

MAXIMUM

YOU

Your Year in Review

by Emilie West

Guided reflections to set yourself up for a
happy and successful 2024

Welcome to a whole new year!

Each New Year presents a whole new year ahead of us, for us to shape as we wish.

It also creates a natural pause to stop and reflect on the year that's been. This reflection can bring valuable insights into our own behaviours and desires and be hugely helpful in deciding how to shape this coming year and our future beyond.

At the end of each year, I like to offer my clients a structured way to carry out this reflection.

I recommend you complete this workbook by hand, this is much more powerful than typing out your answers, however you can also complete it digitally. Dedicate at least two hours to reflecting on and answering these questions in peace and quiet. You may break this up and complete this workbook one section at a time, just make sure to take time to consider your response to each question.

I recommend you come back to your answers after a couple of days and see if anything new has occurred to you. Our minds often generate answers and inspiration when we are sleeping so don't be surprised if something new comes to you the day after working on this!

We all communicate and learn in different ways so don't feel restricted to writing out your answers in full, feel free to draw your responses or use images and photographs.

It is important to answer these questions honestly and so I recommend working through this exercise with the intent of keeping this workbook private.

If you take time to reflect before answering these questions, this process can be extremely powerful. My wish is that it sets you on a path to having a positive, joyful and successful year ahead.

Wishing you the very best for 2024.

Learning from the past

What went well

Each year brings us challenges, successes, moments of sadness and positive experiences. By reflecting on these we can get to know ourselves better and discover what we find fulfilling in life.

- Complete the table below. For each answer consider what were you doing, where were you and who were you with?
- Your answers may be the same for some of the sections. The reason for asking many similar questions is that the different wording can provoke different memories and responses.
- You can answer questions in full or as bullet points, or with images. Use whichever form feels most natural. If you need more space for your answers don't curtail them, just write them out on separate pages.
- Once you've answered these questions review your responses and highlight, or make a note of, any elements you would like to experience more of in the year ahead.
- I recommend reviewing your diary, social media and photos to remind yourself what you did over the past year to help you complete this exercise.

This year I...
was happiest...

had the most fun...

was my best self...

This year I...
felt most productive...

was most creative...

was most successful...

This year I...
felt most inspired...

felt in my element...

felt most free...

This year I...
felt most relaxed...

felt healthiest...

felt most grateful for...

What didn't go well

Each year it is important to acknowledge the challenges we have faced and learn from them to help us to move forward positively.

- Answer these questions in the same way that you answered the questions above.
- Once you've answered these questions review your responses. You may want to take some time to reflect on what has come up.
- Is there anything you think you would like to do differently in the year ahead as a result of these reflections?

This year I...
spent too much time...

was least happy...

felt most stressed...

This year I...
felt most frustrated...

was least successful...

felt least healthy...

This year I...
was not my best self...

felt unmotivated...

felt unappreciated...

Celebrating success

- Before setting goals for the future, it is important to pause and recognize your successes from this year. Even if you didn't achieve all your goals from the start of the year, you will still have made progress and may have experienced positive results that you hadn't specifically set out to achieve.
- Recognising your progress and successes will help you to prime your mind for more success in the year ahead.
- You may also have faced and come through some challenging circumstances, so it is important that you recognise and are proud of yourself for overcoming these challenges.
- Ask yourself these questions and answer as if you are your own biggest fan:

This year I...
feel most proud of myself for...

made others happier or helped others by ...

overcame the following challenges...

Identifying barriers to success

- To succeed in the year ahead it is helpful to reflect on your responsibility for how your year turned out, including what you could have done better.
- The idea isn't to beat yourself up over what you haven't done well but rather to identify any behaviours you have that may get in the way of achieving your future goals.
- Ask yourself these questions and see what comes up

This year I...

got in the way of my own success by...

would like to have done better at...

Having answered these questions are there any habits you would like to break and new habits you would like to form?

I would like to break the following old habits...

I would like to form the following new habits...

Identifying barriers to success

Now that you have reflected on the previous year, you are ready to set your future vision.

