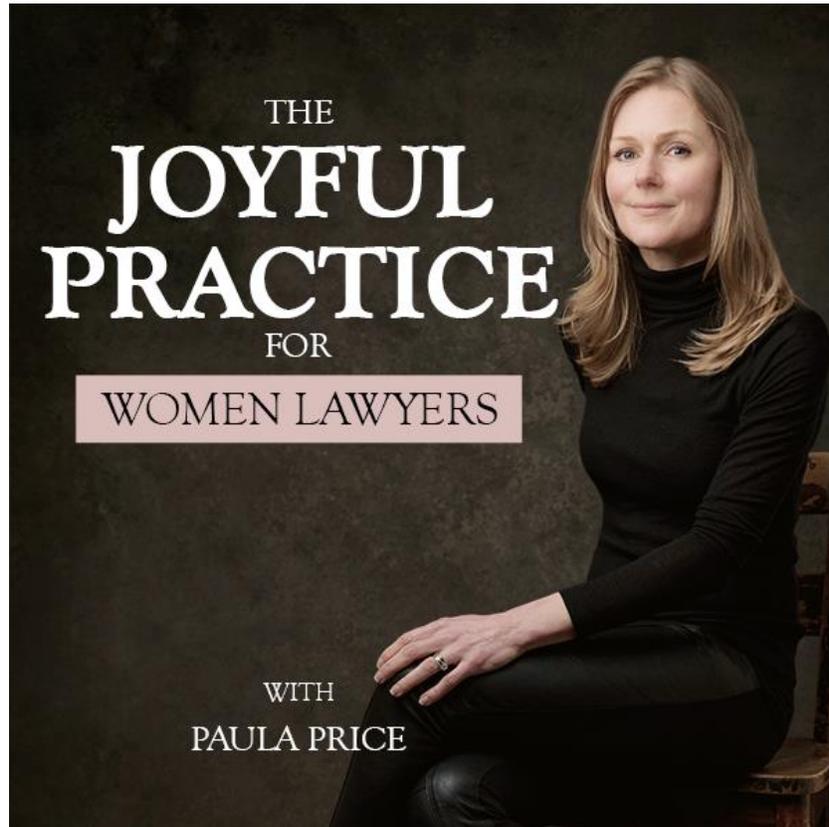


Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 33.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, lawyer turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. Join me every week for a break from the hustle so we can focus on you, what you truly want, and how you can create it.

If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello my friends. Welcome back to the podcast, and happy new year. If you're listening to this podcast when it goes live, we are in the first week of January 2022. I imagine for many of you this means you are back to work. If you have families, young children, they are back to school. The routines are starting up again. I love this time of year because it really is an opportunity to start fresh and to pick up where we left off at the end of the previous calendar year. And to set ourselves up with some goals, things that we want to accomplish.

I used to get really attached to this idea of new year's resolutions. I still do. I have a friend. We get together every year, and we write out some resolutions. It's wonderful. It really is great to have our focus on what it is we want to accomplish during the calendar year.

But what I have also found with new year's resolutions is that sometimes we set up these resolutions for ourselves. And if we don't do things perfectly right out of the gate then we get frustrated with ourselves and we give up and we no longer pursue those things that were seemingly very important to us on the eve of the new year.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

So today's podcast episode is all about looking at the calendar year that lies ahead. I spoke in my last episode wrapping up 2021, celebrating all the successes that you accomplished over the last year. I talked about it being like a relay race, right, where every year it's like you're starting in a fresh race. You hand the baton over to yourself from one year to the next. Now that we're starting out this next leg of the journey with our baton in hand, the question here is how are we going to set ourselves up so that when we reach the end of 2022, we feel proud of what we've accomplished and we've done what we've set out to do.

So today's episode is all about how to focus on those goals, how to approach those goals in a way that is more sustainable so we're not burning ourselves in January and then giving up because we're frustrated. We're looking at our goals with a longer term view, and we're giving ourselves some tools that we can use to accomplish what we want in a way that is constructive and that feels good over the course of the year. So I'm going to offer four different ideas. I'm excited to share each of these ideas with you.

