

Beginning Again

Reflect. Plan. Practice. Become



January, the first month of the year, is named after Janus, the mythological Roman god of doorways. Janus also symbolizes gates, bridges, change, transition and time. He is depicted as a two-headed god, with one face looking back and one looking forward. Each January marks the transition to a new year. The practice of reflecting on the past and planning for the New Year is valuable for those who are committed to living and leading with intention. It is an annual practice of celebrating and learning from the past and envisioning and committing to a new future.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish" - Antoine de Saint-Exupery

New Year's Resolutions tend to fade quickly. They are often talked about in a light-hearted, wishful way that lack gravity or foundation. The process outlined in this paper, if truly followed, will result in greater success in realizing what you want for yourself in the coming year. Give yourself plenty of time, but do have it finished by the end of January.

Moving through each year is a bit like walking a labyrinth with its loops and switchbacks. Labyrinths are a contemplative part of spiritual traditions across the globe. A rendering of the Chartres Labyrinth is illustrated in the title of this worksheet and on the back of this page. Walking a labyrinth is not a simple and direct path – it depicts a complex journey towards a goal worth striving for. It requires persistence, patience and awareness.

Reaching the center of the labyrinth requires that you traverse the whole of it. You follow the path without taking shortcuts and may encounter obstacles in the form of other walkers. You loop back and move forward, passing the same areas many times but from a different perspective. Reaching the center is cause for reflection before moving back out, taking the same yet opposite path.

"Every end is a new beginning" - Proverbs

This worksheet includes sections that address all elements of successfully realizing your vision and goals:

- ∞ Reflecting on the past year: Looking Back; Peaks and Valleys
- ∞ Envisioning your desired future and goals: Looking forward
- ∞ Describing your starting point: Today's Truth
- ∞ Taking action toward your vision and goals: Making it Happen

Now set aside a few blocks of time, settle in and get started!

TRACE THE LABYRINTH

Find the sole entrance to the labyrinth, and with your finger, a pen or pencil, trace your path to its center. Before following the path back out, place your hands in your lap and enjoy a few deep breaths or even a short meditation. When you're ready, follow the path back out.

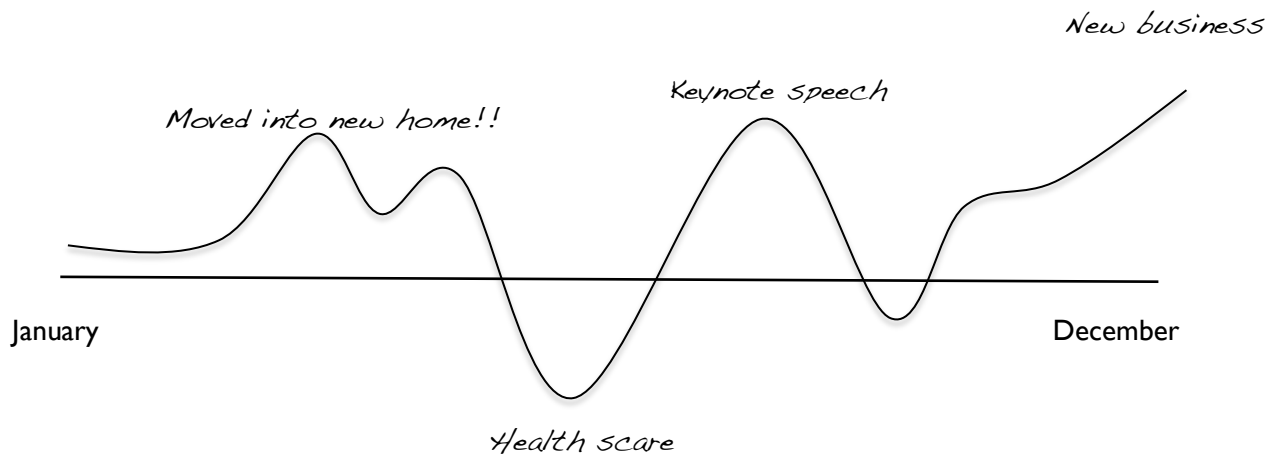
Take your time. Stay present.



LOOKING BACK

Peaks and Valleys of 2019

On the following page, chart the past year. Using the line as a marker for 'neutral', plot the highs and lows of your year. Include achievements and losses – all that were significant for you no matter how large or small they may have looked to others standing on the outside. Label each peak and valley. Here's an example of a simple Peaks and Valleys chart.



