

Annual “Planning” Day

WORKBOOK

Expanding the Expression of Who You Are in 2020

The Annual “Planning” Day

What we do this time of year matters.

At its best, we use this closing of the year to see ourselves with new eyes, and to meet ourselves with love and compassion and curiosity in the face of all that did or didn’t transpire.

With THAT clarity, how we move into the New Year changes dramatically.
Instead of being jacked up on fantasies of how we are going to be SO MUCH BETTER than before,
we deepen our understanding of who we are and what we bring to the table.

This brings a naturalness to what we decide to do next, a simplicity, an “oh, of course” quality that makes us more sure-footed, more potent when we do show up.

With this clarity, we start to trust that we, and the world, will benefit from our showing up more fully.

We recognize that in the ongoing discovery of who we are as a soul we find the juice we need to bring more of ourselves forward.

So to create a space where you can clear out the deadwood and see yourself and your desires more clearly,

I offer the Annual “Planning” Day. Four hours and a bit to get the clarity and the specificity that allows you to show up more fully, more powerfully, more vibrantly.

Today is designed to take you through a powerful set of exercises and questions to help you pinpoint the details that unlock more of your power so that you show up in the world, on the public stage, deeper, truer, wilder.

Creating yourself. Creating a thriving, profitable, ethical business.

The goal of today is NOT to leave you with a neat and tidy plan, spelling out exactly what you will do when to achieve certain outcomes.

Rather, the goal is to make a bit of a mess. To dig around, to open things up, to stimulate new thinking. To bring new life, new energy, and greater clarity and insight into the stage of your journey called 2021.

During our “Planning” Day, we’ll work on four elements:

- Calling in the Qualities That Will Expand Your Expression in 2021
- Dialing in What You Are Here to Feel and Experience (and What You Want Other to Feel and Experience)
- Laying Claim to the Innovative Wisdom That Is Here to Come Through You
- Choosing Projects to Put Your New Awareness into Practical Action

Seeing Things with New Eyes

The day is designed to give you experiences of what I call Catalytic Recognition.

To sink you more deeply into yourself and jolt you with new clarity about who you are and what you are here to do. To pinpoint where your power and your inspiration come from.

So you feel fierce and focused about what comes next. Clear on what nourishes you. Clear on what matters most. Clear what you’ll devote your love and energy to and clear what you’ll leave behind.

My hope is that you’ll leave today with a new clarity, and with an inner momentum to step out more boldly in the New Year, to allow yourself to be truly seen, to make your voice ring loud and true.

Meeting Ourselves in Our Desires

The New Year can be a tricky time.

It’s a time where we have to stand and face our own yearnings and desires. To choose to either reach for them with all the tenderness and confusion in our hearts or back off and scale down to protect ourselves from disappointment.

That’s why I like to start the New Year by bypassing my rational mind.

When we take more time and thought designing the New Year, instead of leaping into a list of ambitious goals, something changes. We settle more deeply into ourselves and we make wiser choices about where to direct our energy.

Embrace the Blank Canvass

My invitation to you today is to let go of all the ideas you have about what things should look like and let yourself embrace the freedom on the blank canvass.

But just for a moment, before you decide what you are going to do, I want you to consider stepping away from what is familiar, looking at your business and your life, and allowing yourself to consider tuning into guidance that might not be what you expect.

Session One: Calling in the Qualities You Need to Expand Your Expression in the New Year

In this hour, we will call in guidance of what we need this year if we are to show up in the full force and power of our beings. We will use a non-linear process to ask and feel into the direction that will most serve us.

Essence vs. Form

As you go through the exploration in the next few sessions, I want to invite you to make a critical, but undervalued, distinction between Essence and Form.

Essence is what is fundamentally true—true about us, who we are, what we bring to the table. Essence is the stuff that can't be changed even if we wanted to.

Form is the vehicle through which Essence comes forward. Form is our best guess about how we'll bring that Essence into something concrete.

As humans, we aren't always good at predicting what will make us happy, or choosing the best Form to express our Essence in the world.

When we don't see the difference between Essence and Form, we cling tightly to our plans and goals, we worry about measuring up, and we suffer if the Form we chose fails to deliver on its promise.

But if we are clear what is Essence and what is Form, we have a lot more fluidity. We know our first job is to honor what matters most, and in doing so, we become more flexible about Form—more willing for it to change, shift, adapt as we go along. We hold our success or failure more lightly. We are more nimble on our feet.

Traditional goal setting focuses on Form and leaves out Essence. That's why it can be frustrating and disappointing. Or feel empty and unsatisfying.

That's why I want to show you a way to dial in to the Essence of what you want this coming year, before you start to play with what Form that might take.