So before I do that, I really would encourage you all to think about what it is that you have in mind for yourself in terms of the goals that you want to set. We're not going to spend too much time in today's podcast talking about what your goals are. But I would really invite you to think about that right now. If you want some exercises on how to set goals, I'd refer you to episode number six where I talk about the great goal framework, and that can really help you get clear about what it is that you want to accomplish.

So assuming that you have some goals in mind, we're going to go through these exercises with those ideas so that you can think about how that is going to apply to you. So some of the things I think you may be working on this year.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

Number one is health. I think that is something that we all take stock of, especially after the holidays. I don't know about you, but the holiday times tend to have late nights. They have more activities with friends and family. I tend not to eat quite as healthy as I would at other times of the year. So when January rolls around, I'm ready to bring back a little bit more routine. So for you that might be one of the items that's on your list of things you'd like to accomplish this year.

I know for many of us in this pandemic setting, an even greater priority. Especially for those of you who are working from home where there is less of a demarcation between your work life and your professional life and your family or your personal life. You may find that you're needing to be more intentional about self-care, about looking after your health. So if that's on your list, this is something that we may focus on in thinking about your goals for the year for 2022.

Another goal that you might have is a goal that relates to your professional work. For many of you, you may be looking at advancing within your organization. Whether it is moving up to partnership or taking on a leadership role within your organization, that might be something that you have set your mind to. It may be that you're looking to transition out of your current job.

So what you're looking at now is how you can set yourself up for making that transition. Whether it's starting at the beginning where you're going to be doing the research and start networking, start figuring out what that next opportunity could be for you. Maybe you're further in the process and now you're more at the stage where you're interviewing and making decision about what the right place is for you.

So regardless of where you are, I would encourage you to think about where you want to be a year from now and what some of the goals are that you're going to be forming in relationship to making those things happen.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

Going back to this concept of new year's resolutions, one of the reasons that I think that new year's resolutions often leave us disappointed is that we somehow have in our minds that we're going to wake up on January 1st and our lives are going to be materially different.

So you can imagine that your goal is maybe that you want to become a marathon runner. Just using this as an example. Now if you were to wake up on January 1st, and you were somehow transported into the body of a marathon runner, you need to ask yourself how long you would be able to maintain that level of physical conditioning based on the current habits that you have currently. How long would that truly last for you if that was your goal?

The other question I would invite you to consider is let's say you've transported yourself. You have this marathoner's body. You're physically capable of doing it. Do you have the mental discipline to run a marathon? Let's say that the marathon race was January 1st. Would you be able to complete the race?

The reason that I ask these questions is that it illustrates how sometimes the goal that we have for ourselves is one that we wish that we had access to instantly. The drawback there is that if we had that thing right away, we wouldn't have the opportunity to build the skills and practices that we need in order to sustain that goal.

So for example, if your goal is moving into a promotion, a leadership position, you may wish that you have that right now. However the process that you're going to go through in order to reach that goal is going to prepare you for assuming that role. So it may be that currently you're not a match for that goal that you have for yourself.

I mean currently you may not have the, if the goal going back to the marathon example. You may not have the practices that you need. The

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

disciplines that you would require. You may not have experienced some of the challenges that you would need to go through to run a marathon to be able to perform that the level that you want.

The benefit of time between where you are now and when it is you ultimately achieve the goal that you're seeking is that this is your learning ground. This is your opportunity to try and to test and to fail and to grow into the person that you need to become to have that goal.

So another example might be time management. Maybe what you really want is to feel like you're less stressed, you're less overwhelmed, you're more in control of your calendar. I talked about this in the last episode. That my relationship with time is something that I'm continually working on. This might be something that you're working on as well.

Let's imagine that you woke up tomorrow and somebody had organized your calendar. It's kind of like when somebody comes and organizes your closet, for example. How long would that calendar stay organized and doable before habits that you may have accumulated start to interfere with the execution of that planning.

So it could be that your calendar is laid out really neatly. You've got time to do all the things that you need to do, but you sit down to do a task. Maybe it's writing a brief or drafting a contract or having a difficult conversation with a client. You find yourself pushing that off. You find yourself drifting over and checking your emails or doing a nonurgent task instead of the thing that's on your calendar.

