

evaluate
last year
ROCK NEXT

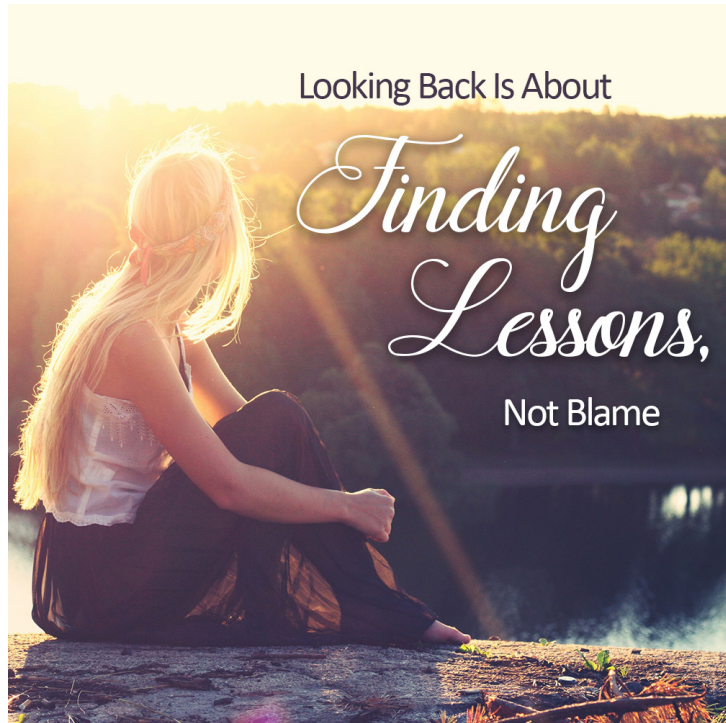


Get Ready To Evaluate the Last Year

Before you move forward with new goals, it's important to evaluate the last year. You can gain valuable insights that can help you achieve your goals when you pause to reflect. But you have to approach this evaluation of the past 365 days with a special attitude.

This isn't about making harsh judgments or fixating on failed projects. Don't use this time to mentally beat yourself up. You won't gain anything valuable from shaming yourself for past mistakes.

Instead, focus on looking for patterns and trends that impacted your goals. It's best to handle your evaluation as if you were reviewing a friend's year. With the level of detachment this brings, you'll be more open to learning from the process.



Choose the Right Environment

Make sure you begin your evaluation in a quiet, calm environment. If you're trying to evaluate your year in between cooking dinner and helping the kids with homework, your picture of the last year may not be that clear and you may miss important realizations.

When it comes to your evaluation, you'll want to do it in a quiet space. It can be helpful to play soft instrumental music or to turn on a white noise machine. This allows you to get into a relaxed frame of mind.

Limit Interruptions

You may also want to silence your phone and log off of social media. The constant dings from your cell and social sites can be distracting and you may find it difficult to get back on track after an interruption.

It's also important to pick the best time of day to do your review. If you're a morning person, then you may be too exhausted at the end of your day to give your full attention to the year's evaluation. You should try to schedule your review during a time when you feel alert and energized.

Take Your Time

Keep in mind that you can break your review up into smaller chunks of time. You don't have to dedicate five hours out of your day to this project. You can choose to break your sessions up instead. Many people find that one hour sessions are best. It gives you plenty of time to reflect on your year without causing you to feel overwhelmed.



Journal your thoughts.

1. Have you found a quiet environment where you can review your past year?

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2. Have you set aside time for your evaluation when you'll feel energized and alert?

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3. Have you decided to stay detached from your evaluation so you can be open to the lessons you're about to learn?

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Looking Back at What Worked

It's time to look back at your year. Approaching your review with a positive attitude is important because it helps you to see your accomplishments clearly. If you've overwhelmed and don't know where to start your year's review, consider asking yourself these questions.

What saved you time?

You may have saved time by outsourcing certain tasks, like bookkeeping or content creation. Take a look at what you outsourced this past year and how it helped your productivity.

You also might have saved time by developing systems to handle your work more effectively. For example, if you're a coach, you may have moved to an online scheduler that allows clients to book sessions with you during your available hours. This means that instead of scheduling every appointment yourself, you're able to devote your time to more important tasks.

What made the most money?

Examine the different branches of your business and see which ones made you the most money. Did your web design package prove to be a big income generator? Did your new product bring you a flood of new customers?

Knowing which activities are making you money is important. You don't want to invest your New Year into tasks that aren't growing your business.

What created the greatest amount of personal pleasure?

Now it's time to look through the year's projects and evaluate them in a different light. You want to focus on the ones that made you happy.