Before Goals or Intentions: Calling in the Needed Qualities

I truly believe that our success depends less on how we exert our will and impose ourselves on the world, and more on our ability to tune in to what is ours to claim. We can't usually do this with our more rational mind, which is scurrying around with a big list of all the things we could or should do.

Rather than leap straight to goals, or even visions, we are going to begin by sensing our way into the energies that our bodies and spirits are already beginning to align with.

Soul Discovery

In this precious, beautiful, sometimes painful life journey, we anchor ourselves in the clear-eyed recognition of who we are as souls. In the ongoing discovery of what is real and true, beyond the surface and beyond the noise of the world, we tap into a source of energy and excitement that helps us navigate and supports us in taking courageous steps to be seen, heard, and known in this lifetime.

Today, we are going to use a non-logical, right-brain exercise to help us make a “soul discovery” that can help guide us in the coming year.

Please do not do the following exercise in advance of our “Planning” Day. There is a magic to doing this with the group.

1. Word Association

NOTE: We will do this together on our first session. It works best if you DON'T prepare your answers in advance. That said, I have this here so you can review after our first session or if you are going through this at another time.

I am going to ask a question, and your job is to write down the first thing you think of. We'll be using the senses as our guide to calling in the qualities we'll most need to expand our expression this year.

The Question: If there were a _____ that would support me in showing up more fully this coming year, what would it be? (e.g. – “If there were a color that would support me in showing up more fully this coming year, what would it be?”)

Use your answer to fill in the first two columns of the following chart.

If there were a _____ : Your Answer Quality Quality Quality

Color
Flavor
Scent
Texture
Location
Piece of Music

Examples:

- Color: lemon yellow
- Flavor: peppermint
- Scent: hot chocolate
- Texture: corduroy
- Location: public library
- Music: Brandenburg Concerto

2. Qualities

Now, go through each answer and write down three energies or qualities you associate with each of your answers.

There is no right answer, just feel your way into what each thing you chose means to you. These will be adjectives. Don't worry if they make any logical sense.

Example:

- Color: lemon yellow — bright, cheerful, optimistic
- Flavor: peppermint — alive, bracing, tart
- Scent: hot chocolate — comforting, cozy, rich
- Texture: corduroy — solid, strong, comforting
- Location: public library — ordered, strong, light
- Music: Brandenburg Concerto — ordered, lively, soothing

3. Clusters of Qualities

What's neat is that you'll see themes and threads emerging as you look at the energies and qualities you wrote down. In some sense, you'll see a message from yourself to yourself about what energy or quality needs to be developed to have fuller expression.

If you see patterns, cluster the qualities that seem to go together.

Working with the example above, I would see the following trends:

- Comforting/cozy/soothing/rich
- Solid/strong/ordered
- Bright/cheerful/optimistic/light
- Alive/bracing/tart

Notice, in this case, that there is a strong repetition of "comforting", "strong," and "ordered."

These are the Qualities that will help you move into fuller expression, fuller power when you show up in the world this coming year.

4. How Might These Qualities Help Me Expand My Expression This Year?

So, what does this all mean?

What do you do with this information? There isn't a simple answer. But asking and answering that question is what this time is about.

Anything that comes to you as you ask this question is fair game to write down.

If it helps, here are two more specific questions to help you dig in.

How Can I Experience More of These Qualities This Year?

Putting aside for a moment what you "think" you should do this year, imagine your life and work is a blank slate. If nothing were on your plate but the mandate to expand your experience of the qualities you named, or to develop that quality in yourself, where would that lead you? What would you do differently?

Take each cluster, one at a time, and ask yourself, "what do I imagine would deepen my experience of this quality this year?" How would use of this energy or quality support me in more powerful, aligned expression?

So, for example, "What do I imagine would allow me to access more comforting/cozy/soothing/rich qualities this year?"

How Can I Bring More of this Quality to My Year?

If you already know some of the things you are doing this year, you can also ask yourself "how can I bring more of these Energies or qualities to what I already plan to do this year?"

How can I bring more sweetness to my marketing?

How can I bring more depth and richness to my content development?

How can I bring some roughness to my public speaking?

Have fun with these questions but don't take your answers too seriously. Even if you don't generate a single practical idea at this point, just asking these questions should break up your normal patterns of thinking and start planting new ideas for where you might go and how you might approach what's on your plate this year.

5. Themes for the Year

As you play with these questions, you may see some key themes emerging for your year. A theme isn't a goal, in that it's not a specific or measurable outcome. A theme as the intention, the flavor, the guiding principle that you want to align with.

Naming a theme can be a good way to simply hold on to an insight or awareness about what you want to stay close to this year.

