The Ultimate Annual Review 2023 Edition

"I don't know where we are going but I know exactly how to get there."

Boyd Varty

Made with ❤️ by Schlaf



👋🏼 Hey there, Steve Schlafman here. I'm a Professional Transition Coach and writer. I help founders, executives and creatives in midlife navigate complex work-life transitions and manifest their next calling. I'm also the creator of Where the Road Bends, a newsletter exploring personal evolutions and transitions.

👉🏼 Interested in deepening your journey? Discover more about my coaching services at schlaf.co. For

regular insights and thought-provoking essays, subscribe to **Where the Road Bends**. And for occasional musings and updates, follow me on Twitter @schlaf. Let's continue this journey together!

I'm glad you're here

Welcome to the 2023 edition of the Ultimate Annual Review. Whether embarking on this process for the first time or returning for another introspective adventure, I'm thrilled you're here. Your trust and commitment to this process are deeply acknowledged, honored, and respected. I see you.

Now in its sixth year, the Ultimate Annual Review has crossed 25,000 downloads, impacting lives in over 80 countries. This year, while retaining the core structure, I've added new quotes for inspiration and expanded instructions to further guide your experience. I also published a Spotify playlist to be your musical companion as you delve into the depths of your experiences and dreams.

A theme close to my heart this holiday season is "enoughness"—an invitation to embrace ourselves and the present as uniquely perfect and complete. As I considered adding new sections and questions to this process, I realized its current form might already be ideal. What if it perfectly meets our needs? What if it's not lacking anything? How does my impulse to add more features to an already powerful exercise reflect an insecurity?

This leads to an even broader question: what if you, in this moment, are inherently complete and perfect, just as you are?

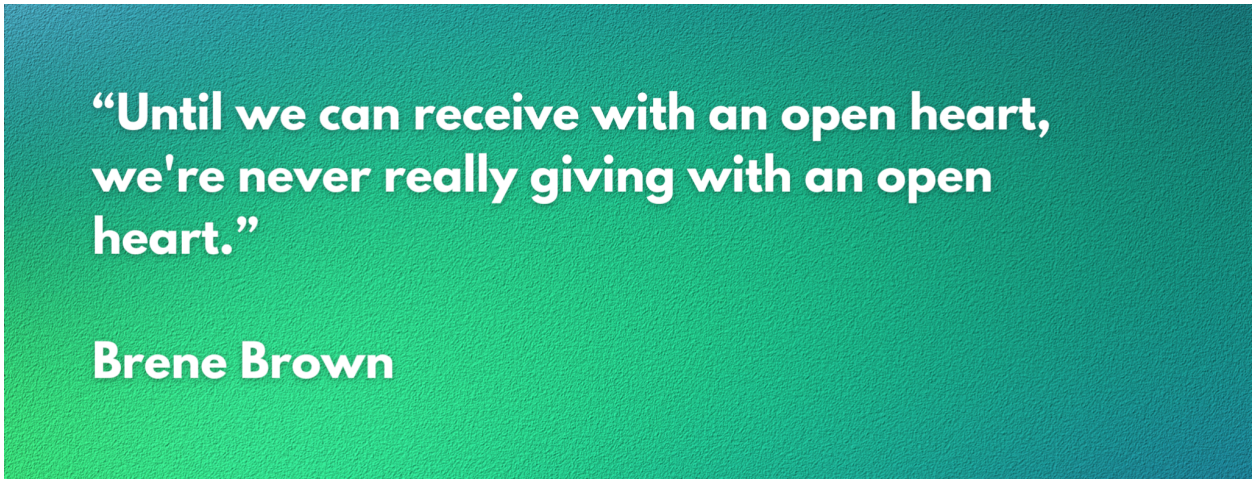
As you reflect on 2023 and envision 2024, I encourage you to savor the unique beauty of your path, including its twists and turns. Recognize that every experience, every choice, every relationship, and every moment has shaped your unique and remarkable story.

With 2024 upon us, I encourage you to embrace this notion of enoughness and self-worth, celebrating your present completeness. Simultaneously, acknowledge and honor your latent potential and possibilities. Remember, you are enough as you are, yet you also hold the promise of tremendous growth and evolution.