Or maybe you sit down to work, you receive a phone call, and somebody asks you to take on another project. Without really considering how that would impact on your existing plan, you say yes. Next thing you know, this calendar that you've got that has everything neatly scheduled in a way that's doable for you starts to become crowded. So you have to ask

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

yourself are you engaging in the practices and the discipline that is required to have the goal that you want such that you can not only create that for yourself but also to maintain it.

So going back to our new year's resolutions, the focus here today is really on considering that the thing that you want to create for this year aren't things that are going to show up instantly. That's a good thing. By giving yourself the time to grow into your goals, you are truly developing the skills and the strengths that are required for you to fully live into those goals.

So with that in mind, I'm going to offer up four different suggestions on how to approach your goals for the year in a way that will make these goals feel more natural, more sustainable. And hopefully in a way that makes the process feel more enjoyable.

So the first suggestion I'm going to offer to you is to pick a word of the year. I don't know if you have ever picked a word of the year before. It is not something that I used to do, but I have been doing it for the last few years. I mentioned in the last podcast episode that my word of the year for 2022 is streamline. So my goal this year is to streamline my practices in terms of my business, in terms of my health, and even in terms of my relationships. So that is a focus for me in 2022.

Last year my word was resonance. So I really focused on taking on projects and activities and doing those things in a way that resonated with my goals and my values. When I wrote emails for example, I would ask myself is this in the tone that resonates with me? Is this really who I'm trying to be as a professional, as a friend, as a mother? I don't write emails as a mother, but really asking yourself if the thing that you're doing is a reflection of your values and how you want to show up in that situation.

Another word of the year that I had was decisiveness. That was the year previous when it came to making decisions, I wanted to be more

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

intentional. I wanted to make my decisions faster. So I would practice being decisive over the course of the year. So you might ask yourself what some of the goals are that you have for yourself. What word would really embody the energy that you would need to have or the focus you would need to have in order to achieve your goals.

So for you maybe one of the things that you're trying to do is really grow your practice in a way that is novel to you, that brings up a bit of fear for you. Your word of the year might be courageous. Maybe that's something that you want to embody. Maybe that resonates with you. Another word of the year that you have for yourself is persistent. Maybe you're focusing on a big goal. Again, you're going to find that challenging. You may find that you're going to want to give up. So maybe persistence is the word of the year that you're going to choose for yourself.

Whatever it is that you want to do, I would invite you to pick a word that you're going to use as your north star. That is the word that is going to guide you when you are making decisions. What I love about a word of the year is that it's a word of the year.

So going back to that whole urgency that can show up around a new year's resolution, when you give yourself a year and a word of the year, you get to repeat and practice what it means to live into that word over the course of the year. So you're no longer feeling that sense of urgency. That allows you to relax and really look at the big picture.

What you'll notice is that you'll imagine that word in relation to all sorts of different situations. You can practice embracing that word in different respects. So I mentioned maybe it's writing an email. So maybe I'm writing an email and I'm thinking well how can I streamline this email? Does it really need to be so long? What is the point here? How do I make this a little bit tighter?

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

If I look at my business for example and I'm looking at streamlining. Okay how am I going to streamline? I can think of different processes that I'm currently using where I can trim them down a little bit. What are some of the things that I can streamline off my desk and put onto somebody else's desk? How can I do things in a way that is more efficient?

When it comes to my health, for example, what are some of the practices that I'm currently engaged in that I can make more streamlined? Where can I remove some things? Where can I enhance my existing systems and so forth.

So when you have a word of the year, you get to think of that word in relation to all sorts of different problems or opportunities or challenges or ideas that you may have. You get to apply that over the course of the year. As you do that, you'll build up your muscle in terms of practicing what that means to you. It also brings you back to focus. So wherever you may drift during the course of the year, you have a way of bringing yourself back.

So think about what that means to you. Think about how having a word of the year will impact on the way that you think, how it will impact on your mindset, how it will impact on your approach to achieving your goal. Especially when you give yourself the grace of a year to do that.

Now the second suggestion that I'd like to offer to you is the idea of decision pruning. I'll start out with an example of how this can be helpful. When it comes to decision making, what I have found and what I've noticed with clients that I work with is that having more decisions to make often isn't all that useful.

