

EXERCISE

# End of Year Review



Time: solo 15 or more minutes, in conversation 20 or more minutes per person



Setup and materials: pencil and paper



Good For: groups or individuals, families, businesses

## Framing:

*I do this exercise to celebrate and review the end of each year. I describe the exercise as a personal review, but you can adapt it to teams, families or groups as well.*

The process is to make two lists.

### List One

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Successes

Accomplishments

Insights

Delights

### List Two

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Disappointments

Failures

Confusions

## Steps:

### 1. Solo

I usually fold my list paper in half lengthwise, so I only work on one list at a time. It's more effective to write your two lists by hand. The process is more active, and you will want a hard copy for the final step of the exercise, not just digital lists.

If your calendar would be helpful, look over each week from last January to now. Or if your calendar isn't handy you can just think back over the year and write down what feels important to you.

### 2. In pairs

After you have completed your lists, have a conversation with a friend, partner, coach, etc. Speak about your experience of the past twelve months. Give yourself credit for your successes. Notice any disappointments or failures that have had a silver lining or somehow turned to good. Look back on your own growth.

### 3. Identify things that you want to carry forward into the new year and write them down on a separate sheet of paper. There might be actions you want to take, unfinished business, tasks to complete. Look at your learning and growth. You may

have begun a healthy habit that you want to continue with. You might have had an insight that you sense is important.

4. As a full group

At this point we let go of the old year, grateful for another year of life, happy to move into the future. We have things to carry forward on a separate piece of paper, so now we destroy the original lists in whatever ritual way you choose. Why let go of the old year? Because it's gone. In a counterintuitive way, our successes can hold us back as much as our failures do. Know that you carry the growth with you and let go of the detail.

Each year I burn my lists — or you can shred, or crumple, or bury them, whatever. Let the year go, with gratitude for all that it contained. Then turn toward the future feeling a little lighter and more agile after this mental house clearing.

*'For last year's words belong to last year's language  
And next year's words await another voice.'*

T.S. Eliot.