So, celebrate and embrace who you are, not just for your achievements or future ambitions, but for your inherent qualities, embracing both your radiant light and your darkest shadows. In this new year, may you honor your wholeness and carry a sense of enoughness, while remaining open to the unfolding of your untapped potential and future possibilities.

With that, it's time to begin the 2023 Ultimate Annual Review. I wish you a holiday season filled with love, light, and special moments.

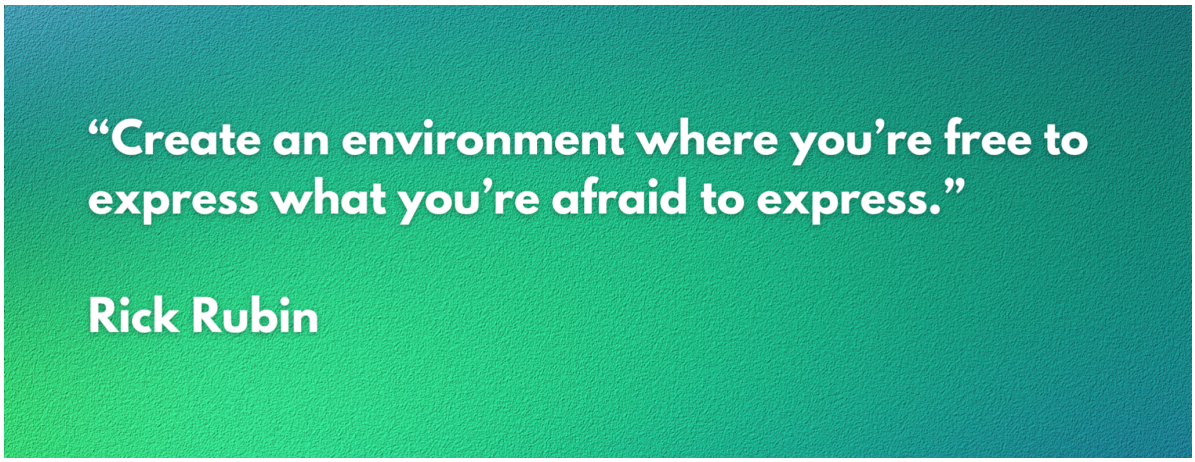
Need help? Feeling stuck? Have feedback?



Life's journey can sometimes leave us at a crossroads or dead end, especially when we're digging deep within ourselves. If you find yourself feeling stuck or have thoughts to share during this reflective process, remember, you're not alone.

I'm just a message away at s@schlaf.co. Whether it's a question, a moment of insight, or feedback about the review, I'm here to listen and help. Your perspectives and experiences are invaluable, and I'm eager to hear how this journey is unfolding for you.

Tips & tricks



💡 As you embark on this journey of introspection and discovery, these pointers are designed to ensure you get the most out of the process. Whether you're a first-timer or a returning participant, these tips will help you create an optimal environment for reflection, encourage thoughtful engagement, and remind you to embrace this journey with an open heart and mind.

Here are some tips:

👋🏽 Recruit a group of friends or family for accountability

⏳ Give yourself ~2 weeks to finish the process

📅 Block out several 1-2 hour slots on your calendar

💸 View this as an investment in yourself and your future

🤫 Find a quiet space and a comfortable chair

📵 Turn off your mobile devices, wifi and unplug

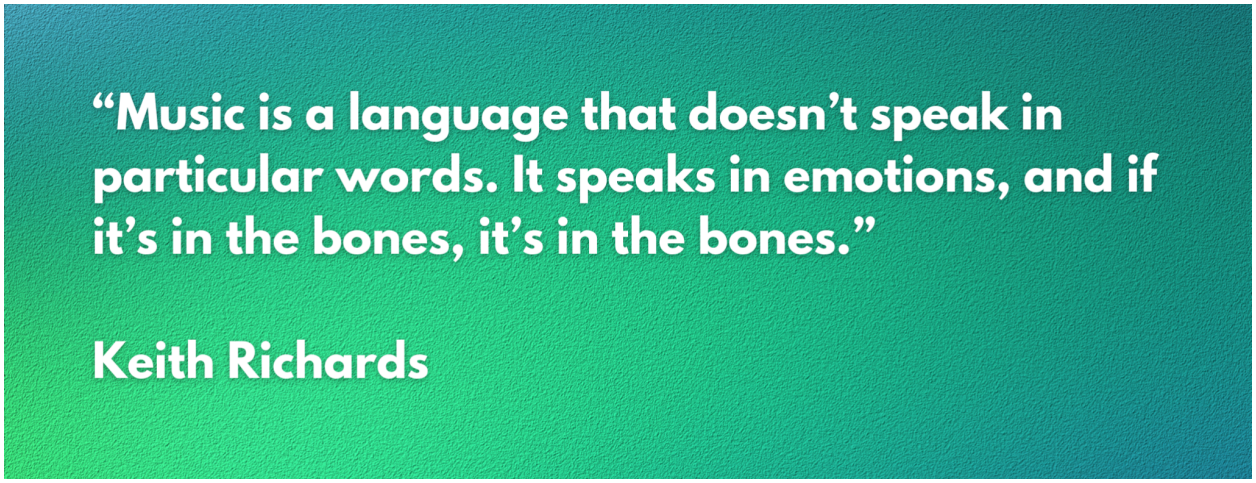
🎵 Play music that energizes and/or inspires you

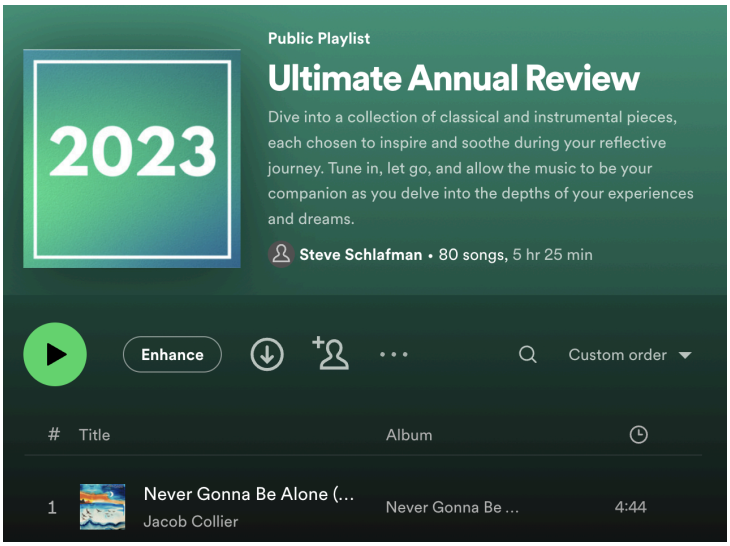
✨ Be bold, honest, and genuine (BE YOU)