Some of my themes over the years have included:

- Feed My Soul
- Trust in Creativity and Inspiration as the Source of My Prosperity
- Trusting in the Power of Me as an Expression of Divine Substance
- Creating Elegant Systems to Deliver Value and Lighten my Heart
- Be Vocal and Visible
- Allowing my Calendar to Orchestrate My Life
- Financial Integrity as a Form of Self Love
- Releasing What No Longer Serves

It's also okay not to have a theme besides the names of your qualities.

6. Find Images

You probably won't have time today, but a great follow up exercise to do this weekend would be to give shape and form to the qualities or themes that have emerged. That could include:

- Searching for images online or off that embody the energies and qualities you want to lean on this year
- Making a drawing or painting or collage
- Buying a physical object that represents the feeling of your energies and qualities

Session Two: The True Spirit of Your Life: What You Want Others to Feel and Experience

In this hour, we will bring into focus the feeling and experience you want to create for others, which is often what you also want to create for yourself. The more you focus your efforts on creating this feeling and experience, the more you will drop into your deeper expression.

Feel and Experience

So often, we plan our year by thinking about what we want to accomplish.

I find it much more useful to focus first on what I want to feel and experience, and then decide what might bring me to that feeling and experience.

When I help clients step into their Potent Expression, one of the powerful first steps we take is articulating what they want other people to feel and experience as a result of their presence and efforts in the world.

If you've created a True Spirit statement with me, either in Words on Fire or privately, we will use that for this hour's work.

If you haven't, you'll use some key questions to come up with an answer you can work with for today's exercise.

If You Know Your True Spirit

If you know the True Spirit of your Work, pull it out and take a look at it. Stand up and read it out loud. Read it a couple of times.

How does it feel? Is it still true? Does it still reflect what you want others to feel and experience?

If it needs some updates, take 15 minutes and make changes. They don't have to be permanent or perfect, you don't have to be certain about them, you don't have to commit to them, let yourself name and play with some new language.

(If you would like my help after our day today, I am offering a **True Spirit Tune Up**, where we can look at your True Spirit together and update it if needed, and explore what is next for you. Email me if you are interested.)

If You Don't Know Your True Spirit

If you haven't created your True Spirit, take about 15 minutes or so to write about the following:

1. What is the most meaningful experience I believe a human can have?
2. How does my presence and efforts help more people have that feeling and experience?
3. When I think of the people I love the most – children, nieces and nephews, partners, dearest friends -- What is it I most want them to feel and experience in this lifetime?
4. When I think of larger circles of people -- friends, community, clients, students, readers, listeners – what do I most hope they get to feel and experience as a result of my presence and efforts in the world?

Read over what you wrote. See if you can put together a working True Spirit statement using this formula:

What I most want people to feel and experience as a result of my presence and efforts is...

It doesn't have to be perfect. Try to write something that moves you or excites you but also feels grounded in your real life experience.

Be Specific

The more specific you are about what you want people to feel and experience, the better.

The more you can ground your statement in the beautiful details of your lived experience, the more it will unlock the story of what you make possible for other people.

(If you would like my help creating a True Spirit statement with nuance and depth, grounded in your language and your life experience, you can work with me privately or in my Words on Fire training.)

How Might Work and Life Change?

Now that you have a statement to work with, explore the question of what greater, fuller, bigger, bolder, richer expression this year might look like.

Take a pen and a journal and write your answers to the following questions:

- To what degree am I living and working in a way that allows ME to feel and experience what I name here in my True Spirit? Where do I feel this? And where is the feeling lacking?
- Are there ways that I could give myself more of that feeling and experience? What if anything is keeping me from giving myself more of that feeling and experience?
- What would need to change if I were to make giving myself that feeling a top priority in my life?
- What would I need to do differently to INCREASE my capacity to create this feeling and experience for others? Where would I need to be brave? Where would I need to be visible?

If you feel like you are drawing a blank, it's ok. The intention is to take you out of what is automatic or easily accessible and stretch your thinking into something new.

As much as you can, let yourself play. This doesn't have to be deadly serious and you are not committed to any ideas that you might come up with.

Session Three: Laying Claim to the Innovative Wisdom for You to Share and Live By

This hour, I want you to connect, or reconnect, to the substance, the depth, the richness of the insight and wisdom that wants to come through you. The more your expression in the world builds on this, the more power it will have.

If You Know Your True Wisdom

Take a look at your True Wisdom.

- Does it still ring true? What pieces do? What pieces don't?
- Are there new truths – new principles, beliefs, approaches, or elements that are part of what you now know to bring to the world in service of your True Spirit?
- If you were to update your True Wisdom, what might that look like?

