

Make 2021 Your Best Year Yet!

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January 1, 2021

Without question, 2020 was a year for the books. While it shook us out of our typical routines and presented challenges for everyone worldwide, it also showed us just how important health, family, and community are. It reminded us that we are never guaranteed anything in life, and that we ought to make the most of every single day.

Looking ahead to 2021, there's a new sunrise on the horizon. We've been given another chance to work, plan, do, and achieve — how do you plan to use this opportunity?

Set the intention to make this year better than the last, and next year even better than this one. There is one valued practice that can set you up for success, allowing you to continuously outdo yourself and reach your desired goals: ***annual planning with intention***.

Annual Planning with Intention

Annual planning is an extensive practice that guides you through a review of the previous year and allows you to create a vision for the year to come. In order to create a mindful and purpose-driven blueprint for the next twelve months, you must act with intention and specificity. Here are some steps to help guide you in your annual planning exercise.

Step 1: Reflection and Review

Take every aspect of your life and business into account during the reflection and review step, from personal fulfillment to career and life purpose. Kick-off your review by answering these prompts:

1. How would you **rate your year** in each of these eight categories: health, finance, relationships, personal development, career/business, recreation, environment, and service?
2. List five **small, everyday things that brought you joy** and energy.
3. List **2-3 main lessons** that you've learned.
4. **What did you love** about your year? / **What disappointed you** about the year?
5. **Name your year** (ex: The Year of Growth, The Year of Agility).

Step 2: Vision and Goals

With clearer insight into the past year, shift gears into a futuristic mindset and develop your vision for the upcoming year. To stay on track, start with a guiding theme, and name the theme with a noun, like *balance, family, creativity, growth, or prosperity*.

From the theme, create a vision. Go to a quiet place, close your eyes, and visualize yourself a year from now. How do you feel? What matters most to you? Whom are you surrounded by? What goals have you reached?

After sitting with this for a moment, open your eyes and list realistic but exciting goals in the eight categories mentioned above (health, finance, relationships, personal development, career/business, recreation, environment, and service).

Step 3: Action Plan (AKA Systems)

Armed with a written reflection of days past and an actionable list of goals for what's to come, you're ready to create your action plan to get you there. An action plan consists of small tasks or systems that you can work through to reach your goals on the other side.

Get down to the nitty-gritty by following these steps:

1. **Choose an area of focus.** You could create a plan for each of the eight categories or group them into related areas of focus.
2. **Write down the goal(s),** choosing your verbiage carefully. Any good goal will be both specific and measurable.
3. **Note your why** for each goal to connect with the reason this goal is essential.
4. **Make a list of supporting actions** that you'll need to perform in order to accomplish each goal. List them in order, when possible. This creates a roadmap from point A (current) to point B (goal achieved).
5. **Set a timeline for each goal.** If you're being specific enough with your actions, this shouldn't be a challenge.
6. **Determine a reward for each goal.** Celebrate all wins, even the small ones. You will have worked hard to get to the end, give it the attention it deserves.

Final Thoughts

It's entirely possible to make 2021 your best year yet.

If you want it, create the framework for it, and make progress every day toward it, you can reach that big goal – or three, or four. Take all of the disappointments, lessons, and wins of 2020, and use them as the fuel you need to make 2021 *your* year. You won't regret it.

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