

END-OF-THE-YEAR PROCESS & LETTER-WRITING EXERCISE

Bringing closure to a situation...

1. Review the events of this past year.

Recall the moment in time you first began the year and decided to jump into it. Who were you then? What were you up to in your life? What were your hopes, aspirations, intentions for the year?

Examine the year's low and high points, your stepping stones, and plan ahead for next year.

Write down the year's main events: turning points, stepping stones, both the high points as well as the low points, as if you were watching a movie. Keep it simple, use phrases or short sentences. This helps open up the perspective to a longer time frame and you will be able to see more of the whole picture.

2. What didn't work out this year?

What were you frustrated about? Which intentions failed? How about disappointments? What was the biggest challenge you faced in this year and how did it turn out? Write this like an "inventory", debriefing yourself vs indulging or wallowing.

3. Feelings and inner work issues.

Depending on your familiarity with this, explore what resentments you are carrying towards others, God, the Universe, fate, and yourself as a result of this year's experiences? Are you willing and ready to forgive, can you forgive yourself? Ask yourself how would you do that, and what would it take to do that?

4. What were the winning moments of this past year?

What were your true accomplishments? How have you



grown/evolved from your experiences? And, depending on your familiarity with a spiritual path, what were the soul lessons of these experiences? What have you learned from this that you couldn't have learned any other way? Who have you become? What will you do differently next time?

5. What have you learned about what you want next?

What skills have you developed that you want to take forward? What do you choose to not bring forward? What might be the breakthrough or leap in living more true to your purpose and mission out of these experiences?



END-OF-THE-YEAR LETTER

This is a wonderful example of what you may want to include in your one page end-of-the-year "holiday" letter. I find that such a letter allows for me to clarify my successes as well as my learning process during the year. It facilitates people to know more about me and my dreams and aspirations. In addition, it works wonderfully well if you own a business, are contemplating beginning a business, or want to make a career change. I wouldn't write more than one page single spaced. Print it on a nice designer paper and enclose it with your holiday or New Year's cards. Of course, you could always send it separately by regular mail, or e-mail if you wish.

CONTINUED

LETTER CONTENT

1. Appreciation

Share your true appreciation and honoring of people in your life, your experiences, and who you are. This opens the letter on a very reflective tone. Appreciative Inquiry is one way to state it. When I share gratitude with others, it makes it more real. State what occurred. Give people specifics. This allows them to connect and relate to who you are and what you are sharing. Everyone wants to hear about success and growth. Many times it enlightens others, and present a positive shift of focus. In addition, your account paints a picture of closure and letting go, a preparation for new things to come. We usually operate in our lives with incompleteness and a sense of inadequacy about what could have happened and what should have happened. By communicating in symbols and images, our life experiences give us release and openings. Say good-bye to the old and allow for the new. This is your chance to toot your own horn.

2. What lessons were learned

State what occurred for you during the year; give facts. What lessons were learned; give tangible and living examples. Relate your experiences if you can to movies or songs from the past few years. People love to go to the movies and listen to music. Try and state your insights and your lessons via a description of a scene from a movie or a song. Other people's lessons and stories can parallel our own. Tell the truth and dare to be vulnerable. State in a sentence or two or in a paragraph what you learned. Be specific. Share facts as well as emotions if appropriate. These lessons many times can blossom into a class, a book, a movie script. Let your imagination be fully expressed.

3. Plans and Intentions

State your desires and goals. This way you have a community of people to remind and support you. Tell those people you are writing to what you want and desire for them. What's possible for their lives? How can your vision of encouragement and empowerment give them a gift?

4. Your contact information

How do you want to stay in touch with people during the year? Email, web site, phone, address? Provide a channel for feedback and communication, and try not to limit yourself. Be open to alternative ways of communicating, reestablishing connections, or releasing ones that no longer support you.