➡️ Move through the exercises at your own pace—there’s no rush

🤡 Don't forget to have fun and enjoy the process

The 2023 playlist

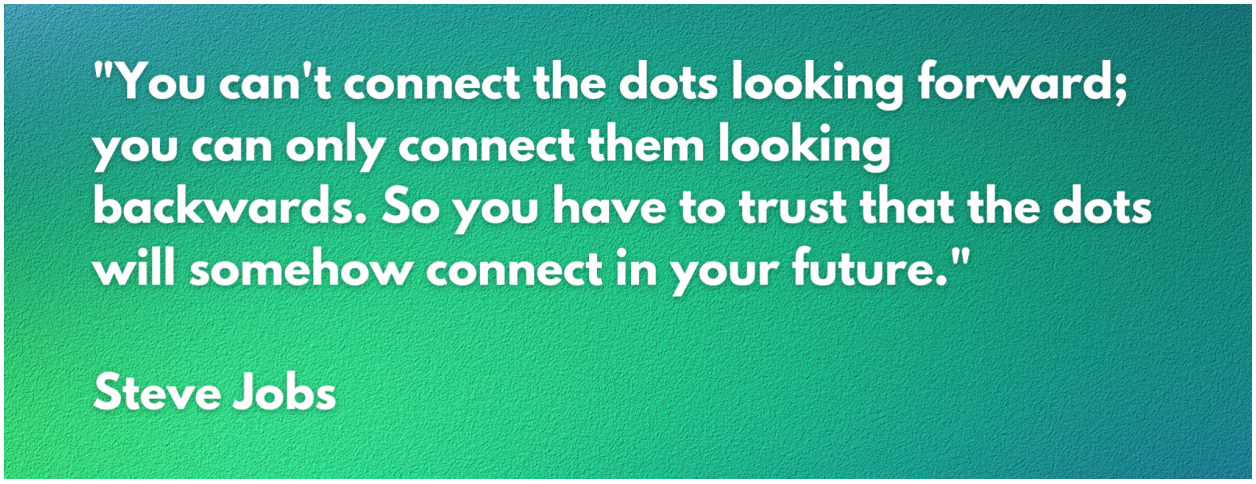


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💡 Step into reflection and self-discovery with a carefully curated 2023 playlist. This collection of classical and instrumental pieces is more than just background music; it's a tapestry of sounds designed to inspire creativity, foster introspection, and set the stage for profound review experience. Tune in, let go, and allow the music to be your companion as you delve into the depths of your experiences, dreams, and plans.

🎵 [Access and download the playlist here on Spotify]

Step 1: Plot Your Moments & Milestones



💡 This initial step is all about taking a walk down memory lane and charting the significant events of your year. It's a time to pause and reflect on the moments that have shaped you—the triumphs, the challenges, and everything in between. This exercise isn't just about recalling events and moments; it's about recognizing the narrative arc of your year. By constructing a timeline, you'll gain a clearer, more comprehensive view of your journey through 2023. So grab your calendar, journal, or any other source that captures your story, and let's start plotting this chapter of your life.

⏰ **Est Time**: 30-60 Minutes

📅 Plot monthly or quarterly

Sources

🗓️ Calendar

📝 Journal

📳 Social Media

📨 Email

📸 Camera Roll

🚴 Health Data

What were your major moments, milestones, and memories?

😷 Volunteered

🧗 Took a risk

🥑 Formed a habit

💕 Got Married

🏃 Built a new habit

🌇 Moved cities

👩🏾‍💻 Changed jobs

📣 Protested

📚 Took a course

🚀 Founded a startup

👶🏻 Had a baby

🍳 Learned to cook

Your Timeline

📅 **List the major moments, milestones and events that shaped 2023:**

🥶 January

-

❤️ February

-

🐿️ **March**

-

☔ **April**

-

🌸 **May**

-

June

-

☀️ **July**

-

⛱️ **August**

-

📚 **September**

-

🍁 **October**

-

🦃 **November**

-

🎄 **December**

-

Step 2: Capture Your Reflections & Lessons



💡 This stage of our journey invites you to dive deep into the heart of your experiences over the past year. It's a space for you to engage with your emotions, celebrate your achievements, and confront your challenges. Here, honesty and vulnerability are key. You'll be reflecting on successes, learning from obstacles, and understanding the impact of relationships in your life. Embrace this opportunity for self-assessment and profound learning as you distill the essence of your year into lessons that will illuminate your path forward.

⏰ **Est Time**: 60-75 Minutes

💟 Go inward and be patient

Success & Growth

1️⃣ What am I most proud of personally?

2️⃣ What am I most proud of professionally?

3️⃣ What new skills did I develop? (e.g. active listening, saying no, etc.)

4️⃣ What new habits did I develop? (e.g. meditation, journaling, etc.)

5️⃣ How am I different based on what I experienced this year?

Obstacles

1️⃣ What goals didn't I accomplish?

2️⃣ For each, did someone or something hold you back? Did my goals or circumstances change? What happened?

3️⃣ What were the biggest obstacles I faced?

4️⃣ How did I meet or overcome these obstacles?

5️⃣ What do I regret this year? (e.g. avoided a discussion, stayed in my job, etc.)

6️⃣ What behaviors or habits held me back? (e.g. not sleeping, being dishonest with people, planning but not starting, etc.)

7️⃣ What beliefs about myself held me back? (e.g. I'm not talented enough, I don't know where to start, etc.)

People & Relationships

1️⃣ Who had a positive impact on me and my life? How did they impact me?

2️⃣ Who held me back and/or drained me? How did they impact me?

3️⃣ What new relationships did I build this year?

Health & Wellness

1️⃣ What behaviors boosted my health?

2️⃣ What behaviors degraded my health?

3️⃣ When have I felt the most energized? (e.g. mornings when I got 7 hours of sleep, mastering a skill at work, playing dodgeball with my club team, etc.)