If you have trouble making decisions, then you can really slow yourself down in this area of indecision where you're deciding between one of two or one of three or several options. Instead of making a decision and moving forward with a decision, you may find yourself ruminating over the decision

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

trying to make the right decision. Instead of moving forward, you're basically stuck. So we may feel really lucky that we live in a time where there are lots of choices, but those choices can sometimes hold us back because we're not able to move forward.

So what I would encourage you to do here with this concept of decision pruning. If you imagine that there are branches and those branches are all decisions that would flow from one initial decision is to prune the decision as close to, I guess if it's a branch on a tree, as close to the trunk of the tree as possible. So that you don't have to make all those other decisions.

So here's an example. Both my children have always done some form of outside care. Whether it was daycare, now it's afterschool care. As parents, we've always tried to have some flexibility around that. So it's not necessarily that they have a very strict schedule and they must go everyday from one hour to the next. It's a little bit flexible. They also go to school now that they're school aged. That started in kindergarten. With school, there is no flexibility. School is school and both children know that.

Now my son likes to negotiate his way out of afterschool care. He does this in part because he knows that sometimes the answer will be yes. With school, there is no negotiation. When it comes to showing up in a classroom with his teacher, this is a given. We never, ever have a discussion over whether or not he will go to school. If he's sick, of course he will stay home. However if he's not sick, he is in class.

Continually we still have discussions about afterschool care. That will come up in the morning. "Mom, do I need to go to afterschool care today? What's that going to look like? How long am I going to be there? What time are you going to pick me up?" These are all decisions. You can look at that branch. All these decisions that now stem from that one decision because there's not this clear yes or no.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

When it comes to the decisions, I recommend having 100% decisions. When you look at the decisions, let's say 99% of the time you do things a certain way. Even having that 1% gap, you're now inviting an opportunity to second guess that decision. So you may think well it's 99%, it's pretty good. But what I'm offering is that that 1% still leaves you in that decision tree. You're now getting tangled up in the branches.

So let's say that you simply do not allow yourself to procrastinate on a task. Let's say that you put something in your calendar and when it's on your calendar, you follow through with it no matter what. If that's your approach that you don't ever change your commitment to your calendar. Maybe something comes up. Truly it's an emergency, you can't do it. But you know that if you sit down at your desk and it's 9:00 and you've written into your calendar that you're going to write a brief that you actually follow through on that.

Versus sometimes maybe you put something on your calendar, but you can always move it around. Maybe you start moving that thing around, and then next thing you know you've spent all this time moving it around on your calendar. Nothing has gotten done, and you're trapped in that 1%.

So what I encourage you to think about is how can you make as many 100% decisions as possible so that you're not negotiating with yourself and losing time and losing out on the opportunity to move forward. I did a podcast episode on this. It's called The Power of Non-negotiable Standards. It's episode number seven. I go into that in more depth. This idea of having these really binary choices.

If you look at this in terms of areas where you might be having goals for the years. Let's say that your goal might be getting a new job. If that is your goal, maybe what's been happening for you is that you're in a busy practice. Maybe you're in private practice. Maybe you're a litigator and you've got trials that come up frequently. What you've been telling yourself

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

is I just want to finish this one file. I just want to make sure that I see it to its end before I go and start applying for a new job.

Or maybe you're a deal lawyer and you just want to make sure that you're there for that last closing before you move on. There may be a bonus that's coming up, and you want to stay on until you get your bonus. Whatever it happens to be for you, you may be pushing your goal off to some point in the future that is kind of uncertain.

So you're continuing that negotiation versus if you were to say to yourself, "By this time next year, I will have a new job." If you've made that a 100% decision line in the sand. All of a sudden you're going to find yourself taking actions in the direction of getting closer to that goal. You're not going to be having so many discussions with yourself. You're not going to be losing opportunities or losing time. You're going to march forward so much more quickly having made that choice.

So this step number, when it comes to your goal is to really figure out where you can make those key decisions so that you have fewer decisions to make. Another thing that I just want to point out here is that whole concept of decision fatigue. My guess is you've heard about this or you've seen it, talked about somewhere.

