



# Yearly Reflection

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*Use this template by clicking on "File" in the top-left corner and then on "Make a copy"*



## Start Here

A warm welcome to the **Yearly Reflection by Mental Garden**! This template will help you learn from the last year and intentionally plan the next one.

For the past few years, I've used the time between Christmas and New Year for reflection, and it had a profound positive impact on my life. As a result, I moved to France and learned French, started playing the trumpet in a big band, and quit my job to pursue my own projects.

Without a yearly reflection, I don't think I would have made any of these changes. It has been a valuable tool for personal growth and making meaningful changes in my life.

With this template, I hope to inspire you to do the same. To help you reflect on what is important to you, and decide on the things you want to pursue in the upcoming year.

## Why Do This?

Doing a yearly reflection has many benefits that can help you live a better life:

- Get a clear understanding of your own values and make sure your actions align with them
- Reflect on the past year and learn from your achievements, challenges, and setbacks, so you can enter the new year stronger than before
- Assess the direction your life is currently taking and make changes if needed
- Practice gratitude and express appreciation to yourself and the people close to you
- Start the new year with a clear idea of what you want to focus on and how you want to spend your time
- Identify areas for improvement and understand where you can relax and enjoy the present moment.

Overall, a yearly reflection is a valuable tool for personal growth, self-awareness, and setting goals for the future.

## How To Get Started







I recommend scheduling 2-3 two-hour sessions to work on it. If that seems like a lot, just start! Doing the yearly reflection will take time, but it's a **valuable investment in yourself**.

Reflecting is something you normally do on your own. But to make it easier, get together with a few friends and do the Yearly Reflection together. You can then discuss your insights during breaks ☕

Even without a group, I encourage you to discuss your thoughts and insights with someone close to you. They might have a different perspective and can help you with accountability.

Resolve to schedule some time right now, and then use the next hour to complete the first section.

I have a few more ideas on how you can make this reflection deeper and more enjoyable:

-  Turn off your notifications and mobile devices to be uninterrupted
-  Play some light background music
-  Skip the sections or questions you don't like. Everything is just a suggestion.
-  Be yourself, honest, and positive
-  Use the back of the pages if there isn't enough space
-  **Have fun!**

## The Format

I've split the Mental Garden Yearly Reflection into four distinct parts:

- **Reviewing the Last Year** – review, learn from, and celebrate the year you're leaving behind
- **Reviewing the Present** – look at your habits and behaviors, as well as the things you procrastinate
- **Planning the Next Year** – dream, plan, and prepare to get the most out of next year
- **Writing a Letter to your Future Self** – send a letter to yourself in one year

Each part focuses on different dimensions of your life. Each dimension includes carefully selected open-ended questions to guide your reflection.

## Thanks for doing this with me

I hope this Yearly Reflection helps you learn more about yourself, and make the most of the coming year. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

With gratitude,  
Marc 🌱



# Moments and Memories

🌱 To refresh our memories of last year, go through your calendar, diary, and photos. From there, select the most awesome memories and jot them down in great detail ✨

## Last Year's Memories


*Take some time to go through last year on a week by week basis. Jot down all the events that come to mind – the people you've met, the important days, and the memories you've made. This is also a great opportunity to read your diary. You might also browse through your calendar, social media, messaging apps, email, and photos to bring back any forgotten memories.*

## Select the most important moments and write them down.

*From the list above, select the most important memories and write them down below. If you want, you can add more details to them: Think about what you saw, felt, heard, smelled, and tasted during these special moments. Who were you with and what did you do? Don't hold back - take as much time as you need to capture the essence of your last year's highlights.*





## Areas of Your Life

 In this section, give yourself a score in each area of your life, such as your relationships, work, and health. Then, imagine the best version of yourself in each area and select the ones you want to work on in the coming year.





### Examine the Areas of Your Life

*For each area, give yourself a score for how well you've done last year between 1 (low) and 10 (high).*

- *For each area, ask yourself "How do I feel about X?" and "How did I do?"*
- *Use the "Notes" section to reflect on each area and to support your score with reasons. Why is the score this way and not any other?*
- *You can add other areas that are important to you.*
- *What can you do to improve this score in the next year?*
- *You can't give yourself a 7, as this would be a copout answer. Decide between 6 (meh) and 8 (good).*
- *If you've already done a Yearly Reflection, compare your scores and notes with last year. What changed and what hasn't?*

Area	Score	Notes / Reasons	How to Improve
 Friends			
 Family			

Area	Score	Notes / Reasons	How to Improve
 Love and Sexuality			
 Relationship to Self			
 Work and Career			
 Learning, Growth, and Education			
 Physical Health			

Area	Score	Notes / Reasons	How to Improve
 Mental Health			
 Money and Finance			
 Hobbies			
 Relaxation			

## **What are your takeaways from doing this? Is there anything that stands out?**

*Consider areas that may have been difficult to score or that had very low or high scores. This may be useful for identifying areas that need further attention.*

## **In which areas should you slow down and take things more lightly?**

*It's not always about doing everything "better" or "hustling more". Sometimes, we need to recognize that we are already doing well enough and that we should relax. Because, well... maybe it's already the way we want it to be?*

## **Which areas are you motivated to work on next year?**

*Add three ideas for each area on how you will go about this.*



## Goals and Achievements (Last Year)

🌱 As you think back on last year, what goals did you set? For what do you want to give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back? Recognize and celebrate your wins, big and small.

