

PLAN A YEAR YOU'LL STICK TO

Years go by in the blink of an eye. We often travel through time, going from one thing to another. We often say, “There’s plenty of time to get this stuff done. I’ll get to that later.”

That’s not living intentionally, nor making the most of the life you are in. That’s why you need a lighthouse to guide you away from the things that could wreck your ship, leaving you flailing about. That lighthouse is just 3 simple, but powerful words. These words help you make decisions and keep your intentional goals in mind.

With these three words in mind, you’ll be able to look ahead to tangible goals, defined priorities, a path to get there, notes of things you need to learn to get there, and actions you need to take to see the dreams become reality.

Let’s create the plan, starting with your own 3 words.

3 Words

Here are some tips on how to choose your three words:

- Pick words that are powerful and personal.
 - Pick words that apply to your goals, and more so, that apply to how you might make choices. For instance, if you’re thinking you want to lose 30 pounds, a word like “lose” really isn’t going to help. Maybe the word “green” to remind you to eat more vegetables? Or the word “sacred” as in “treat my body like it’s sacred.” The word has to trigger a mental association that will prompt you to make a better choice.
- Pick words that are multidimensional
 - Picking words that apply to more than one aspect of your life gives you more scaffolding to the decisions.
 - Example: Blaze – I choose this because I need to start getting out in the public eye more, showing the world what it can be. I’m scared, but I’ve been in my shell too long. This also applies to my intellectual pursuits. I’ve gotten complacent, and I should follow the “blaze of passion” to make more of it.
- Don’t worry about fancy things like making it an acronym or phrase. With three words, why would you waste one or force something inauthentic to your needs?
- Restrict it to 3. While you can do more, it can widen the view instead of narrowing it down on something achievable.
- Don’t repeat from year to year exactly.
 - You want to be moving forward, not stagnating. Why choose the same three words if you want the year to be different?

Stick the Process

OK, you've got your light on, but what about the path? You're going to aim that light that you just created down a path that will lead you from where you are now to a place that's closer to where you want to be.

No one can guarantee each stepping stone is exactly in place. As far as I'm aware of, there is no soothsayer that has ever been that good. Not even in fairy tales. So these notes are simply to guide you along the path.

You'll need 7 sticky notes for this step.

Note 1: 3 Words

Note 2: Big Wins from Last Year. – Start off reflecting on what is going well. Even the small things, such as I was able to overcome stagnation and get out of my comfort zone and network more often this past year.

Note 3: Main Goals for This Year. – A lot of people will encourage you to make big, bold goals. There is nothing wrong with that if it helps inspire you to move forward. Me? I'm more of a fan of realism. I advocate for seeing what you did this past year, looking at your goals, and moving forward towards them as best as you can. Some years, like the one my father died, I barely went forward. Other years, it seemed like I had boundless energy and could go miles.

You know your circumstances and surrounding environment. Make it realistic or make it bold.

Just. Go. Forward.

Note 4: Leaps you need to make to get to those goals. – You are here. The future is there. What will get you from your current reality to the one you want by the end of next year? After a mouse ran across my foot while I was making tea the other afternoon, I decided I needed to move. To move I need more money. My leap is to get better at selling so I can serve more people (one of my other goals) AND pay myself more so I can get out of this place.

Note 5: Main Priorities. – If you could only focus on one part of the big picture, what would it be? And the next thing if all things work out well?

List your top 2 – 3 BIG priorities that will serve your goals. For example, if you want to get a new job, and you know that “getting in shape” will help you put your best foot forward, then add that to your note.

Note 6: What you need to learn to get there. – life is about learning, growing, and having fun. Pick some things that will help you grow intentionally.

Maybe you want to get better at leadership. For that, you might know that communication is a weak point of yours. So, you can put down, “Learn to communicate better” on your note.

Note 7: What actions you need to take. – make it easy on yourself and create a task list that you can check off when you're not on top your game. I use mine when ADHD strikes and I can't focus, when I'm listless and depressed, when I feel like I should be doing *something* but don't know what.

What actions can you take to learn the things you listed in Note 6? Maybe to communicate you could look up some great tips on YouTube or read a book. Maybe it's investing in a communication class. Maybe it's even getting a communications coach to help you.

A TWIST: MORE NOTES

In the past I have tried using a note for each bit action I needed to take. They were odd years where I really, really needed to see the tasks being taken care of in a visual way. So, I put a sticky note up for each action and even sub-tasks so I could throw it away. It worked... the first year. The second year I just ignored it because it was overwhelming.

Pick your method: Minimalistic or triumph over the tasks.