

# Year-End Review:

Transmute the Hard and Wonderful Experiences of the Year into Your Guiding Wisdom

## Why We Are Here

In times of chaos, knowing where we stand matters more than mapping out the future. When things are shifting rapidly around us, we want to settle more fully into who we already are. Even when we are struggling or lost, there are places inside of us that remain strong.

Whatever you lived in 2022, be it joyful, terrible, or a mix of both, there is goodness and guidance to be harvested.

This day is about allowing yourself to sink more deeply into reflection about this year so you feel stronger and more able to move confidently into the New Year.

In this day, we will:

- Reflect on the experience of the year
- Integrate those experiences by crafting the Story of the Year
- Harvest the learning and wisdom you can lean on going forward
- Call in the qualities that will support you moving into the New Year

## Before We Meet: Your Year-end Inventory

If you have time before we meet, I encourage you to look over what actually happened this year. You can use your online calendar, your planner, your business notebook, or any other source to review the journey you went on this year.

While you review, take notes about what you notice, what you forgot, where you invested time, and anything else notable.

## Set the Tone for the Day

Set the tone for your day of digestion and reflection. This time with yourself is sacred and precious. You might:

- Put on supportive music
- Make tea
- Light a candle
- Sit someplace really comfortable
- Wear something really comfortable

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## Session One: Reflecting on the Year

Now it's time to make meaning of the year.

When we take this time to digest our experience, instead of being stuck in a certain feeling about the year, we start to see the nuance and complexity of the path we've been walking. We can hold it differently.

We begin with broader questions, to start to sift through the journey that was this year. I've provided questions and you can also use any other questions you love.

I recommend journaling, writing down your answers to each question.

As you answer these questions, you may find a variety of feelings rising to the surface.

Take care of yourself and be a compassionate witness as these feelings arise. If needed, stop, put your hand on your heart and the other on your belly and let yourself breathe in what's arising. Hug yourself. If needed, speak kind words to yourself, soothing words to yourself as the feelings move through you. Some studies have shown that if we can stay fully present with a feeling, it often passes within 90 seconds.

Some of my favorite self-comforting practices include:

- "You're feeling \_\_\_\_\_. This is what it's like to feel \_\_\_\_\_"
- "I accept that I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_. I forgive myself for feeling \_\_\_\_\_. I forgive myself for judging myself for feeling \_\_\_\_\_." (from Rebecca Skeele)

It's less important that you answer all the questions than that you go deep with the ones that interest you the most.

Start with these questions:

- What surprised me most this year?
- What was most nourishing or supportive?
- What made me happiest?
- In what areas did I shift and grow the most?
- Where did I invest the most time and energy?

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- What new skills or muscles did I build?
- What was I truly committed to?
- What happened that I could not have predicted?
- What was most challenging? (Whether it was a blessing in disguise or utterly awful. )
- What, if any, value did I get from the difficult parts of this year?
- What did I lose?
- What am I grieving?
- What have I not yet made peace with?
- Where did I step up or show up the most fully?
- What parts of myself came forward that I might have previously hidden?
- What is coming alive inside of me?
- What can I most give myself credit for or celebrate?
- What did I let go of this year?

If you have time, when you are done, read over your answers. Sink in to what you are feeling and observing.

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## Session Two: The Story of the Year

A beautiful way to integrate your experience is to write the Story of your Year.

Humans comprehend and relate through Story. Our minds naturally translate our experience into Story, highlighting some events, minimizing others, finding connections, seeing arcs of development.

Studies have shown that writing our Story is healing. We feel less distressed. We feel stronger in the face of whatever challenges occur.

As you shape the Story of the Year, you take charge of the narrative. You are no longer at the mercy of what happened, you are choosing how to hold it, how to view it, how to understand it.

## How to Write the Story of the Year

You may want to review your Inventory and your Reflection questions before you begin, so your picture of the year is fresh.

Start with the prompt: “What was the Story of my Year?” Or “The Story of my Year was \_\_\_\_.” Or “This was a year of \_\_\_\_.” Complete the blanks with a theme or thread.

Let your hand move across the page (I recommend you write this long hand, but it’s not required if typing is easier for you).

You don’t have to know what the answer is before you begin writing. Discover the answers as your hand moves.

Don’t limit yourself to one theme or one thread. Your life wasn’t that simple, nor should your Story be. Part of this exercise is to discover the multiple themes and threads that were alive this year. Keep repeating the prompt as needed when you want a fresh burst of energy.

So this Year might have been a Story of Loss, and then write more about that Loss.

It might have been a Story of Persistence in the Face of Challenge. And write about what it took to persist.

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It might have been a Story of Unexpected Blessings. Say more about each of those.

It might have been a Story of Finding New Inspiration or Rekindling an Old Love.

It might have been a Story of Learning to Trust Your Intuition.

Likely it was a mix of all of those things.

As you land on a theme that rings true, expand on it. How did that Story unfold throughout the year? What different ways did that theme develop? Where in your life did that Story come to life?

Keep writing about the themes you discover until the Story feels complete.

Once you're done, take a pause.

Then, if you have time, cycle back and read your Story to yourself. Out loud if you dare.

Let yourself feel and hear the Story of what you've lived.