4️⃣ How has physical discomfort and pain affected me this year**?**

5️⃣ How has mental and emotional pain affected me this year**?**

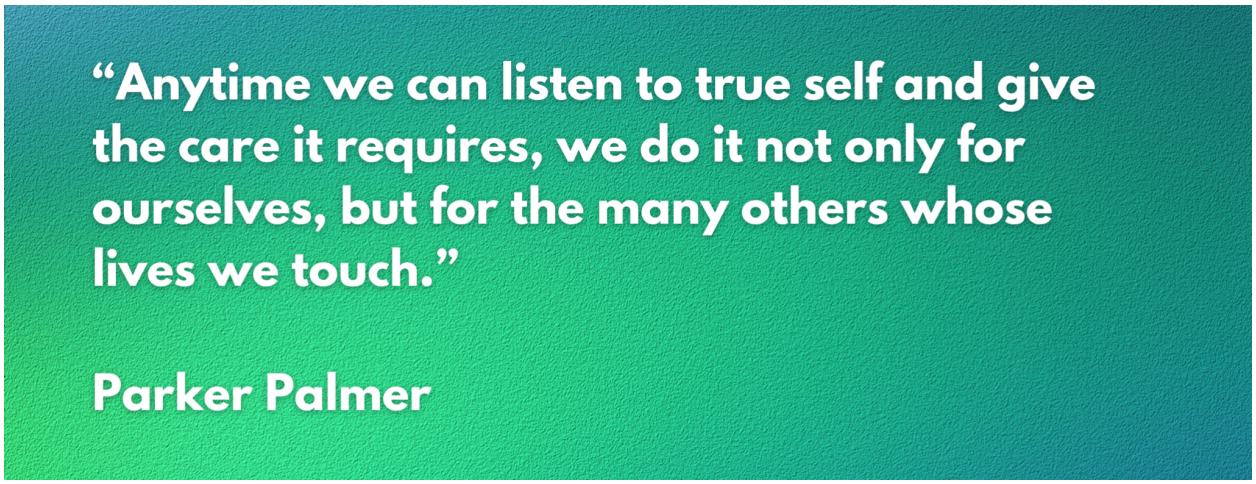
Lessons & Themes

1️⃣ What lessons did I learn this year? (hint: see below for areas of your life to consider)

2️⃣ What 3-5 words or phrases would I use to describe 2023**? (e.g. stressed, chaotic, inspired, growth, sobriety, etc.)**

3️⃣ What am I most grateful for?

Step 3: Assess Your Current Life



💡 This step is an invitation to pause and evaluate where you stand across the various dimensions of your life. With a clear and open mind, you'll assess aspects ranging from health and family to career and spirituality. This isn't just about scoring each dimension; it's a thought-provoking exercise to gain perspective on your overall well-being and satisfaction. Be honest and intuitive as you rate each area, and let this assessment guide you in identifying the facets of your life you're most motivated to focus on and nurture in 2024.

⏰ **Est Time**: 30-60 Minutes

📌 Capture your level of satisfaction

#️⃣ Give each a value from 1-10

☹️ 1 means “highly unsatisfied”

😀 10 means “couldn't get any better"

🔎 Identify what you want to focus on

Your Life Dimensions

Life Dimension	Prompt	Score	Comments
🏂Health	How does your body and mind feel?		
👨‍👩‍👧‍👧 Family	How do you feel about about family?		
👫 Friends	How do you feel about your social life?		

