

Reflecting on Past Accomplishments and Setting Goals for the New Year

Objective

To reflect on the past year and set goals for the new year.

What to Know

As the year comes to an end, the start of a new year is a great time for self-reflection. You can review what went well, identify how you can make improvements, and discover ways you can achieve your fullest potential in the upcoming year.

Here are tips to help you reflect on the past year and start the new year with positivity and motivation.

1. Journal. Writing is therapeutic because it helps you:

- understand yourself
- release emotions
- organize your thoughts
- prioritize problems
- set and achieve goals
- record ideas on-the-go
- relieve stress
- self-reflect
- enhance your memory
- build creativity

Here are some questions you can answer in a journal or notebook.

⇒ What are you proud of in the past year?

⇒ What went well?

⇒ What didn't go well?

⇒ What lessons can you learn from what didn't go as planned?

⇒ What was the overarching lesson in the last year?

⇒ Where do you want to go from here? (*set S.M.A.R.T. goals using this question – remember to be specific!*)

Tip: Review your camera roll or social media posts to help you answer these questions. You will be reminded of the wonderful times that perhaps you forgot.

2. Create a gratitude list. Research has shown that having an attitude of gratitude is one of the best things you can do for your mental health. The more you practice gratitude, the easier it becomes to appreciate the things in your life.

3. Create an accomplishments list. You can refer to this list when you are upset to increase motivation by accessing a different perspective that your present self cannot see.

4. Acknowledge and release the bad. While you want to focus on your accomplishments, you cannot completely ignore what was disappointing or negative.

5. Meditate. Once you complete the above four steps, clear your mind to make room for the new. Find a peaceful spot to sit and close your eyes. Focus on your breath. Practice inhaling for the count of four and exhaling for the count of four. If your thoughts wander, bring them back to your breath. You might want to make this a daily practice in the new year.

6. Gift yourself. Take small opportunities to celebrate yourself and your accomplishments. Perhaps you will schedule a massage or take yourself out for dinner. Do not skip this step! It is important to celebrate *you*.

7. Set goals. What do you want to accomplish during the upcoming year? Set some S.M.A.R.T. goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-oriented). For each goal, be sure to include each of these elements.

8. Make a plan. Schedule the required steps to achieve each goal in your calendar. Small, incremental steps will get you to where you want to be.

9. Choose three words for the New Year. These meaningful words should resonate with you. Choose three words and carry them with you going forward. Some examples:

- Optimistic
- Joyful
- Ambitious
- Creative
- Expansive
- Confident
- Healthy
- Happy
- Adventurous

10. Choose three traits you want to embody in the New Year. Write down three traits you need to become the person who embodies the three words you chose above.

This worksheet will help you reflect on the past year and start the New Year off right by completing the ten activities above.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions in a journal or notebook. Set aside an hour so you can thoroughly answer each question.

- ⇒ What are you proud of in the past year?
- ⇒ What went well?
- ⇒ What didn't?
- ⇒ What lessons can you learn from what didn't go as planned?
- ⇒ What was the overarching lesson in the last year?
- ⇒ Where do you want to go from here?

What are some other questions you can include?

Write down everything you are grateful for that happened or existed in the past year and why. Dig deep and include the reasoning behind each item on the list. Feel the appreciation deep within you.

Now, create your accomplishments list. What are you proud of in your life? What can you say you have done that no one else has?

Make a list of everything disappointing or not-so-positive that happened in the past year.

Tip: Copy the above list and throw it away or set it on fire (in a safe and responsible way).

Now, take some time to meditate. You might only do it for a few minutes. That is OK! Write about your experience below.

How can you celebrate yourself? Write down some ideas, and schedule them in your calendar.

Write down your S.M.A.R.T. goals for the new year.

What are you going to do to take steps toward your goals? What habits will you perform regularly? Be specific.

What are your three words for the new year?

Write down the three key traits you want to embody.

What do these traits mean to you?

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
