as well.

## 2. Ask yourself what worked for you in 2015

Examine what worked about you and what you did that contributed to your successes. Again, make a specific list. For example: "I found the courage to talk to people and collaborate instead of doing everything on my own. They became a great resource whenever I hit a roadblock. Doing my research and getting a broader sense of what's involved allowed me to take appropriate actions to manifest my ideas into reality."

If you know this, you can repeat your success. Otherwise your success is accidental and you would have no clue how you got here. Whatever you managed to do and therefore earned is yours to keep and you can always bank on and build on it.

## 3. Make a list of your lowlights for the year

Although we like to remember the good times, we also need to acknowledge the bad times. Include any shortfall in results, difficulties and challenges you were unable to overcome, anything that got displaced as a result of your success in an area, and any negative experiences you encountered.

Name them specifically and write them down. For example: "I fell short of my target of selling 15,000 books and raising another \$45,000 because I procrastinated for too long in the beginning and entertained thoughts about giving up. I did not spend as much time with my family as I would have liked to, and I missed important gatherings due to deadlines. I also neglected my health and fell ill more frequently than usual."

Knowing what did not work gives you an opportunity to work on your weaknesses and to put relevant structures in place. These can become goals for the New Year too.

## 4. Return to the dream

Why did you set this goal for yourself in the first place? What did you originally desire to accomplish? What impact was it intended to make? Why was it important? Is it still important to you now? If it is, how does it continue?

For example: “I wanted to share my experiences with others in the most effective way, so that more people can benefit and grow. It’s also my way of thanking my coaches and mentors who believed in me and spent their time to groom me. I wanted this to be more than just about me, and I wanted to do something meaningful that would also make a difference in the world.”

*Dreams are the ‘why’ of our behaviors.* We get our energy and motivation from our dreams. In the running we sometimes forget what we’re running for. It’s easy to say you want to give up when things get tough. But obstacles are a part of life. Returning to the dream gives you a reason to keep going even when you’re faced with a challenge.

## 5. List areas for improvement

What is the gap that still exists between where you are at now and your intended outcome? Are there skills you need to develop? Are there resources you lack and need to acquire? Or are there areas you have neglected that you need to put into a healthy balance?

Make a specific list. For example: “Increase my ability to enroll others into my vision. Set aside two evenings for dinner with the family. Schedule an hour everyday for exercise.” These could become objectives for the New Year too.

## 6. Account for personal learning and growth

What valuable lessons are you taking away from the past year, both positive and negative? How have you grown as a person? How can you apply what you’ve learnt and achieved into your future endeavors?

For example: “I have become more courageous in saying yes to opportunities. I have increased my knowledge about writing and publishing. I’ve learnt to work better with different types of people and manage a team. I feel more confident of facing challenges because I realize they were the times I grew the most.”

## 7. Acknowledge and thank people who matter

Who are the people you need to thank for supporting you in the past year? These important people could include your family, friends, mentors, colleagues, and customers. Let them know how they made a difference for you.

For example: “Thanks for pushing me and not settling for any of my excuses. Your criticisms helped me improve and excel in this. Thanks for being there when I needed someone to turn to.”

## 8. Acknowledge yourself

Give yourself credit when it's due. What can you acknowledge yourself for that you can be proud of? For example: "I acknowledge myself for my perseverance and stepping out of my comfort zone to explore new things, and for not giving up even though it was a struggle at times."

## 9. Celebrate!

With or without other people, take time out to give yourself a treat, or a reward for your efforts over the past year. Indulge in your favorite food, a relaxing massage, a beach holiday, or whatever you love. Recharge and get ready for the New Year!