### What goals did you set for yourself last year, and how well did you achieve them?

- *Make a list and score them from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Again, **you can't pick a 7.***
- *If you didn't set goals at the beginning of the year, think about the goals that implicitly guided you.*
- *Also reflect on them in more detail in the extra column. To get you started, here are a few ideas to focus on: What did you do to achieve each goal? What was your process? Who helped you and how? Do you notice any patterns in the goals you've accomplished vs. those you haven't?*

## What have you achieved last year?

*What are you most proud of personally and professionally? What have you achieved? Write it down in as much detail as you can. What did you do to achieve it? When you're done, select your top three and write them down below.*


 Personally

 Professionally

 Biggest Achievements: Your Top 3


## Why are they achievements?

*Let's go one level deeper. Why are those things achievements or successes for you? Is that something that comes from within, or maybe some external?*



 Congratulations on all your achievements! (It's a little strange to write this because I don't know what you've actually accomplished, but I guess everyone has something to celebrate... 🥳)

This page is a testament to your hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Keep up the great work! If you haven't already, this is a good time to give yourself a pat on the back (or ask a good friend to do it for you) :)

## Challenges and Failures

 As you reflect on the past year, it's important to acknowledge not just your successes, but also the things that didn't go as planned. In this section, take a moment to think about the challenges and failures you faced. What can you learn from these experiences? Is there anything you would do differently if given the chance?

### How did you fail last year? What were the biggest challenges?

*If you need help getting started, have a look again at the  **Areas of Your Life** and your  **Goals and Achievements (Last Year)**.*

*Failure is a very broad term and can mean both very small and big things. What would you do differently if you could?*

*Regarding your challenges, who or what helped you overcome them? What have you learned about yourself by overcoming them?*

### If you could travel back to the beginning of the year, what advice would you give yourself?


*Make it actionable. How does this advice apply to the next year?*

### What was the single biggest time waster?

*Think about goals you pursued, people you've spent time with, and things you've learned.*



## Lessons

 How have you changed and what important lessons have you learned? By looking at the things that gave you energy and those that took it away, you can gain insight into who you are and what matters most to you.

### **What's something new you have discovered about yourself?**

*Have you recently learned or realized something about yourself that you didn't know before? It could be a new skill or talent that you have discovered, a change in your attitudes or beliefs, or a newfound passion or interest.*


### **What was the #1 most important lesson you learned last year?**

*What did you learn the hard way? The easy way? How does this lesson impact you?*

### **What gave you a lot of energy? What drained a lot of your energy?**

*How can you have more of those or avoid these things?*

## Relationships

 Let's take a moment to appreciate the people who have played a significant role in your life. Who influenced you the most, both in positive and negative ways? As you think about the relationships you want to continue and those you want to let go of, take the time to reconnect with people who have meant a lot to you and consider who you want to spend more time with in the coming year.

**Who has had a significant positive influence on your life this year?**

*How did they make an impact?*

**Who has had a negative influence on you this year?**

*How did their actions affect you?*

**Which relationships are no longer benefiting you?**

*Are there people that drain you, or where you just don't feel a connection anymore?*

## **Are there people you want to connect or reconnect with?**

*Write them a short message and say hi. (I'm serious, do it NOW.)*

## **Which relationships will you prioritize next year?**

*How exactly will you go about this?*



## Gratitude and Letting Go

🌱 As you approach the end of the year, it's natural to think about what you can let go of and make space for new beginnings.

Is there anything you need to forgive in order to move forward with a clean slate? Now is also a good time to express gratitude for the people and experiences that have enriched your life. Who and what are you grateful for – and why?

Finally, consider if there is anything you want to release from your mind before starting the new year fresh.

### What did you let go of last year?

*Is there anything or anyone that isn't part of your life anymore? Is this the way you want it?*

### Is there anything you have to let go of before you can start the next year?

*Did anything happen during the past year that still needs to be forgiven? Or someone (including yourself)? Is it possible to forgive them now?*

## What are you most grateful for last year?

*Start with the magnificent sunset you saw last week, and continue with the people that make your life absolutely awesome. If you want, you can go through the 🚦 **Areas of Your Life** again.*

## Who needs to be acknowledged in your life?

*Who do you feel grateful for? Reach out to them and express your gratitude.*

🌱 **You're done with the past year.**

You have just finished the first part (I promise, that was the longest). Take a deep breath and rest for a bit ✨



## Habits and Behaviors

🌱 How you spend your time each day is how you spend your life. With that in mind, take a look at the behaviors that make up the majority of your days. What habits and behaviors do you want to cultivate in the coming year, and how will you make that happen?