Ask yourself why you felt happy when you worked on these projects. Did you get to tap into a skill you've always wanted to use? Did you discover a talent you didn't know you had? Whatever your reason why, make sure you write it down so you can remember it later.



What relationships developed that you're excited about and why?

Growing your online community is done one relationship at a time. That's why it can be helpful to review your relationships over the past year.

Did you become friends with another business owner that you might want to partner with later on? Did you hear from several customers that love what you're doing and want to beta test your next project? Make a list of the new relationships you've developed and why they matter to you.

What positive breakthroughs did you make that have impacted your mindset for the better?

As you're evaluating your past year, reflect on your mindset. How is it different now? Did you experience a mindset breakthrough that changed the direction of your life? Did you invest in learning more about mindset and how it affects your business?

Think of your twelve-month review as a great way to dig up your past. You might just find a few golden nuggets that will help you in the coming year.



Journal Your Thoughts

1. Which projects brought you the most personal pleasure?

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2. What relationships have you developed that you're excited about? Why?

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3. What breakthroughs did you make that impacted your mindset for the better?

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Be Honest About What Didn't Work

You've carefully delved into the past year and found the positive moments. You celebrated your wins, embraced your favorite projects, and taken a look at what activities made you a nice profit. But now it's time to step back and discover what didn't work.

During this phase of your New Year evaluation, it's important to remember that you aren't judging yourself. What you're judging are your projects. Just because a project failed that doesn't make you a failure.

What projects flopped in the past year?

Did you try something new this year that didn't work out? Maybe you tried Kindle publishing only to sell ten copies of your e-book. Maybe you launched a project that your community wasn't enthusiastic about.

If a project failed, you need to identify it and consider why it failed. Maybe you didn't spend enough time marketing your new Kindle e-book. Maybe you didn't listen to your community's needs and that's why your project flopped. Acknowledging your failure is the first step to learning from it.

What did you invest time and money into that gave you the least return in profit?

Every project requires energy and attention from you. Are you nurturing projects that are sick and dying? These projects will often give you very little in return for all your effort. It might be that you have a blog that you're still trying to get traffic to after months or even years. It might be that you're still updating your course on web design even though no one's buying it.

You have to examine the projects that are siphoning time and money from your business. Is there another healthier branch of your business that you could invest your time and money into?



What tasks or projects did you find yourself dreading?

Most business owners have at least one or two tasks on their plate that they don't enjoy. Perhaps you hate designing graphics for your blog or you dread coming up with fresh content for your podcast every week. Make a list of tasks that you don't enjoy. Look them over and ask yourself if you can drop or outsource some of these projects.

Are there people in your space that you feel unenthusiastic about?

Not every business partner or client is going to be a good fit for your business. Maybe you originally took on a client because you needed to pay the bills but now you make enough that you don't have to worry about that. Perhaps you've been business partners with another entrepreneur who's now going in a different direction than you are.

No matter the relationship, it's important that you take time to consider why you no longer enjoy working with this person and what you can do about it. It might be time to let that demanding client go so you can embrace one that you're enthusiastic about serving. It might be time to say goodbye to your business partner and find a new one to work with.

Keep in mind that you are more than your ideas. You are a human being on a quest for your dreams. If you approach this part of the evaluation with this in mind, then you'll be able to learn as much from your failures as you have from your successes.



Journal your thoughts on the next page...

Journal Your Thoughts

1. What projects flopped in the past year?

2. What did you invest time and money into that gave you the least return in profit?

3. What tasks or project did you find yourself dreading?

What Were You Hoping For That Didn't Happen?

It's time to think back to the beginning of last year. You were probably reviewing your year and dreaming new dreams. You may have felt hopeful that this would be the year you would finally succeed. You may have been determined to accomplish your goals no matter what.

But no matter how hard you worked, some things just didn't happen. Let's examine why you didn't meet some of your goals and what you can do about that.

What didn't you accomplish?

First, you need to make a list of what you didn't accomplish. Did you set big income goals or plan to travel abroad? Did you want to publish a book or speak live at an event? Were you looking for a new business partnership?

What goals were you enthusiastic about?

Once you have a list of what you didn't accomplish, you need to review the goals that you did accomplish last year. What made some goals stand out for you? Why did you prioritize some goals over others? If you had the year to do over again, would you still choose the same priorities?

Did you really want to accomplish these things?

Before you go any further, you need to look over your list of failed goals. Did you really want to meet that goal or did you add it to your list because you felt pressured to do so? For example, maybe a lot of your friends started a weight loss program and you set a 'lose weight' goal simply because you wanted to be included.