Again, it doesn't need to be perfect. Just clarifying in your own mind what a new articulation might be will help point you in a clearer direction.

If You Don't Know Your True Wisdom

Take a look at your "feeling/experience" statement. Ask yourself this:

- What has my life taught me that makes this feeling and experience possible for someone?

- If I were to guide someone to have more of the feeling and experience I wrote about last hour, what would I advise them to do?
- See if you can organize what life has taught you into some key points, some key lessons, insights, or approaches that you see change people.
- This will be your working True Wisdom

Take Up More Space

When you step out into the world with some strength and certainty about what you know, you experience yourself and your value differently.

You start to inhabit a larger territory. You take up more space. People feel your presence in a way they hadn't before.

Go Deeper

Greater expression is available when you root your business offers in your True Wisdom, in what your life has taught you, and bring forward your distinctive insights above and beyond conventional advice. The more closely you hew to your own knowing, the stronger, the richer, and the more distinctive your offers will be.

Take your journal, and write in response to these questions:

- If I were to honor my accumulated wisdom more deeply, how would my work in the world change?
- How might my offers change?
- If my wisdom is already embedded in my work, but more covertly, how could I be more OVERT about what I know and what I believe?
- What do I know deeply in my bones is true, but I am not really stepping up and saying it?
- What might it look like to really shout it out to the world?
- What are practical changes I might make so people get quickly who I am and what my work is about?
- If I trusted in the bones of my True Wisdom/life knowledge, what would I be inspired to offer that I don't currently offer?
- What might I say differently about what I do if I were to trust in this accumulated wisdom?

Session Four: Putting Your Insights into Pragmatic Action

Now, I want to support you in putting all the new insight you've gained into practical action so that you can step into new visibility in the world in the coming year.

Our goal today was to open up some imaginative directions for the year, to shake loose some new conceptions of how you might show up and what you might offer that would expand your expression of yourself this coming year, both in your work, and in your personal life.

In this hour, you will take all the pieces of exploration from the previous three hours and create a more specific picture of what a more vibrant, fully expressed 2021 might look like.

You can choose any of the following approaches to bring your work for the day together. Don't worry if you can't get to all of them in this hour. Work on the ones that have the most life. And come back to them this weekend if you are inspired to do more:

- What Do You Know Now
- Choosing the Projects that Amplify Expression
- The Story of 2021
- Healing What Wants Healing
- How Will You Be Nourished

What Do You Know Now

You may simply want to take this next chunk of time and write what is clear and coming together for you. This is a time that you can take all the ideas you've generated and start to feel into which you want to move ahead with and which you might leave at the idea stage.

You could do that by answering the following questions including:

- What are the changes I want to make within what I currently offer professionally?
- What offers I am ready to retire this year to make room for something new?
- What new offers do I want to bring forward?
- What new voice or expression do I want to turn up this year? How might I amplify that voice or let it be seen more clearly?
- What changes might I want to make in my personal life to support deeper expression?

Choosing the Projects that Amplify Expression

Why Projects and Not Goals?

First, you can do both. I find clients tend to get into action more quickly when they define Projects over Goals. A goal is usually a declaration of a measurable outcome you want to create, while a Project defines an activity you plan to engage in for a specific period of time—whether it's a week, a month, or the whole year.

Defining Projects keeps you focused on the action more than the outcome. The outcome matters, yes, but the outcome is not always under our control, as much as we might wish it were. We do, however, have control over the actions we take in service to those goals.

Knowing your Projects keeps you focused over time.

When we set a goal, we usually do so assuming that achieving that goal will make us happy—and often we are wrong. Achieving the goal does not create the happiness, pride, or peace that we imagined, or we beat ourselves up because we failed to achieve the goal in the way we thought we would. However, you can feel success and satisfaction simply by virtue of seeing a Project through to completion, whatever the outcome.

In fact, in Hand Analysis, the Life Purpose of Success is defined by the ability to [a] pick a meaningful Project that is truly yours, and [b] see it through to whatever you define as completion.

It's a path we can all benefit from following.

When we pick a Project, we are called on to define the actions and efforts we think will be worthwhile to engage in. Whether or not those actions produce the results we wanted, we learn from the process. We build skill over time, we learn how big or how complex of Projects we can take on.

We achieve success, ultimately, not by setting ambitious goals, and worrying all year about whether or not we'll hit them, but by picking challenging and worthwhile Projects and seeing them through to completion.

Four Kinds of Projects

Before you choose your Projects, brainstorm possible projects for the year. Once you've generated a list of possible Projects, you will streamline the list and pick the ones that are most fruitful to move ahead with.