### What habits do you want to keep doing next year?

*Think about habits and behaviors.*

### What habits and behaviors do you want to start?

*How will you go about doing this?*

### What habits and behaviors do you want to stop?

*How exactly will you do this?*

### Actionable Summary: Habits

*Write down the top 3 habits you want to keep, start, and stop. You can write down more if you want*



## Procrastination

🌱 It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and forget to focus on the things that are truly important to you. Are there things you know you should be doing, but haven't gotten around to yet? We all have at least one thing that we know would make a big difference in our lives, but for some reason we haven't started doing it.

### What do you know is true but aren't acting on?

*Why aren't you acting on it?*

**Say the following (out loud): "Everything in my life is completely fine." What objections arise?**

*Write them down.*

**Is there anything you're procrastinating? Something important you are not doing?**


*Why is it important to you? What is the first specific step you can take?*

**What is one thing you are currently not doing that would significantly improve your life if you did it consistently?**

*(On a personal note, I always have the same answer to this question. For me, it's approaching people I meet in public to get over the fear of rejection.)*



## Health

 Health is the crucial foundation for a good and joyful life. As you reflect on the past year, take a closer look at the behaviors that have an impact on your health, both positive and negative. What can you do to improve and maintain your health in the coming year?


### Which behaviors have a positive impact on your health?

*Think of three specific ways you can address this.*

### Which behaviors have a negative impact on your health?

*Think of three specific ways you can address this.*

 **You're done with reviewing the present.**

Take another deep breath before starting with the next year. Also, why not make a cup of tea? 



## The Big Picture

🌱 It can be helpful to take a step back and gain perspective on how you want to spend your time. By zooming out, you can make more informed decisions about your priorities. In this section, go over your bucket list and select the items you want to tackle the most in the coming year. And also try putting yourself in the shoes of your 80-year-old self and what choices he or she might regret.

### What's on your bucket list? What do you want to do before you die?

*If you already have a bucket list, think about the things you would like to add. If you don't have a bucket list yet, this is your opportunity to create it ✨*

### If you were 80 and lying on your deathbed, what would you regret?

*Think about things you will have done, and things you will have failed to do.*

**Of the points you wrote down on the last page, pick at least three things you will do next year.**

*Be careful with picking too many. Look both at your bucket list and the things you would regret not doing.*

**What are the major questions about your life you are currently asking yourself?**


*How would you currently answer them?*

**What do you want to spend the next five-ten years of your life on?**

*Are you already living in line with this? Do you have to change something?*



## Goals and Challenges (Next Year)

 A yearly review wouldn't be complete without looking ahead and deciding who you want to be and what you want to pursue next year. Take a moment to think about what you want to accomplish in the next 12 months.

### How do you want to be different in one year?

*What are the steps for becoming this person?*

### What would you do if you couldn't fail?

*We tend to disregard goals or things we want to do on the notion that we might fail. Let's remove this filter and consider them anyway.*

### How will you challenge yourself next year?

*Be bold.*

**Write down all potential goals for next year, even the scary and unrealistic ones.**

*Write down more goals than you could possibly pursue. (You've got a lot of space on this page, use it!)*

*(lots of space for your goals)*

## **Pick 3 goals you genuinely want to pursue next year.**

*Pick at least one goal that's scary. For each of these goals, answer the following questions:*

- 1. Why is this important?*
- 2. What does success look like?*
- 3. How do you know you've achieved it?*
- 4. Why might you fail to hit this goal? How can you prepare for this?*
- 5. Who can keep you accountable?*
- 6. What are three small, specific, and actionable steps you can take to get started?*

*(more space on the next page)*

*(continuing from last page)*

 **You're done with planning your year.**

Take another breath. There's just one last thing we want to do – Writing a letter to yourself. But first, let's look at a summary of what you've written down.



## [Optional] Writing a letter to your future self

🌱 After taking the time to reflect on the past, present, and future, you can send a letter with our insights to our future selves. To do this, we'll use a website that allows us to send an email to an exact future date. This section is optional (like all sections), but I (and your future self) highly recommend it as a way to document your growth and progress. ✨

### What would you like to say to your future self in one year?

*Write a letter to yourself one year from now. Are there things you'd like to remember, something you want to remind yourself of? Be creative and be true. You can use the page below to get started.*

*To make sure you actually receive your letter in one year, we will use the website [futureme.org](https://futureme.org). Write the letter on the website. Then, delete the page above (so you can't peek when you feel like it). In FutureMe, select "Deliver in 1 Year" and put in your email address. Then, click on Send to the Future.*

#### 🌱 Give yourself a pat on the back

Thank you so much for completing The Mental Garden Yearly Reflection. I'm extremely proud you've made it this far, and it really means the world to me. If you have any thoughts or insights you want to share, feel free to reach out to me at [marc@mental.garden](mailto:marc@mental.garden).

 **What do you think?**

If you've come this far, I'd love to know how I could make this even better. Please fill out this [short form](https://bit.ly/yearly-reflection-feedback) (bit.ly/yearly-reflection-feedback), it only takes 2 minutes. Thank you!