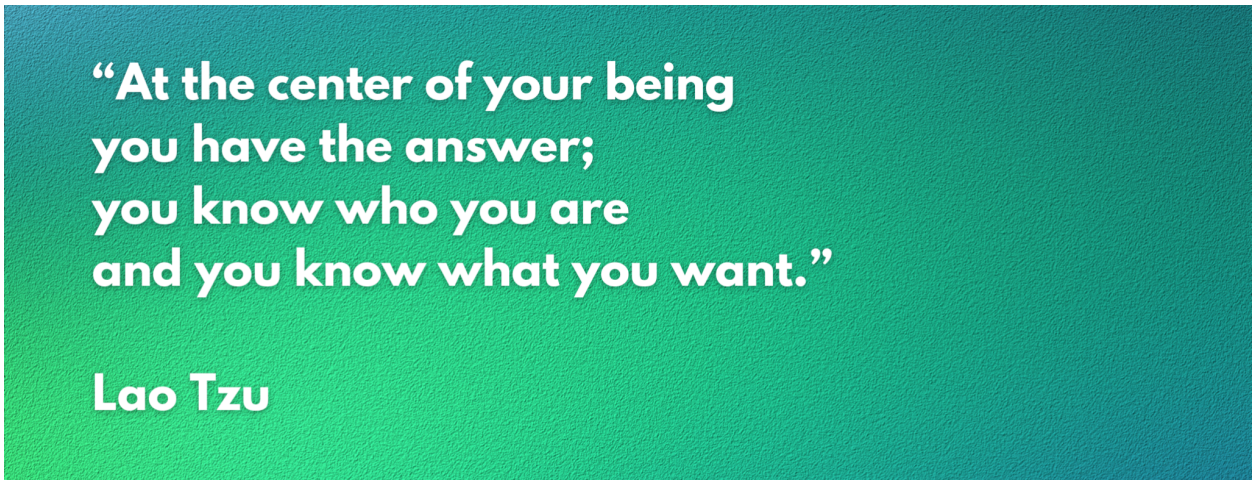
❤️ Romance	How do you feel about sex and love?
💰 Money	How do you feel about money and finances?
👩🏻‍💼 Career	How do you feel about your job and career?
💫 Spirituality	How do you feel about your connection to something bigger?
📚 Personal Growth	How do you feel about your personal growth?
📈 Professional Growth	How do you feel about your professional growth?
🕺🏻 Leisure + Play	How do you feel about your level of recreation and fun?
🖥️ Technology	How do you feel about the role technology plays in your life?
🏡 Environment	How do you feel about your surroundings at home, work and play?

Reflections

1️⃣ What three things stand out from this exercise?

2️⃣ Which dimensions am I motivated to focus on in 2024?

Step 4: Identify Your Intentions



💡 Now, we shift our focus to the future. This step is about setting clear, intentional goals for the upcoming year. It's an invitation to dream big, yet stay grounded in realism. Consider what you truly desire for yourself in 2024—in your personal growth, relationships, career, and beyond. Reflect on the changes you wish to make and the growth you aspire to achieve. This is a time to be bold in your aspirations while being honest about your current realities. Let your answers guide you toward a year where your actions align closely with your deepest intentions and values.

⏰ **Est Time**: 60-90 Minutes

🌟 Be bold yet realistic

Creating Awareness

1️⃣ What big questions about my life am I asking myself?

2️⃣ If I knew I couldn’t fail what would I focus on?

3️⃣ What do I know to be true that I'm not acting on?

4️⃣ What do I want for myself?

5️⃣ What would I love to learn?

6️⃣ How would I love to grow?

Moving On

1️⃣ What attitudes, beliefs and behaviors do I want to shed?

2️⃣ What activities do I want to walk away from?

3️⃣ What do I need to say no to?

4️⃣ What do I want to say no to?

Habits & Behaviors

1️⃣ What habits and behaviors do I want to start?

2️⃣ What habits and behaviors do I want to stop?

3️⃣ What habits and behaviors will I continue?

Fears & Obstacles

1️⃣ How will I challenge myself?

2️⃣ What permission do I need to give myself? (e.g. it's ok to walk away from that relationship that isn't serving me, it's ok to slow down, it's ok to put myself first, etc.)

3️⃣ What internal obstacles do I need to break down? (e.g. limiting beliefs, creative blocks, etc.)

4️⃣ What external obstacles do I anticipate facing? How will I prepare? (e.g. layoff, pandemic, tough boss, etc.)