Decision fatigue is the idea that your brain has the capacity to make so many decisions in a day. There's a finite capacity. You make decisions all day long, right? This is why people have a uniform, right? It just reduces the number of decisions. That's why I like to have a really routine like existence because it just lessens the number of decisions that I need to make every single day so that I can focus on making decisions in areas that are really important to me. That have the capacity to move things forward.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

So when you're suffering from decision fatigue, that's when you start to make decisions that aren't always the best ones. For me these usually are the decisions that I make late at night. If I've had a full day, I've made lots of decisions. Then it's like I'm confronted with decisions late at night. I no longer have the capacity to make decisions.

You may find that you're the same way. That at a certain point, you just run out of that bandwidth to make decisions. So what we're trying to do here is to limit the number of decisions that you need to make in relation to your goal so that you are simply moving forward and getting closer to your goal with more speed and greater ease.

So step number one is picking a word of the year. Step number two is decision pruning. Reducing the number of decisions that you need to make. Step number three is planning backwards.

We had the pleasure over the holidays of having guests over for dinner. We had my brother, his wife, our nephew. If you're listening my little nephew, it was so lovely having you over. Thank you. It was such a treat. That was the first time in probably almost two years that we have had guests over for dinner. It's just not something that we've been doing during the pandemic.

If you have ever had people over for dinner, then you're probably familiar with that whole concept of planning backwards. Right? You have your guests arriving at five or six or whenever it is. Shortly after that you're going to put a meal on the table. Ideally all the food is ready at the same time. If you're like me, you probably look at all the things you want to make. Maybe you write out a list, and then you decide what you're going to do first all the way up to what you're going to do last.

So in this case we had roast. So the roast, of course, goes into the oven first. Then I was having some green beans. So I trimmed the beans so they would be ready to be steamed at the last minute. There were a few other

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

things like setting the table, emptying the dishwasher. All those tasks that come in sequence leading up to the arrival of your guests.

If you don't cook, that's fine. I just love this example because it's one of the examples of planning backwards. It's super fun. It's all enjoyable. I love doing it. It's not just for planning dinner parties. It's for planning your practice.

So I was a litigator when I was practicing. When it came to court applications, I was reverse planning. I was planning backwards. I was looking at okay, what are the materials that I need to have filed by a certain day? How am I going to approach my work so that I get everything done in time?

If I need to get an affidavit sworn by a client who lived overseas or where I knew there was going to be a discussion over what the evidence was, whatever that looked like, I would start with the affidavit or drafting the notice of application. Whatever it is that I had to do first. Then that would allow us to move onto the next stage.

So whatever it is that you're doing in your practice, if you're a deal lawyer, a solicitor. I have never closed a deal myself. I was not in that area of practice, but I have seen closing agendas where it's basically a to-do list. It's a huge to-do list where everybody is assigned a task and a deadline. So you're really doing that exercise of looking at where you want to be and planning backwards for all the steps that you need to take to get there.

You can do this on a daily basis. I like to employ this strategy day to day when I'm looking at my day. Maybe I need to shift a few things around on my calendar so that everything gets done on time. It may be week to week where you're looking at what are the deadlines for the week. How am I going to make sure this gets done on time?

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

What I would invite you to do here in particular is looking at your goals for the calendar year, looking for your 2022 goals. These are bare goals. How are you going to approach those in a way where you're efficiently planning backwards?

So let's say, for example, that you want to apply for a master's program. Some of the lawyers that I've worked with have really wanted to go back to school to get one qualification or another. It may be something to permit them to move away from a traditional law practice. Sometimes it's something that will enhance their ability to practice in their current area. Whatever that might look like for you.

If you're looking at applying for a program, chances are there's some legwork you'll need to do in advance. Maybe it's figuring out what the dates are. I mean that's probably a starting point. Maybe you need reference letters. So that might require tracking down some people that can write reference letters for you. Maybe you need to write your own statement of purpose. Maybe there are transcripts that you need to get from your university. Whatever that looks like.

So I would invite you to look at the task. Maybe if you are going back to school, maybe there's more planning. Maybe you need to start saving up some money because you're going to reduce your workload. It could be all sorts of things. What I encourage you to do is to sit down and just like you were going to prepare a meal where when the clock strikes 6:00, you've got the table and everything is on the table. You're ready for your feast.

