

ANNUAL REFLECTION

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2020 Annual Reflection Framework

Brought to you by Inside Out Leadership
as adapted from the work of Being Centered and Reboot.

As the curtain closes on an interesting, challenging, awful, wonderful, amazing, heartbreaking, stretching year, it's time to reflect on what we've learned, and create space for a 2021 in which we're just a bit closer to the person we know we can be.

The Annual Reflection Template is a journey of structured reflection, designed to help you mine max value from the year that was, and set the stage for a successful and fulfilling year to come.

Exercises:

1. The events of 2020
2. The impact of 2020 events
3. What 2020 events ended, or changed
4. Your relationship to 2020 events
5. Defining success for 2021
6. Keeping success present throughout 2021

Each exercise runs between 15-30 minutes depending on how in depth you choose to go, making the **total time to complete this entire reflection approximately 2-3 hours**, although you can certainly spend more time if you like. You can do it all in one sitting, or split it over 2, 3, or 6 sessions over the next few weeks.

Important Tips Before You Get Started:

- ❖ Remember to copy/paste this into a Google Doc of your own, so you can make changes directly on the document.
- ❖ For all journaling prompts, focus on writing, not editing. Don't allow yourself to edit, just let yourself flow in a steady stream of consciousness. [Here's why.](#)

To begin, a poem

You reading this, be ready

Starting here, what do you want to remember?

How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?

What scent of old wood hovers, what softened
sound from outside fills the air?

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world
than the breathing respect that you carry
wherever you go right now? Are you waiting
for time to show you some better thoughts?

When you turn around, starting here, lift this
new glimpse that you found; carry into evening
all that you want from this day. This interval you spent
reading or hearing this, keep it for life –

What can anyone give you greater than now,
starting here, right in this room, when you turn around?

--- William Stafford



Exercise 1 (15 min)

- Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).

List your experiences, accomplishments and milestones from this past year. Describe them in as much detail as you like.

Jan - Mar

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 1
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 2
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 3

Apr - Jun

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 4
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 5
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 6

Jul - Sept

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 7

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 8
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 9

Oct - Nov

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 10
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 11
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 12

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and Third by experience, which is the bitterest.

-CONFUCIUS



Exercise 2 (30 min)

- *Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).*

For each of the moments and milestones from your past year, write a brief reflection about how that moment or milestone helped shape who you are today.

Jan - Mar

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 1
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 2
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 3

Apr - Jun

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 4
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 5
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 6

Jul - Sept

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 7
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 8
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 9

Oct - Nov

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 10
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 11
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 12



Exercise 3 (30 min)

- *Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).*

For each of the moments and milestones from your past year, write a brief reflection in answer to the following journal prompt:

What do these events tell me about what I'm leaving behind? What do they show me about what's coming to a close for me, what's ending, or what I'm letting go? What part of myself, my identity, or my life, is being shed through these events?

Jan - Mar

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 1
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 2
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 3

Apr - Jun

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 4

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 5
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 6

Jul - Sept

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 7
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 8
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 9

Oct - Nov

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 10
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 11
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 12



Exercise 4 (30 min)

- *Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).*

For each of the moments and milestones from your past year, write a brief reflection in answer to the following journal prompt:

Relate to each of these moments or milestones as if they were an ally -- a teacher, expressly here to help you grow into the person you were meant to be. A teacher who challenges you to help you grow.

From that place, write a thank you note to each moment for helping you become who you are, and giving you the opportunity to become who you want to become.

Jan - Mar

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 1
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 2
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 3

Apr - Jun

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 4
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 5
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 6

Jul - Sept

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 7
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 8
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 9

Oct - Nov

- ❖ Moment & Milestone 10
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 11
- ❖ Moment & Milestone 12

NOTE: If for any of these you have trouble seeing them as an ally, use these questions as thought starters:

- *If the Universe were using this person or situation as a perfect ally to help me grow, what would I get to learn about myself and about life?*
- *What is it that I could not have experienced without this person/circumstance?*
- *What part of this am I most resistant to? Can I see that this is true about me? And am I willing to welcome/love that part in myself?*
- *What is my biggest judgment about the way it is? Am I willing to see that the opposite of my judgment is as true or truer?*
- *How is this person or circumstance helping me face something that I have been unwilling to acknowledge or face?*
- *What quality could not have been developed in me without this person/circumstance?*
- *How is the universe using this person or situation to give me feedback?*
- *How is this in service to my growth?*
- *What part of me is this bringing forward to welcome, honor, accept, or love?*
- *In twenty years (or two), what will I say I learned from “that”?*
- *In twenty years (or two), what about this will I be grateful for?*

STEVE JOBS

*If you are working on
something exciting that
you really care about, you
don't have to be pushed.
The vision pulls you.*

Exercise 5 (30 min)

- Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).

Prep: Review your notes from all four of the previous exercises. Get clear about everything that happened, and the impact of all those things on who you are and who you are becoming.

Step 1: From that space, journal an answer to the following question:

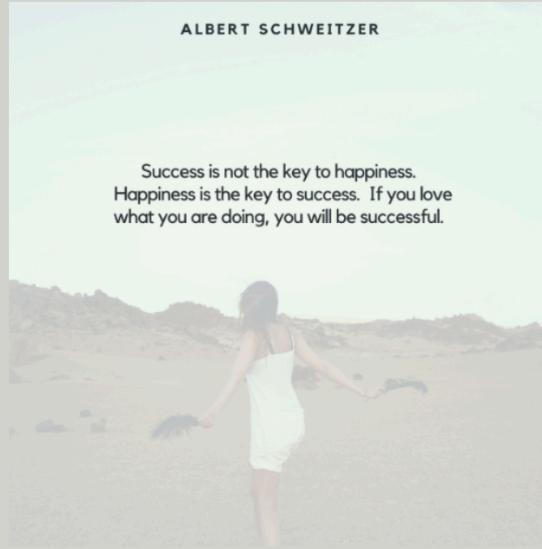
How will you know when you're successful?

(Begin your answer: “*I will know I am successful when...*”)

Step 2: In the present tense, describe yourself at the height of your powers and success. Describe your life when you're successful.

(This is your ideal scene, so please spend the time to fill in the juicy details that would really make the experience wonderful for you.)

Step 3: Copy/paste this scene into your calendar or to-do app, such that you see it at a regular interval, daily or weekly, throughout the year. Every day or week of 2021, read this scene aloud to yourself.



Exercise 6 (30-60 min)

- **Materials needed:** Envelope, stamp, reliable friend.
- Begin with a five minute centering meditation ([example](#)).

Step 1: Looking ahead to June, 2021, write yourself a letter.

Start the letter like this:

Dear [Your Name],

This is [Your Name] from the end of 2020, and I wanted to give you a bit of advice for this coming year, based on what we learned in 2020...

Step 2: Put the letter in an envelope addressed to your home address. Add postage to the envelope, and give the envelope to a reliable friend of yours for safekeeping. Ask them to hold onto the letter for the next six months, and mail it to you in June of 2021.



Closing

Thank you for everything you brought to the world in 2020, for everything you are, and for everything you are becoming. Thank you for taking the time to reflect consciously on all the moments in this last year of your life, and set your intention for the year to come.

Please, thank yourself for taking 100% responsibility for creating the life you want.

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

—Mary Oliver

About & Help

The Annual Review Template was created by [Ryan Vaughn](#), founder of [Inside Out Leadership](#), made possible by standing on the shoulders of two giants: Carl Bacciellieri of [Being Centered](#), and Jerry Colonna of [Reboot](#). If you were to ask them, it's giants all the way down.

About Ryan

Ryan is a leadership coach to entrepreneurs, the founder of [Inside Out Leadership](#), and a serial entrepreneur. He has helped leaders from dozens of companies design a more conscious life, and make key changes to improve their performance and satisfaction. Previously, Ryan scaled companies to over 11-million users across 45 states, raised over \$20m from leading VCs, built teams of nearly 100 world-class employees, and acquired or partnered with nearly a dozen companies.

Help, feedback and questions:

At any point in the process, please feel free to [contact me](#) with any questions, comments or feedback. I'd love to hear from you.