Reflect on the events and situations that resulted in learning or a change in direction. Feel free to add extra details or to customize the exercise in a way that provides the most benefit to you.

2019 Peaks and Valleys

January

December

Celebrate

What am I most **proud** of in 2019?

How can I **acknowledge and celebrate** that, if I haven't already?

Acknowledge Learning

What were my most significant **professional learnings** in 2019?

What were my most significant **personal learnings** in 2019?

What trends or patterns are common to what supported or encouraged the learning? (people, events, my own mindset, etc.)

Be Grateful

For what and/or whom am I grateful in 2019?

Let Go

What do I want to let go of in 2019? This may be a role you play, a mindset or attitude you hold, a habit that you'd like you be finished with.

Contemplating the Peaks and Valleys Chart

As I contemplate the Peaks and Valleys chart, what do I notice? What story might I be able to tell, connections can I make?

LOOKING FORWARD

Vision 2020

Relax, close your eyes and imagine it's December 31, 2020 and you're celebrating a wildly successful year – you have achieved all that you have set out to achieve. Engage your emotions and amp up your imagination. Make your vision bold and full of color and actual physical sensation. You may find that you imagine scenes with other people and at specific places. Take note of whom you're with and where you are.

Use the back of this page to fully describe your vision.

Identify a potential **theme** for 2020. Many designate a 'word for the year'.

The following **emotions and physical sensations** show up for me as I contemplate my future:

Clarify

In order to declare 2020 a **professional 'best year'**, what will I accomplish?

In order to declare 2020 a **personal 'best year'**, what will I accomplish? *Include in your thinking all various aspects of life: from health, finances, home, family, friends, spirituality, and community achievements.*

Vision 2020

Vision Check

Review your vision and list of desired accomplishments. Do they meet the following criteria?

- **Affirmative:** Each element is based on a desire - something you want to create rather than something you want to get rid of. Rewrite any element that is written in the negative. Example: Achieve health vs. lose weight. And be specific about what 'achieve health' means.
- **Important:** It's important to you...really. On a scale of 1 – 5, you would give each a '4' or '5' in terms of importance. They are more than a wish or nice to have. You are willing to put forth time and effort to make each one happen.
- **Current tense:** Write your vision and goals/accomplishments as if they have already happened and avoid statements that begin with 'I will...'. Example: My energy is high, and I am eating a healthy low-carb diet. I get at least 7 hours of sleep each night and I am enjoying my new exercise habits.
- **Ownership:** You are the one to take action and make it happen.

2020 Goals

Break your Vision into Goals. You can use the S.M.A.R.T format: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

WHAT'S TRUE NOW?

For each goal, accomplishment or aspect of your vision, take stock of where you are now - your current situation. Include metrics, your past history in trying to achieve the goal, emotions and attitudes. Be both honest and kind with yourself.

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

Include what ongoing challenges from 2019 will be present in 2020.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

For each goal, create a plan. This is where it gets serious and where most visions for the year fail. An effective plan has at least these elements: (*scroll to page 13 for more detail*)

- Conditions of satisfaction – what will the end result look like?
- A date of completion
- Defined actions required to achieve the desired result (plan)
- A basic timeline
- Regular check-ins

And finally...

Increase your odds for success:

- **Buddy up:** Find a person(s) who you commit to check in with regularly on the achievement of your goals. Hold each other accountable.
- **Join a group:** Many people find that being a part of an accountability group, or a community of practice helps keep them on plan. It's important that the group meet regularly and that everyone agrees how they will hold each other accountable.
- **Make it public:** Share your goals with friends, family, co-workers, supervisors, etc. Some people even post them publicly in their office or even on social media.
- **Review regularly:** Look at your goals on a weekly basis, reflect on your progress and make plans to move each commitment forward.
- **Invest in support:** Consider hiring a personal trainer, nutritionist or other health professional or a personal coach. A financial investment can increase the attention and intention paid to the effort.
- **Create habits:** Start with small habits that help you stay on target. James Clear's approach to creating habits is clear and starts small: **Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results**. As an example, making your bed first thing in the morning can help you set in motion a sense of accomplishment and productivity. (*See page 18 of this packet for more on habits*)
- **Try an analog planner:** Over the past few years, paper-based journals have enjoyed an upward spike. The connection between hand writing, memory and self-awareness is proven over and over again. I've been using the [Best Self Journal](#) for 2.5 years and highly recommend it. This year, though, I'm trying the [Bullet Journal](#) method to give me more flexibility and customization. Also highly rated are the [Full Focus Planner](#) and [EVO Planner](#).
- **Recognize resistance:** If, over time, you notice you are not moving your commitments forward, here are some suggested resources:
 - [Do the Work](#) and the [War of Art](#) by Steven Pressfield
 - [Poke the Box: When Was the Last Time You Did Something for the First Time](#) by Seth Godin
 - [Immunity to Change](#) by Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey

Congratulations!

You've got a great start for a new decade! I look forward to checking back in with you at the end of 2020 to hear about your achievements!

#BeginAgain

Reflect.Plan.Practice.Become

Keep Scrolling for further Goal Planning + The Art of Becoming: Habits and Practices

THERE'S MORE: BREAKING IT DOWN FURTHER

We thwart our ability to make progress by leaving goals at a too-high level. We need to see how our projects will unfold so that we can line up resources, plan for challenges and manage our time, energy and attention. Where will we start? What is the first step? As the saying goes, you eat a chocolate elephant one bite at a time. But first you must get a sense of the size and scope of the 'elephant' so that you can pace yourself! For each goal, create a general plan and add more details later. The intent here is to give yourself more information so that you know what it will take. You may find that you reduce what you plan for 2020 so that you can prioritize what is most important. This is a good thing!

Break your vision into manageable chunks. Use the following three-month periods (**2020 at Ten Thousand Feet** template on following page) to sketch out how your vision will take shape. Include events you already have on your calendar: vacations, graduations, conferences, etc. Be sure you are scheduling time for personal rejuvenation during the year.

Then, at the beginning of each three-month period (roughly 13 weeks), break the goals down further, making them more manageable. See **2020 at the One Thousand Feet**.

2020 at Ten Thousand Feet The Lay of the Land

January	February	March
Notes:		

April	May	June
Notes:		

July	August	September
Notes:		

October	November	December
Notes:		

2020 at One Thousand Feet Map it Out

Quarterly Planning

Goal #1:

Context: Why is this important? How does it fit into my bigger picture for 2020?

Goal #2:

Context: Why is this important? How does it fit into my bigger picture for 2020?

Goal #3:

Context: Why is this important? How does it fit into my bigger picture for 2020?

Step by Step: Take it to the next level down. Each of these Steps will likely require several actions at the task-level that unfold on a daily basis.

Goal #1

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Goal #2

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Goal #3

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

HABITS and PRACTICES: THE ART OF BECOMING

In short, our practices, or habits, shape who we become. Western psychology pioneer William James described humans as ‘mere bundles of habits’. As you launch your year and keep your compass set in the direction of your goals, the habits you create will determine your success. Period.

[James Clear](#) has created the ultimate guide to habit creation with his book, [Atomic Habits](#). It’s based on years of research that includes psychology, neuroscience, cognitive and behavioral science. I highly recommend that you dig into this via his book, various YouTube videos and multiple podcast interviews. Just do a search in any of these vehicles and you’ll find a wealth of information. You’ll likely improve the template, below. But until then, this will help!

In the meantime, here is a format for you to use to track your weekly practices. I’ve listed a few high-impact practices that develop proficiency in various areas:

- ∞ **Daily gratitude practice** – Shawn Achor, author of [The Happiness Advantage](#), has found this to be true: Practicing Gratitude leads to Happiness. Happiness leads to Success. So, Gratitude → Happiness → Success*
- ∞ **Weekly and Daily Planning** – Plan your work and work your plan
- ∞ **Meditation** – Increases your ability to stay focused and calms the mind
- ∞ **Exercise** – Increases energy, boosts mood, decreases stress...

**Source: 10% Happier Podcast. Episode #156: Shawn Achor, The Science Behind Gratitude*

Practice	Goal	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	Total

Deliberate Practice Leads to Mastery. No doubt that we get better with practice, but deliberate practice is necessary. Again, lots of research out there but here’s a brief description by [Peak](#) author, Anders Ericsson: Deliberate Practice is defined [here](#) by Anders Ericsson.