

## **Setting goals that stick: New Year, new you!**

### **Episode 133 - Transcript**

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Hi friend, Happy New Year!

Setting your goals and good intentions for the New Year works best when you take some time to reflect on the previous year and your progress. There are lots of ways to do this, but I have a favorite that works for me that I wanted to share as we kick off the New Year together.

As I embark on a new year, I do a personal evaluation which I call my “Personal Year in Review.” It’s a look back at all the highs and lows, what jumped out at me, areas where I felt I excelled as well as areas where I dropped the ball and fell short. This year, obviously my reflections will look different from past years. So much in 2020 was beyond my control..... with one significant exception: how well did I embrace what was in front of me and try to make the best of a challenging or less than ideal situation? What did I learn, and what might I do differently? Did the experience change me? If so, how? What did I learn about myself? And what lessons will I carry with me going forward.

In reality, this idea of looking at challenges based on what we can learn is at the core of mindset, which I talked about in Episode 132 just before the holiday break.

So much in life -- whether surviving in a pandemic or not -- is beyond our control. How we respond isn't. What we tell ourselves matters, and it's an important reminder as we embrace another year of potential uncertainty.

As I worked on this exercise over the weekend, I reflected on how many of the goals and benchmarks I had set for 2020 had to be massively overhauled or retooled.... At the same time, I also saw evidence of the new opportunities that had come as a result of being forced to embrace several pivots. I'm sure your year was similar. Think about all the things you had to learn to do, or to do differently as a result of this experience. Maybe you didn't learn to speak French, take up knitting, or rearrange all of your closets, but I'll bet there are some really significant things that you learned about yourself, or tackled that you likely wouldn't have otherwise. And for parents, how about homeschooling? It probably wasn't perfect, but what did you learn? And all that time with your kids. Again, maybe more than you bargained for, but what a gift when you think about it.

For me, I'm naturally inclined to focus more on the "to do's" and things still to be done, rather than on what I've accomplished. This can be pretty typical for women. We tend to be tough on ourselves. This exercise forces me to really reflect on progress made. I find that it's a great confidence booster, even though there are always areas for continued improvement.

In normal years, as I do this personal year in review, I quickly start to see some obvious goals for the new year come out of this exercise. This year was no exception even though those goals will look a bit different because of the experience of the past year, and the pivotes i had to make.

Here's how the exercise works..... It's essentially a brain dump that starts with a narrative to capture the year. I divide mine into buckets: family/relationships; professional; personal improvement; health/fitness; etc... -- I don't over complicate this.

As I reflect on each bucket, I capture what I remember and things that were particularly meaningful. I make lots of notes about the things that impacted me including conversations (liek those i've had on the podcast this year!) and experiences that left me changed, things I learned, books and movies that sparked my curiosity and impacted me in some way (we've all had a lot more time for that in 2020!)

Next, I go back through my calendar and my journals for the entire year and jot down a few more notes and capture other events and experiences that i've identified as important, or where I recognize something I learned.

In my case, and in a more typical year -- those might include speeches given, blogs I've written, podcasts produced, workshops or courses taught, networking and building new relationships and contacts, as well as progress on other

projects. To the extent I can capture these things numerically I do that too. This year, because those numbers will either be missing from the list or much lower than normal, i'll be looking at how I managed to pivot aspects of those goals into something that allowed progress even though it looked very different from my original plans. For example, my in person speeches and in person podcasts were scrapped, but several new opportunities for virtual engagement came up instead that required me to quickly learn some new skills.

Another part of this exercise ....

I also spend time reflecting on my personal relationships. How am I showing up for others? How am I doing as a mom, wife, and daughter? And, how have I dealt with challenging people and difficult experiences? I reflect on what I learned, and what I can do better [and also what I can challenge my kids to do better]. I often ask them for their feedback on how i've done as well.

Next, I take all of this and begin to craft my goals for the New Year based on this "progress report." I call my goals for the New Year my Plan of Action. Included in that are benchmarks and areas to tackle and improve upon in the coming year.

Because I've done this for years, I also review the previous year's evaluation, and the Plan of Action for the coming year -- in this case I'll be reviewing my 2020 Plan of Action to see how it matched up. How did I perform? And how did I embrace the

challenges presented to me that none of us could have anticipated.

Most of all, I'll be more generous with myself this year.

Finally, one additional element that I include in my plan of action and goals for the new year is a series of Why questions that force me to dig deeper into WHY these things are goals in the first place. Forcing yourself to get clear on WHY is an essential element needed to actually own the goal, and truly make it a priority. Why does it matter? How will you be better? How will you have a bigger impact? For yourself, for those you love, for your community, for whatever higher purpose you aspire to.

This two part exercise has worked for me for many years, and I've taught my students how to do this and use it to measure growth and hold themselves accountable for their goals.

It's important to pick an approach and customize it so that it works for you, but also challenges you to be accountable to yourself.

I'd also love to know what works for you as you reflect on the year that's passed and as you set future intentions. Do you share your resolutions? If so, with whom? How does that help?

As we launch a new season of she said/she said podcast I'll be talking to my guests about how they set their intentions for the new year, and how they stick to them. More to come on that.

Until then, I'm sending you my love and my warmest wishes for a wonderful start to the new year .... may you embrace your inner growth mindset no matter what life throws your way this year. One thing is for sure, I'll be here working to share thoughts and perspectives to spark your curiosity, leave you feeling engaged and inspired, and hopefully even more ready to tackle the world in your own unique way.

Take care, my friend. I'll see you next week.

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