What do you need to put into place today starting today so that six months down the road, eight months down the road? Whenever that timeline is going to elapse for you and you want to have that goal, what do you need to do to get there? You can do that by sitting down and brainstorming all the things that you might need to do, and then figuring out where those things land in terms of timing. Get those in your calendar. Make sure that

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

you're going to be respecting the calendar that you set for yourself. So that's one area where you might be doing that.

Another area where you might be looking at planning ahead of time is that idea of moving into leadership. Seeking out that promotion. Maybe it's seeking out that new job. Here, again, I would invite you to start thinking about who you need to become in order to step into that new role.

This kind of goes back to that example that I shared at the beginning. If you woke up tomorrow and you were in the physical body of a marathon runner, how would you really perform when you had that marathon to run if you were to run that marathon the next day? Or how long would you be able to sustain that level of fitness if that's what you're trying to do?

How is it if you're looking at the promotion that you're seeking, the leadership position that you're seeking. How do you need to grow and evolve in order for that to be something that you can step into when it's time for you to do that? What are the skills that you're going to need? What are the practices that you're going to need to develop?

Same thing with time management. You may have this goal for yourself that you want to feel less stressed. You want to be more organized. You want to have a calendaring system that works for you. Well that may be something that you can set up overnight, but how are you going to develop the skills that you need to maintain it? How are you going to set boundaries? How are you going to take projects on?

What is the mechanism you're going to use to discern between things that you say yes to and things that you say no to? What are the relationships that you're going to have in terms of support for yourself so that if you want to delegate tasks, you have somebody to delegate them to?

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

So these are all things that you're going to want to build up over the course of the year. So you're no longer just looking at your new year's resolution as January 1, I am going to do all things differently and my life is going to be perfect. No. It's come January 1, I'm beginning the process of becoming the person who has the thing that I want.

So that was step three is planning backwards, looking at where you want to be, and figuring out what steps you're going to need to take to get there and then sequencing those in a way that makes sense. So this brings us to step number four. Step number four is all about how to make it easy for yourself to follow through on your commitments to yourself.

Here I would invite you to think about the small incremental steps that you're going to take over the course of the year, and to think about how all those steps are going to add up over time. So, again, going back to this idea of why I think new year's resolutions often end up in failure is that we set ourselves up of these really lofty goals.

The classic example to me is always that idea of getting into shape. For somebody who may not have been exercising to say well I'm going to go to the gym seven days a week. I'm going to exercise really hard for an hour every day. By the end of the year, I'm going to be super strong and all those things.

Is that really a realistic way to approach it? What happens when you miss a day? What happens if you go to the gym and you have that really strong workout and you're really sore the next day and then you don't go? Does that mean that you're no longer going to be committed? What are the things that you're doing to set yourself up for success in the long run?

So here rather than giving yourself this grandiose plan of doing everything perfectly right away, what if you were to look at all of the small incremental stages that you can go through. All the decisions that you're going to make

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

that will tally up over the course of the year to shift you into the direction of where it is that you want to go.

So here's an easy example. For me, one of the goals I have for the year is to eat a bit more healthy than I have been over the holidays. Part of this is just because the holidays tend to attract all sorts of chocolates and sweets and things that we don't normally stockpile in our cupboards. I noticed the other day that our cupboards just had a ton of junk food in them.

So I took a giant garbage bag and I went to the cupboard and I just kind of threw out all of the stuff that had accumulated. I threw out a bunch of old crackers that had long since expired. Now when I look at the cupboards, it's so much more pleasant. It's so much easier. There are a lot fewer distractions in there.

Very simple step. It didn't take me very long, but it created momentum. It makes me feel good. It makes me that much closer to the goal that I have which is to just generally eat a bit healthier than I have been over the past few weeks with the holidays.

So for some of you, it's thinking about how are you going to set yourself up in a way that you're going to be more likely to adhere to your goals? Let's say time management is something that you're looking toward and you're trying to figure out how you're going to make that easier for yourself.

Well it may be that you're scheduling an hour on Sunday night or arriving at the office an hour early on Monday morning to give yourself a pocket of time where you're going to think about your week. Where you're going to plan out some of the big rocks in your week, the big tasks you want to get done.