You may find it useful to sort your Projects into different categories.

I think in terms of four main types of Projects:

Revenue Projects

Development Projects

Innovation Projects

Personal Projects

Revenue Projects are how you make money. They are designed specifically to bring in revenue.

Revenue Projects might include: offering a new teleclass, repeating a successful live event, doing a Spring campaign to bring in private clients. When I talk to a business owner who is struggling to make money, I often find that they are focusing almost exclusively on Development Projects, and not pursuing Revenue Projects.

Development Projects are projects designed to improve the overall functioning of your business, but which, *in and of themselves*, do not generate revenue!

Business Development Projects might include:

- Revamping your website
- Doing branding work
- Increasing general visibility
- Creating an online course

Development Projects can be creative and exciting. Sometimes they feel more fun than Revenue Projects because there is no pressure. But Development Projects on their own won't increase your income! Make sure you aren't keeping so busy with Development Projects that you have little or no time to pursue Revenue Projects. Development Projects should feel like they are helping you to more fully align with who you are and what wants to come through you, and to express that in the world.

Innovation Projects are a special kind of Development Project. An Innovation Project is one that lets you test out something which is calling you.

For those who are Innovators at heart, these projects have a lot of juice and energy. They boost creativity and help you develop your intellectual property and business content. They may not in the early stages generate revenue.

But last year's Innovation Projects may become this year's Revenue Projects. Innovation Projects often involve alpha or beta tests, of offers that test a new approach, a new offer, or new content.

- Any new offering, private or group you want to bring forward
- Any new product you want to bring forward
- Any new marketing initiatives you think will forward your business
- Any new way you want to run your business

Personal Projects are projects related to your personal life.

Personal Projects are any projects designed to enrich your life as a human being. A Personal Project can include a health initiative, improving your home environment, making more time for your art, or deepening your connections in your community.

Using Themes to Inspire Projects

Another way you can generate Project ideas is to go back to your qualities and themes. So, if your themes for the year were:

- Creating Elegant Systems to Deliver Value and Lighten my Heart
- Be Vocal and Visible
- Financial Integrity as a Form of Self Love

You could ask, "*What specific projects would reflect creating elegant systems to deliver value?*" So, that might produce the following this list of POSSIBLE projects (Note that you are just in the brain

dump stage, you have not committed to these, nor do you need to take these on):

- Revamp the website.
- Create systems for lead generation.
- Build stronger referral relationships.

What specific projects would allow me to be more vocal and visible?

- Do a video summit in the spring.
- Do a weekly video cast.
- Book local speaking gigs.

Streamline Your List of Projects and Goals

If you've gone through the previous steps, you may now have generated a list of 10 or 20 Projects. In most cases, trying to focus on them all will make you crazy and undermine your ability to successfully complete any of them.

There is no one right number of Projects to commit to. Some Projects might be more complex and encompassing, others more defined and time-limited.

Your body may communicate to you which Projects are uplifting, inspiring, energizing, or grounding, and which feel unbalanced, incoherent, or disconnecting.

Breathe in your wanting, your longing for all those qualities you defined in our first session. Allow yourself to want something without knowing for sure if you can have it. Let that desire shape the Projects you choose.

You may also want to access your guidance in other ways, such as muscle testing, use of a pendulum, or any other tool you know. A simple question you can ask in these cases is, "Is it in my highest good to take on this Project?" or, "Is it in my highest good to pursue this goal?"

Another good test for a Project or goal is to ask this: "would this Project or goal be worth pursuing even if it took three times as long and was three times as hard as I think it will be?" Would this Project be worth pursuing even if it doesn't create the results I think it will. If you can genuinely answer yes, that's the sign of a good Project or goal. (Guess what? Most meaningful goals do take at least three times as long and are three times as hard as we think they will be.)

Adding Time Frames

To make your Projects and goals real, and bring them into form, place them in time. A Project is just a good idea until you choose when you'll work on it.

One organization book I read said, "A to-do list is like a credit card, but a calendar is like a bank account."

Why? We can make our to-do list endless, but a calendar makes vividly clear what we can and cannot take on. What we do and don't have time for. When you look at the time you have, you start making clearer choices about what to spend your time on.

Look at each of your Projects. When will they happen? Over what period of time?

There may be some natural time frames built into some of your projects. If one of your projects is to spend time at the beach, you may already know that that will need to happen in the summer.

Or, there may be a natural sequence in your projects. You need to create your next information product, for example, before you can sell it.

You may have a routine for what you offer when. Is this schedule working for you? Do you want to change it?

Maybe some of your projects can be implemented right away, giving you an immediate sense of a shift, and giving you more energy to work on the remaining projects.