It may be helpful to leave a couple of days between the year in review exercise and the exercises below to let your mind process your reflections first.

The Magic Wand

When setting your future vision it is important to let your mind be creative without limits, which is why I want you to answer the following questions as if you have a Magic Wand. With this Magic Wand you can change any part of your life instantly with no cost or downside to yourself or others.

What would you change? What work would you do? Where would you live? How would you spend your time? What would your surroundings look like? Let your imagination and desires answer the following questions.

If I had a Magic Wand, I would change the following about my ...

Work

Work environment (office space)

Personal life

Social life

Lifestyle

Appearance

Home environment (home location, style, décor)

Finally, how would you spend your time if you were no longer allowed to work, and all your financial needs were taken care of?

Setting your vision for 2024

Now that you've used your Magic Wand to daydream about your best life I want you to use your reflections to create a vision for the end of the year ahead.

If your Magic Wand vision seems very far from your current life remember that you that don't need to achieve everything you day-dreamed in one year. Trying to achieve too many goals or changes simultaneously can be stressful and even sabotage our happiness by preventing us from enjoying our day-to-day life.

Instead treat your Magic Wand answers as inspiration for your direction of travel.

Imagine you are at the end of 2024, you are really happy with how the year has gone, the progress you have made, how you have spent your time and the direction that you are moving in. In the present tense write down what you are doing, where and with whom. Include what you have achieved and how you feel. Include lots of detail and description to create a strong image.

Here's a short example, I encourage you to write a much longer more descriptive version,

I am feeling really fulfilled in my work doing XYZ and feel grateful for having achieved XYZ achievements. I am now working with people I really enjoy working with doing work that I love and I am great at. I have a terrific group of colleagues and a mentor who coaches and motivates me. I enjoy my working environment working part time at home and part time in an open plan office in a central location where I feel productive and confident. I have a capsule work wardrobe that makes me feel comfortable and confident. This year I successfully completed X project and overcame XYZ challenges and my hard work was recognized and rewarded with XYZ.

I enjoy time with my friends, doing XYZ, and catch up with a good friend every week. I really enjoy their company, afterwards I feel positive and restored. Each week I go for two runs and do a yoga session and feel fit, healthy and injury free. Each month I spend one full day doing XYZ favourite hobby which I find a great way to de-stress. I finish work by X time each day and then have an hour of down time and listen to music and audio books that are interesting to me. Having redecorated my home easily I find my home a peaceful place where I love to relax and enjoy time with friends and family. This year I took 4 weeks holiday where I explored new places and was able to switch off from work and return refreshed.

My vision for 2024

My vision for 2024

Checking your vision for 2024

Now that you've written down your vision, we need to sense check it to make sure it is truly authentic. Ask yourself the following questions and then go back and re-edit or add to your vision accordingly.

- Is this vision truly what I want?
- Is any of this vision driven by what my parents/friends/loved ones or media think I should want?
- Is any part of this vision driven by a need for validation or respect from others?
- Do I want any part of this vision so that I can show off to other people, or make my family proud?
- Would I still have this vision if no one would ever see any of it?

For more help defining an authentic vision for yourself please see www.maximumyou.co.uk.

Next steps

To help bring your vision to life, I recommend creating a visual representation either in the form of a physical vision board, with images cut out of magazines or printed out, or by using a pinterest board to gather digital images that inspire you.

Revisit your vision regularly by reading through your written version and looking at the images you have curated, ideally once a week, to keep reminding your mind of your goals and the direction of travel. Just in the same way that professional athletes visualize winning a race over and over again, being able to imagine and visualize your vision for your life is the key to achieving it.

In order to achieve your vision as you go into 2023 it will also be useful to identify and periodically review:

- specific goals and actions that you need to take to achieve your vision
- your key sources of energy
- your inspiration to keep you moving forwards

Coaching can be extremely powerful in helping you complete these steps and turning your vision into a reality. If you would like help in doing so, please do reach out to me at: bookings@alchemycoaching.co.uk.

With best wishes for your year ahead.

Emilie