Maybe it's planning another session at the end of the week on a Friday afternoon, for example, where you reflect on the week. Maybe it's giving

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

yourself an extra 15 minutes every day when you start your day or 15 minutes after lunch, midway through your day, to look at your calendar. To decide on whether or not your day really is structured the most efficiently. It's giving yourself that window to succeed and follow through on the task that you're setting up for yourself.

Maybe going back to this idea of growing into the person who can take on a leadership role. It means that in the steps that you're taking every day, how are you showing up in alignment with the person you need to be to take on that role. We can bring our word of the year into that to make this example even more rich. Let's say for example your word of the year is courage, and you're wanting to evolve into the person that is taking on a leadership role and making decisions and executing on those decisions in a way that is confident and authoritative.

You may be writing an email. The email has nothing to do with getting a promotion or being advanced to leadership, but you look at the language of the email and you can ask yourself. Am I writing this email in the way that I would if I was in that position? If not, what would be different about it? Maybe there's language that you're currently using that undermines your sense of authority. Maybe you're not making decisions in areas where you could be making decisions. Maybe you're not speaking in a way that reflects strength.

So ask yourself how you are communicating and whether or not it's in alignment with where you're trying to be professionally. This isn't so much an exercise of faking it until you make it. Although, I suppose there is an element of that. Really it's about fine tuning your approach step by step day by day until you slowly but surely become that person who can take on that responsibility.

So this is something that is ongoing. In episode three of this podcast, I talk about a joyful practice and how the real underlying message there is falling

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

in love with the process as opposed to the result. I trace it back to the Shawn Achor theory that happiness isn't something that is a target that we set for ourselves and achieve it, and then we have the happy and we are happy indefinitely.

He talks about how traditionally we've often postponed our happiness to the attainment of a goal. That another way of looking at it that is more sustainable and joyful is to find joy in the process of reaching your goals. This is really what I'm encouraging all of us to think about as we set our big goals for ourselves in 2022. How can we fall in love with the process of learning to become the person that we need to be to achieve the goals that we're setting for ourselves?

So, again, we're shifting the focus away from the result. The results are important. I think it's great that we have those results in mind. It gives us clear direction. We now know what we're striving towards. How can we work with that goal in a way that we're enjoying the process, that we're learning and evolving so that when we get there we're ready? We've gone through the challenges. We've learned to overcome them. We've developed the skills that we need to get there, and now we're ready for it.

So those are the four steps that I would recommend to all of you who are setting big goals for yourselves in 2022. These are skills and strategies that I think we can all engage to make this year our best year yet.

So to recap, those strategies are to number one pick a word of the year. That will give you focus and a way of working toward the thing that you're trying to create in a way that is aligned with the energy you need to get there. Number two is decision pruning. So clear out all the decisions that you don't need to make. Make those decisions easy for yourself. You will free up time. You will move faster. It will feel more easy for you because you're not stuck ruminating over those multiple decisions that you would otherwise be making.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

The third is to plan backwards. So look at the result that you're trying to create, figure out what all the different steps are, and then we get to sort those steps sequentially so that you're really operating one step at a time in the direction of reading the result that you want.

Then finally take small steps each day that will contribute to the attainment of your goal. As you do that, you'll get closer and closer. It may not feel like such a big accomplishment in the day to day, but when you look back at the beginning of the year, you'll notice that there's a big shift between where you are right now and where you're going to be on December 31st, 2022.

Again I love this idea of it being a relay race. You've got the baton. Who do you want to be? What is it that you want to pass on to yourself at the beginning of 2023?

So when you practice this, what I would encourage you to do. The reason that I think this is going to be effective for you is that you're becoming a person who embodies your goal. You're not just looking at the goal as this thing that you get and you kind of don't really move on from there. You don't really grow from that. It's all in the process of leading up to it. That's where you get so much of the joy and so much of the satisfaction.

When you allow yourself to bring that into the process, it feels like you're building. You no longer are just kind of seeing it as steps that you must take to get to your goal. You can understand how the skills that you're developing, the strength that you're building is going to help you once you're there to really succeed and flourish.