I like to make a graph in my notebook. I take the long side of the page and write out the months of the year.

Then I make a bar to represent each Project, showing which Projects are happening when. This helps me see what fits, where too much is going on, and where natural openings are to fit in new Projects.

It's important that you make clear choices about which Projects matter most. You likely will NOT be able to implement all the great ideas you have. The more Project you hang onto the more likely you'll feel exhausted or overwhelmed and the less likely you'll move forward.

See our Bonus Handout below: Consider Your Capacity. Plan conservatively how much time will be needed to implement this Project.

The Story of 2021

Just as we did the Story of 2020, you can now use the same approach to look into the future. You can take the themes you developed in our first hour and write about how you imagine you'll live out each theme.

Take some time to write it as a narrative (meaning some semblance of complete sentences and paragraphs that connect to each other. I find that longer phrases expand you more than bullets.) I begin mine with this statement: "I envision 2021 being about..."

Here's a sample of some of what I wrote for 2015:

Letting go of what no longer serves. Purer expression of my voice. FB posts, ezine articles, offerings, teachings. I see myself sinking more into my expression, challenging myself to be more vocal and visible.

Memoir. Greater integration of my creative writing with my professional work. I want to continue to stretch myself as a writer and to move this project forward, and I want to bring all the things I work on as a memoir writer to my professional writing. I want to share more stories, bring the depth and tenderness to what I share about personal work to my professional work.

Greater comfort in my own skin. Greater trust, greater knowing that I work with the universe. Less angst about "What will happen? Will I be disappointed?" To keep cycling back to ways to feel calmer, more loving, more accepting of myself.

What I like about this approach is that it goes beyond the question "What do I want?" and it starts to move us towards "What do I sense is the direction I am moving in?"

How Simple Can You Make It?

One of the reasons business owners suffer is that they design elaborate and complicated strategies to accomplish business goals that could be accomplished with much less effort.

In part, this is because there are so many experts out there telling us we have to do THIS, and we should do THAT, and we lose the detail and the refinement that tells us whether or not any particular strategy is right for us at this time.

For example, you can often generate more revenue by simply reaching out in a few places to people who already know you to suggest that you work together.

Or, you can ask existing clients if they would like to do more work with you, or work with you on a more regular basis.

Or, you can experiment with some straightforward ways to invite more people to have sales conversations with you.

Often, we make up rules and give ourselves lots of work so we don't have to do those simple, but scary, things. We decide we HAVE to put up a new web site, or build our list, or blog weekly for at least a year in hopes that we'll be off the hook for actually asking to be hired. For having to feel vulnerable, or awkward, or needy and asking someone if they'd like to work with us.

If you pick a simpler, more direct business strategy, it often takes less time and less effort to produce the results you want.

How Will You Be Nourished

One of the ways to support ourselves in new expression is to think consciously of what will NOURISH us as we move through the year. What will feed us? What will remind us of the intention we are feeling today? What will keep us anchored into who we are and what we want to express?

You can explore the following questions to find the answers that will work for you:

- What came forward today that was new and inspiring and exciting that I want to hold on to as a guide this coming year?
- What can I put in place to remind me of this? Think about the senses – is there an IMAGE that captures what you've caught hold of? A song or type of music? A written statement? A scent? A texture? How could you turn the qualities you unearthed into tangible, tactical reminders of your intended expansion.
- What ritual could you put in place to reconnect to your tangible reminders above? For example, you could read your True Spirit out loud every day as you begin work. Or you could look at your image and say out loud how you will embody that energy for the day.
- What practices reconnect you to your intention?
- What people, places, or communities feed this part of you, these parts of you wanting deeper expression? How can you make those a greater part of your world?

Healing What Wants Healing

In my 24 years in business, what I've seen is that most of our business growth comes NOT from learning new strategies and techniques, but from shifting our healing stuck or frozen places that limit our energy and keep us from taking full, whole-hearted action to get what we want. To address the deeper, inner pain that takes us out of the game when we hit an obstacle.

There are many, many ways to do healing work on your own or with a skilled practitioner. Here are a few of my favorites.

1. Naming the Old, Sad Stories You Carry

Having a business is a great way to bring up and work through all your emotional issues. Nothing will test your belief in yourself, your clarity around your value, like creating a business and making offers to the world in exchange for money.

Nothing challenges your fear of survival like the cash flow ups and downs that are a usual part of establishing a new business.

Nothing tests your belief in being enough like constantly being offered training and coaching programs.

For most of us, the drama of business boils down to a few familiar stories.

My stories (most deeply activated around money and love) usually boil down to variations on:

- I am invisible
- I am not good enough
- I am not worthy of love and attention

What are your most painful, old, familiar stories you tell about yourself and why you don't have what you want?