It's important to remember that it's OK to let go of goals that you never wanted in the first place. By releasing these goals, you open more room in your life to pursue the goals that really matter to you.

What contributed to other goals slipping by without your full effort?

After you've reviewed your list and let go of the goals you didn't care about, you should take a long look at why you didn't put your full effort into the remaining goals



that you wanted to accomplish. Were you so overwhelmed that you didn't know where to start? Were you afraid of how accomplishing such a big goal could change your life?

You need to be honest with yourself about why you didn't accomplish these goals. It's easy to dream a big goal and write it down. But it can be tough to break it down into actionable steps. That's where a coach or mentor can help you.

Once you've completed this step, you're ready to come up with fresh dreams for your future.



Journal Your Thoughts

1. What *didn't* you accomplish in the past year?

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2. Why did you set these goals? Did you really want to achieve them?

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3. What contributed to these goals slipping by without your full effort?

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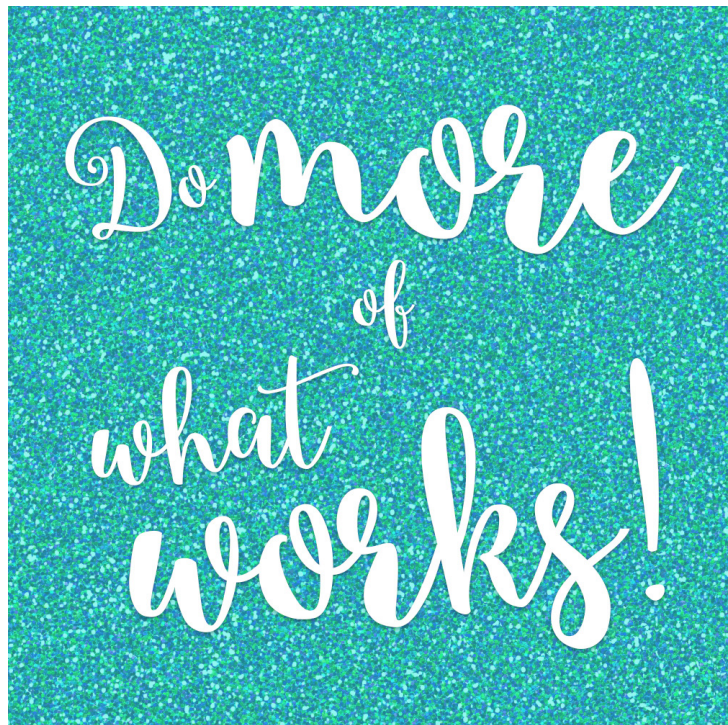
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Create A Framework For A More Awesome New Year

You've spent some time carefully evaluating last year. You've mined the previous year for valuable lessons and paid attention to signs of trouble areas. Now, it's time to tackle your New Year planning.

This is an exciting phase and you may be tempted to set the same goals again. You might tell yourself that this time you'll really do it. Albert Einstein is loosely quoted as saying, Insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results. You need a new plan of attack or you'll experience the same results you did last year.



It can be helpful to build a framework and use it to guide you this year based on what you've learned about yourself during your evaluations.

Do more of what worked.

If you've been following along, then you already have a list of projects that you enjoyed and that worked well for you last year. This year, focus on what you enjoyed about these projects and try to re-create that feeling with new projects. For example, if you discovered that you loved making videos last year, then maybe you'll incorporate more videos into your business. Perhaps you could add videos to an existing course and convert it into a video course.

Do less of what you dreaded.

The projects you work on should light you up. They should make you shine and give you a sense of pride. If you have projects from the last year that you hated, look at ways you can do less of them. Maybe you learned that you don't enjoy offering group coaching because you prefer to offer one-on-one help. You should aim to move away from services and products that aren't enjoyable to you.

Do more of what created profit.

Look at the projects that brought in the most profit for you last year. Usually, these are the projects you enjoyed the most and felt passionate about. You want to fill your New Year with more projects that made you money.

Do less of what sucked time and money.

Sometimes, we work on projects because we think we have to.

It might be that someone told you that the best way to make money online was to do ABC.

It might be that you started offering a certain service because you needed the experience when you were first starting out.

Whatever your reason, you have permission to let go of the projects that suck your time, your money, or your joy.

If you offer a service you're ready to retire, or if you're still offering a course that no longer fits with your business, set an end date. Then let your customers know about this end date. Explain that you won't be offering this course/service/product after your chosen date. Then retire it!



Journal Your Thoughts

1. What goals are you enthusiastic about achieving this year?

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2. What are you going to do differently in your business this year? Why?

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3. Where are you going to be focusing most of your time and energy this year?

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