Another reason that I think these steps are helpful is that all of this is within your control. You get to choose your word of the year and then act in alignment with that word. You get to decide which decisions you're going to make and which ones you're going to let go. You get to figure out how

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

you're going to plan strategically for the things that you want to create in your life.

When it comes to those small steps, you get to decide what those are and you get to take them. All of that puts the power back with you to make these things happen. You're not depending on others to make these things happen for you.

As you practice these things, you develop new practices, new habits. Your neural pathways start to reform themselves. I've talked about this in previous podcast episodes, this idea of neural plasticity. That you become what you practice routinely.

So as you practice these things, it becomes more second nature to you. It becomes more natural. As you continue this practice and you develop that accountability with yourself, you increase the amount of trust that you have with yourself to go after your goals, to accomplish your goals, and all that of course sets yourself up for success to do more of that this year and next year and beyond.

Finally I think what's really effective about doing these exercises is that the further ahead you get, the more clarity that you have. So if you imagine right now you're at the base of a mountain. Your goal is at the top of the mountain. You are going to do the work you need to do to get there. You're going to do the climbing. You're going to have the setbacks. You're going to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, get back up, keep climbing.

When you get to the top of that mountain, what you'll notice is that you have a completely different perspective now, right. You've been through that journey. You have a completely different vantage point now. You're going to see that there's something else out there that you want to go after. Now you're in the position that you can go and do that. That, in itself, is exciting.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

That creates that whole next stage of living into the next iteration of whatever it is that your goal is. Whether it's a professional goal, whether it's a personal goal, whether it's a health goal, you're now ready for that next stage.

So you're going to need a few skills to follow through with these strategies. Number one is you're going to need to do some planning. I think planning really is the key to creating what you want. It's being deliberate and focused and thinking about what the results are and how you're going to go about achieving them. It's a willingness to commit, especially when it comes to making those decisions.

If you're looking at making a big move this year or you're thinking about going back to school or you're even committing to a better time management system, you're going to have to commit to making that happen. If it's time management, you're going to have to commit to saying no to things. You're going to have to commit to following through on your calendar. There is no more procrastination. It means you're going to have to be deliberate in strategically planning your days. So these are all areas where you're going to have to make a decision and then follow through on that decision.

These strategies are going to require of you a willingness to change. So, again, going back to this idea that the goal that you have you may not yet be ready for. You are going to have to be willing to grow and evolve and build the skills and the strength that is required of you to step into that goal. So you'll need to change some of the habits that you have currently in order to get there.

Finally there's a willingness to let go. If you want to move into that next stage, that next evolution of your career, of your health, of your personal life. Maybe it's setting boundaries. Maybe it's better time management.

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

You're going to have to let go of some of the practices that you have currently.

So I talked about streamlining being one of my goals. I want to develop better systems in my practice. I want to start delegating more tasks. I want to make some changes in terms of the support that I have for the work that I do. That's going to mean letting go of control. It's going to mean letting go of certain relationships that I currently have.

Those are challenging things for me to do. I realized that if I want to move forward and I want to give life to the goals that I have for myself, I'm going to have to do that. So I'm inviting you to think about what it is that you're going to need to let go of to get to where you need to be.

When you do these things, then you'll start to create your goals. You'll start to see the progress. You'll start to feel closer to thing that you're after. You'll feel like you're so much more aligned with the task or the goal that you have for yourself. As you do that, there's this wonderful expression. The significance of goals isn't so much that you achieve the goal. It's who you become in working towards that goal. That's effectively what we're focusing on here is who do you need to become to have that goal and working towards developing that person?

Another side benefit that comes from this work is that once you develop these skills, these meta skills that are required to get there, you can apply those skills across the board. It's not just in relation to that goal that you've set for yourself here in 2022 but other goals that you have.

So those are the suggestions that I have for you to create the best year for yourself yet. Thank you so much for joining me today. It has been a pleasure speaking with you, sharing these ideas with you. I would love to know what it is that you're working on this year. So please feel free to reach

Ep #33: Your Best Year Yet

out and connect with me. You can do that on LinkedIn. You can send me an email.

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So thank you again for joining me. I will look forward to connecting with you again next week. Bye for now.

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