2. Releasing the Old, Sad Stories You Carry

The more you accept that these stories are running under the surface, the more quickly you shift out of the operational (what do I need to do to enroll my next group) and the more you recognize you're doing another round with one of your old stories.

Once you've realized you're being run by an old story, you have the opportunity to shift it. There are many, many excellent tools and techniques, as well as practitioners, who can help you shift these old beliefs and these old stories.

Some of these include:

- Talk therapy
- Trauma work

- Emotional Freedom Technique (also known as EFT or Tapping)
- Ho O Pono Pono
- NLP
- Hypnotherapy
- Reparenting or Working with the Inner Child
- Prayer
- Self-soothing

If you know one of the above techniques, I encourage you to use it more consistently in your work. Learning more of these techniques can be a good use of your time and energy.

One of the simplest is to accept and forgive the part of you that you judge or blame. That could look like:

- I am judging myself as not being smart enough to have a successful business." (*Breathe in, and breathe out to release.*)
- "I forgive myself for judging myself as not being smart enough." (*Breathe in and breathe out to release.*)
- "I love and accept the part of me that judges myself as not being smart enough." (*Breathe in and breathe out to release.*)

3. Turning Towards What is Challenging

One of the challenges of the New Year is that we often commit to tackling same area of our lives that we've persistently found hard to change.

Maybe we just can't seem to change our financial picture.

Or we struggle with marketing and enrollment.

We struggle with our bodies. How they look, how much energy they have, how strong they are.

We struggle to keep our homes clean and neat and beautiful.

There can be something profoundly disheartening about tackling the same goal or intention over and over and over again.

And yet.

If we left them, these challenging stuck areas can be our invitation to growth. They can bring forward the old, sad stories. And they can also be our teachers.

If success in a given area continues to elude us, we are being asked to approach things differently. We are being asked to challenge old assumptions and to redesign old ways of doing things.

Within an area of challenge, we can ask questions like:

- What painful feelings does this stir up in me? How can I heal or release or accept myself in the face of those painful feelings?
- What have been my underlying beliefs and assumptions about how I will experience change in this area?
- What can I see now is not working about that approach?
- What other approaches are possible?
- What would be the opposite approach to what I've been using?
- How can I bring more love to the table?
- How can I bring more of my Qualities to this area?

If you can start to see the persistent struggle, not as a sign of failure, but as an invitation to go deeper, and to shift something profound, they become less painful, and even a blessing. And, you may find that the lessons in that area of your life can be applied to other areas.

Bonus: Consider Your Capacity

As I mentioned above, one of the surest ways to be less effective and more miserable is to take on more than you have capacity for. As humans, we are generally really bad at estimating bandwidth. Here are some ways to moderate the tendency to take on too much.

Mapping Out Your Year

1. Map Out What is Already On Your Calendar

You may already know a lot about what is coming down the pike this year. Before we start adding lots of new things, take a moment to sketch out what you know is already in place this year. Next to each month, write down what you have already planned. This could include:

- Vacations
- Programs or Offers you are planning to make
- Events, Conferences, or Retreats you are planning to attend
- Family milestones
- Household Projects

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Looking at your chart, you should have a sense of the rhythm of the coming year, and how much space you have for something new.

2. Consider What Is Already On Your Plate

We live in such a rabid culture of self-improvement that we often feel we need to be achieving and excelling in every area of our lives.

So we strive to do excellent work, make good money, manage our money, be a good partner, a good parent, a good friend, and a good son or daughter. We work on our bodies and health, try to eat well and exercise. We work on our creative projects, we try to keep a nice home. We donate and we volunteer. We do our spiritual practices and participate in spiritual communities. Maybe we are involved in politics or social change.

And it's exhausting.

There is something to be said for letting ourselves off the hook somewhere in our lives. To have areas that we declare it's ok NOT to excel. To give ourselves permission to do a C+ or even D- job of being a Parent Association member, or a housekeeper or a cook.

Studies suggest that we all have a limited amount of discipline. So the discipline we use to weigh ourselves every day, or plan our meals, or keep our house clean, or improve our memory is discipline that is NOT available for other areas, which may be more important.

I've been thinking a lot about this lately.

As I get older, I realize my time, my energy, and my bandwidth are limited. My ability to do what matters most depends on my willingness to let go of "doing well" in the areas that matter less. (The challenge is that these other areas still matter, they just matter less.)

What matters most is caring for my son, doing my best and most beautiful work in the world, being kind to myself, and writing my memoir. If I do justice to those areas, there truly isn't much left over to excel or improve somewhere else.

Take a long, sweet look at your Capacity.