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## Session Three: Harvesting Wisdom, Guidance, and Direction

Now it's time to pull together what emerged from the previous two sessions. How does what you have LIVED guide you moving forward?

You can continue to journal your answers, and this is also a good chance to play with other tools as you answer these questions. For example, you could answer these questions by:

- Drawing a picture
- Making a collage
- Playing with sticky notes
- Working with a mind-mapping software

Here are the next-level questions you can explore to help bring forward the wisdom of the year:

- What did life teach me this year?
- What worked well for me this year?
- What was a hot mess?
- What am I ready to approach differently?
- What spells, illusions or false stories was I operating under?
- What unhelpful patterns of behavior am I ready to let go of?
- In what areas can I bring more compassion?
- Where can I let myself off the hook? What self-improvement goals might I let go of so I can concentrate on what matters most?
- What resources and assets do I have available that I am not using, or not using to their fullest?
- What can I most deeply affirm about who I am and who I am becoming?
- What is my solid ground moving forward?
- Where did I most naturally have discipline?
- What simple structures might create more joy and freedom?
- What feels like the next right risk for me to take in pursuit of the True life I desire?

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## Session Four: The Qualities of the Year

In this hour, we will call in what we need this year to show up in the full force and power of our beings. To find our True.

We will use a non-linear process to ask for guidance and feel into the direction that will most serve us.

### Essence vs. Form

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. Essence is our spirit, our gifts, our deepest desires.

Form is the vehicle through which Essence comes forward. Form is our best guess about how we'll bring that Essence into something concrete. It's the project, the possession, the mile marker we'll hit.

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.

When we know our first job is to honor what matters most, what we want to feel and experience, then we become more flexible about the Form – how what we desire shows up —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 consider what Form that might take .

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## **Before Goals and Intentions**

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.

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. Do not prepare your answers in advance.**

That said, I have complete directions here for what to do AFTER the word association or in case you need to do this on your own at another time.

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## The Word Association Exercise

I am going to ask a series of questions, 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 this year has in store for us.

The questions will all have the form: "If 2023 were a \_\_\_\_\_, what would it be?"

Question One: If 2023 were a Color, what color would it be?

Question Two: If 2023 were a Flavor, what flavor would it be?

Question Three: If 2023 were a Scent or smell, what scent would it be?

Question Four: If 2023 were a Texture, what texture would it be?

Question Five: If 2023 were a Place or location, where would it be?

Question Six: If 2023 were a piece of Music, what music would it be?

So answers might look like:

*Lemon yellow*

*Peppermint*

*Hot chocolate*

*Corduroy*

*Public library*

*Brandenburg Concerto*

These are your key words for the year! It's fun to consider how you might have a Lemon Yellow/Peppermint/Hot Chocolate/Corduroy/Public Library/Brandenburg Concerto kind of year!

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## Finding the Qualities in Your Words

Now that you know what kind of a year this wants to be, let's decode what that means.

For each item you chose above, I want you to think of the qualities you associate with that. Try to come up with three adjectives that describe the feeling or quality the thing you chose evokes for you.

*For example, if you picked the color lemon yellow, you might decide that lemon yellow, for you, is bright, cheerful, optimistic*

*The flavor of peppermint might be alive, bracing, tart.*

*The scent of hot chocolate might be comforting, cozy, rich.*

*The texture of corduroy might be solid, strong, comforting .*

*A public library might be ordered, strong, light.*

*The Brandenburg Concerto might be ordered, lively, soothing.*

Use this chart to list the qualities you associate with each of the things you chose.

	Your Choice	Quality 1	Quality 2	Quality 3
Color				
Flavor				
Scent				
Texture				
Location				
Music				

## Your Quality Clusters

When you look at all the qualities all together, you'll see themes and threads emerge.

Cluster the qualities that seem to go together. It's a message from yourself to yourself about what energy or quality is being called for this year.

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Working with the example above, I would see the following clusters of qualities:

- *Bright/cheerful/optimistic/light*
- *Comforting/cozy/soothing/rich*
- *Solid/strong/ordered*

## What Are These Qualities Telling Me?

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.

Over the coming weeks before we meet again, let yourself dream and imagine what might be possible.

Some of the questions you might ask yourself include:

### ***How Can I Experience More of These Qualities This Year?***

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? What would you add to your life? What would you take away?

### ***How Can I Bring More of these Qualities to What I Am Already Doing?***

If you already know some of the projects or activities you are doing this year, you can also ask yourself questions like: "How can I bring more sweetness to my marketing?" Or, "how can I bring more depth and richness to my content development?" Or, "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.

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## Theme for the Year

As you play with these questions, you may see a way your clusters become themes for the year.

A theme for the year isn't a goal, it's not a specific or measurable outcome you are trying to accomplish. A theme is the intention, the flavor, the guiding principle that you want to align with and hold onto as you move through the 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*

*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.

## Anchor with Images

To deepen your connection to these qualities, look for images online or off that embody the energies and qualities you want to lean on this year

Make a drawing or painting or collage.

Buy a physical object that represents the feeling of your energies and qualities.

## Coming in January: Chart Your True Path

We will continue this conversation on Friday, January 6. We'll look, not at planning, but at strengthening and deepening your connection to the Spiritual Truth of who you are, your Innate Wisdom which defines your personal process for navigating life, and to the Sacred Exchange you most desire to have with other humans.