

2024

Annual Review System

**A 3-STEP SYSTEM TO HELP YOU REFLECT ON THE PAST YEAR
AND SET GOALS TO MAKE YOUR LIFE BETTER.**

GOALS

One of the most important things I do every year is my annual review and goal-setting for the new year. This exercise always provides new insights and the occasional surprise. It helps me make positive changes that endure and compound, which means it is incredibly valuable if done well. There are three main reasons for carrying out this exercise:

- It is a powerful way of reminding us of our achievements and things to be grateful for.
- It gives us the time and space to take a step back to reflect. To ask and answer the big questions.
- The goals that come out of the exercise help to provide us with guidance and purpose.

There are three stages

- I. REFLECT
- II. PLAN
- III. EXECUTE

"A year from now you may wish you had started today."

- Karen Lamb

I. REFLECT

December, or the start of each new year, is typically the time to review the progress made on our goals. This regular post-mortem is a powerful learning exercise that provides feedback to help us benefit from understanding what went well, didn't go well, or was a surprise.

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards."

- Soren Kierkegaard

But don't just limit yourself to reviewing progress versus goals. The reflect stage is the time to ask yourself questions such as:

What did I learn this year, and how could I use this in the year ahead?

What new things did I discover this year?

What did I try but have yet to succeed at this year?

What am I assuming that is preventing me from moving forward?

If this was easy, what would it look like?

If I keep working this way, what will my career and life look like in five years' time?

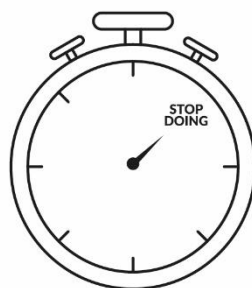
The reflect stage is also the time to carry out The Prior Year Review (PYR). It is a post-mortem exercise to help us review how we spent our time in the past year. The exercise helps to identify the top 20% and bottom 20% of things we do. These tasks, experiences, and relationships energise or, conversely, drain our energy. I aim to schedule more of the top 20% and ruthlessly prune the bottom 20% so they don't reappear in my schedule. We increase our effectiveness and chances for upside in the year ahead by identifying things to do more of and to stop doing.

Start with a notepad or a spreadsheet and create two columns:

| Week | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| | | |

For each week in your calendar from the last year, record the things such as people, activities or commitments that triggered positive or negative experiences during that week. Put each of them in your respective columns.

- Once complete, using the Pareto principle's power, what 20% of each column produced the most reliable or most potent peaks?
- Aim to do more of the 20% of things you highlighted in the POSITIVE column.
- The 20% you have identified in the NEGATIVE column should immediately go into your stop-doing list. These are the things that drain your energy and motivation.



II. PLAN

What is the difference between values and goals? Values are desired qualities of ongoing action. Values can never be completed or ticked off the list as "done". You can think of values as a compass - you use them to set direction and help you stay on track during the journey. But looking at a compass won't give you a journey. The journey only starts when you take action - hence the goals.

Your goals make up your plan for the year ahead. Write your goals down and put them somewhere you can see them.

But watch out for two common mistakes people make when setting goals:

First, there is a reason why New Year's resolutions make poor goals, as more often than not, they quickly fail. Whereas goals that acknowledge:

- What actions am I taking that may prevent my goals from being realised?
- What competing commitments do I have?
- What am I assuming to be true that is limiting me?

Stand a better chance of becoming robust commitments. Ask yourself these three questions as you refine and record your goals.

Second, a pervasive challenge when setting goals is to focus on development goals and inputs rather than output-focused ones. Output-focused goals are rarely something we control, and by judging ourselves based on outcomes, we can lose track of the things that get us the best results. Setting the goal of being promoted is an example of this. This can be a vicious circle. By focusing our energy on the outcomes, we can end up getting worse ones. Instead, we should focus on the development and growth required to get there.

| Goal | Why are you doing this? | What issues do you foresee? | Whom will you need to collaborate with to achieve it? | What resources do you need? | How will you know that you have achieved the goal? |
|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | |
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| | | | | | |

III. EXECUTE

Having goals is a core element of being coached. Coaching and goals are about creating change and accountability. Monitor your progress throughout the year against your goals. I recommend doing reviews at least quarterly. It doesn't take too much time to complete.

"It is only process that saves us from the poverty of our intentions."

- Elizabeth King

I encourage you to challenge yourself if you are achieving your goals early, as often it makes sense to refine existing goals or to add new ones.

Alternatively, we need to be flexible and adapt as the world changes around us. Things often don't work out as we plan. And time frames are rarely what we hope for or expect – the same can be true for our goals. Don't be afraid to refine your original goals, as now may not be the best time for some of them.

Lastly, be [consistent](#), as goals take time and sustained effort to complete.

COACHING CONTEMPLATIONS NEWSLETTER

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