First consider how much energy you have overall. Are you healthy? Are you feeling strong? Or are you working on building more energy, more strength, more vitality?

There is no shame in having a smaller Capacity than someone else. You may have physical conditions, health challenges, or mental and emotional challenges that are limiting what you have available to create something new.

Then consider what you are already choosing to devote time and energy to, the things that matter, that make up your life:

- Caring for a child, a parent, a pet
- Improving your health and vitality
- Being a partner
- Tackling a home project
- Completing a project, a career, a marriage
- Grieving a loss

If you attend to each of these things with the care and devotion you choose, it may simply be true that you have less time and energy available to pursue business growth than you think you should. The more you match your efforts to your Capacity, the clearer and calmer you will feel.

3. Consider Your Existing Income Streams

If you have a business, and you want to grow your business, it's good to name specifically which income streams you have and which income streams you might want to add to reach both your

“inner” business goals (impact or satisfaction) and your outer business goals (income, profit, growth).

You may also need to decide whether or not to put down an income stream.

On a recent call for my membership group, a participant told me she needed to decide if she was going to continue offering a program, or let it go. She had a lot of heart and emotion tied up in the program, but it wasn’t really working the way she wanted. Should she lean in, stick with it, commit, persevere?

Or should she cut her losses and put her energy elsewhere?

This is one of the toughest kinds of decisions business owners have to make, and one of the most common.

If you’re in this situation, here’s what I recommend.

Take some time to tease apart the situation. Ask yourself some good questions, and see what emerges.

Here are some of the more useful questions I think you can ask in this situation:

1. What would need to be true for me to whole-heartedly embrace continuing to offer this income stream?
2. What would need to be true for me to peacefully let this income stream go?
3. When it comes to this income stream, am I putting out more than I am getting back?
4. Is this income stream a loss leader for me? Even if it’s not profitable in and of itself, does it lead to more connections, clients, income, etc.?
5. How is this income stream contributing to my growth and development?
6. Could the resources going into this income stream be better used elsewhere?
7. Am I avoiding another more growthful opportunity or income stream?
8. What would I believe it means about me, or the universe, if I let this income stream go?

If you have new income streams you’d like to add this year, consider where in your calendar above they might fit. Consider the time you would need to develop that income stream, test it, offer it, and enroll it.

4. Plan Way More Time Than You Think Is Needed

Now, you consider those bright and shiny new projects.

Pick the one that seems the most powerful or useful to dive into this year.

How much time will it take to execute?

My father always said that Projects usually take three times as long as we think they will.

Self-development author Mark Manson makes an interesting suggestion to help you plan more accurately.

- Take the most time you could possibly imagine the project would take, the absolute worst scenario.
- Now take the least amount of time you think the project will take, the best case scenario.
- Now take what you think is a realistic middle of the road estimate.
- Average the three numbers. This is likely to give you a realistic projection of the amount of time you'll need.

I promise you you will be far, far less stressed tackling fewer projects with more care and energy than staggering under the weight of more projects than you can manage.

If you are ambitious, and you want to do more than feels manageable. Then you'll want to consider hiring help so you can get more done more quickly.

5. Don't Overinvest in Training and Coaching

I am a learning junkie, and often my very favorite things each year are the coaching and training I invest in.

And yet, if you are like me, it's easy to invest so much time in learning and developing that you don't leave much time for actually doing.

I find that I often get less from the programs I do invest in simply because I feel overwhelmed, with little time to sink into each program because I'm trying to juggle too many options.

Bonus: The Power of Making Financial Projections

One of the scariest but most useful things you can do as you run your business is to make financial projections.

Financial projections include estimating timing and amount of income from each of your income streams as well as estimating timing and amount of business expenses throughout the year.

This can feel uncomfortable because the projections are made up. You aren't sure what will happen. But that's ok. Projections are supposed to be made up. The longer you run your business, the more data you'll have to make stronger estimates.

It can also feel uncomfortable because we can get caught between the yearning for the income we project and the reality of what we can bring in.

Nonetheless, doing projections of earnings and expenses can help you:

- Determine if you can, with your current resources, bring in the income you desire
- See the flow of income throughout the year so you can plan accordingly
- Determine what capacity you have for different offers
- And more

Making Financial Projections is a kind of grown up step to take in your business. It shows that you are serious about generating revenue, and about generating a profit from your efforts.

You can download a template for Financial Projections [here](#).

I recommend estimating both your income and your expenses month to month for the coming year.

Each month, look at your Profit and Loss. Update your Projected Income and Expenses with the actual figures.

As you go through the year, you can use this document to look at different Revenue Streams, or to consider the consequences of changing what you offer.