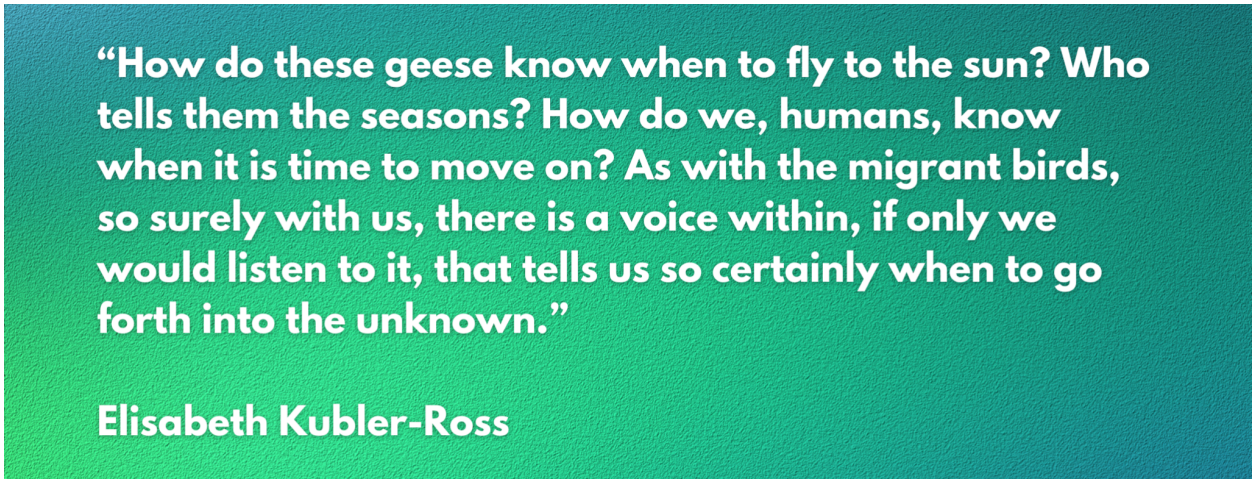
Relationships

1️⃣ What relationships in my life will I prioritize this year?**

2️⃣ What relationships no longer serve me?

3️⃣ Who would I like to reconnect with?

Step 5: Set Your Goals & Action Plan



💡 This step marks a pivotal transition from reflection to action. Here, we transform insights and intentions into tangible goals and actions for 2024. This step is about defining what success looks like for you, understanding the significance of each goal, and laying out a practical action plan. Remember, the goals you set here are the milestones you'll strive towards in the first three

months of the year. Let's create a roadmap that leads you to move closer to what you want to manifest in 2024.

⏰ **Est Time**: 60 Minutes

🛣️ Where the rubber hits the road

Purpose & Goals

1️⃣ What is my purpose in 2024? (If you would like some guidance, here's an essay I wrote about purpose and ambition)

2️⃣ Brainstorm: What goals *might* I like to accomplish?

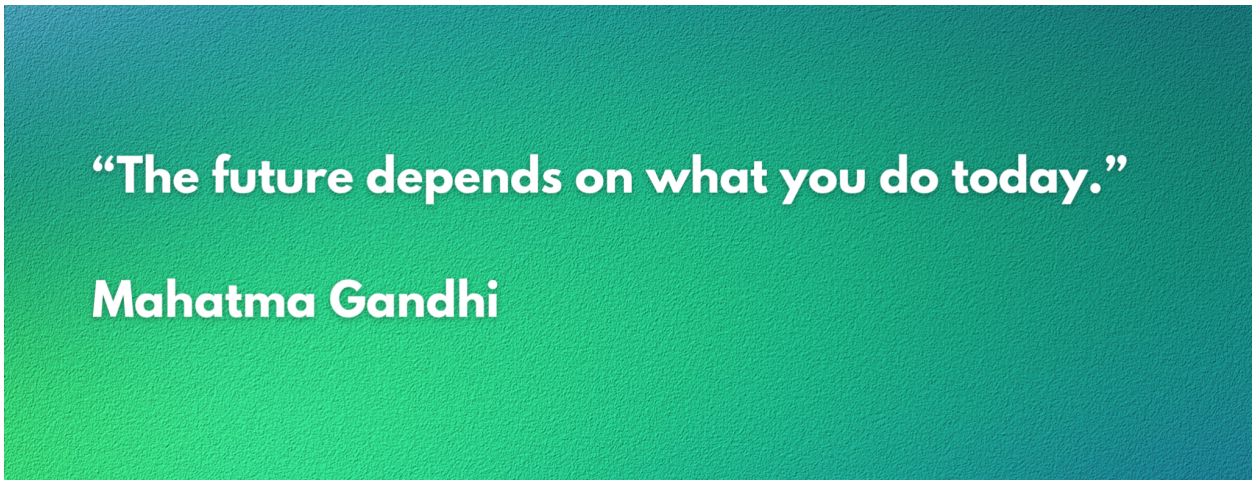
3️⃣ Of those, what 1-3 goals do I *really* want to accomplish?

Your Action Plan

My Growth Priorities —>	Goal 1:	Goal 2:	Goal 3:
1️⃣ What's important about this to me?			
2️⃣ How will I be different when I've achieved this?			
3️⃣ What does success look like? How will I know?			
4️⃣ From 0-10, how confident are you you'll hit this goal?			
5️⃣ Why might you fail to hit this goal?			
6️⃣ What beliefs and behaviors support this goal?			
7️⃣ What beliefs and behaviors hinder this goal?			
8️⃣ Who can help and provide accountability?			

9️⃣ What 3 specific but small steps can I take to get started?

Step 6: Write To Your Future Self



💡You've reached the final step in your annual review journey. You now have the unique opportunity to communicate with your future self. It's a moment to encapsulate your current thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and lessons into a message that will reach you in the future. Think of it as a time capsule of self-reflection, a personal reminder of where you were at this point in time. As you write this letter, be honest, hopeful, and heartfelt. What you capture today will be a beacon for your future self, a reminder of your journey and growth. Embrace this chance to connect with the person you are yet to become. What do you want them to know about you, your life, and your future right now?

🧠 What do you want to remember?

💌 Send letter via **FutureMe.org**

⏰ **Est Time**: 45-60 Minutes

🎉 This is the last step!

Dear Future Me,

As you stand at the end of 2024, remember the journey that brought you here. Reflect on the key lessons you've learned, the goals you've pursued, the pivotal moments that have shaped you, and the emotions that color your life right now. Think about what you're deeply grateful for

today, and the changes you hope to see in your life. Above all, what is the core message or insight you *really want* to carry forward from this moment to the next year?

With hope and reflection,

Me

A final note

💌 *You made it! A huge congratulations on completing your Ultimate Annual Review!

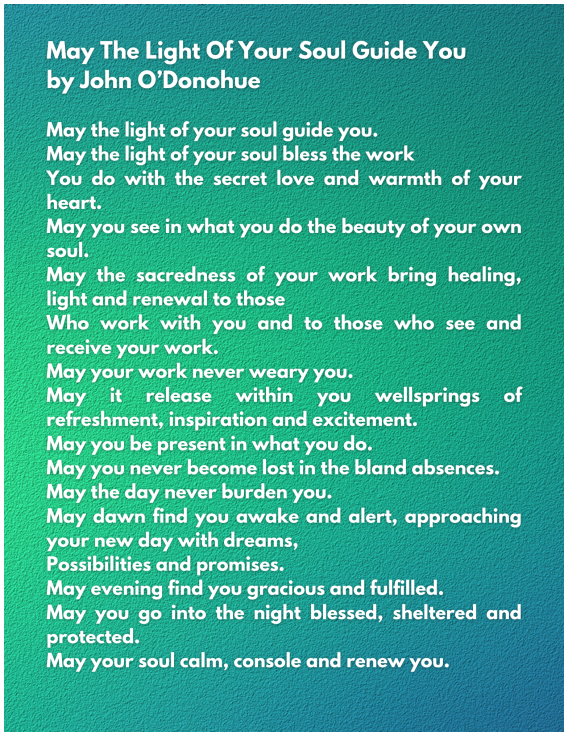
The time, effort, and heart you've poured into this introspective journey is not just commendable, but truly inspiring. What you've achieved is far from ordinary—it's a significant milestone worthy of celebration and deep appreciation. By completing this process, you've taken a powerful stride in both understanding and consciously shaping your life's path. Well done.*

As you head into 2024, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes for your path ahead. May the insights you've gathered here illuminate your way with hope, strength, and a world of possibilities. Each new day brings a chance to live out the lessons and reflections you've gleaned, weaving them into the ever-evolving tapestry that is your life.

*Remember, I'm always here to offer support, guidance, or simply to listen. Don't hesitate to reach out at any time at s@schlaf.co. Here's to a magnificent 2024, a year where you continue to grow, thrive, and shine your unique light on the world around you.

With love and light,

—*Steve*



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