

HOW TO MAKE 2020 YOUR BEST YEAR (AND DECADE) YET



Before reading further, if you're beating yourself up for not being where you want to be, especially with the added "pressure" of entering a new decade, then stop. Take a deep breath, and exhale slowly. Now breathe in the present moment and keep reading.

The end of the year (and decade) is just days away, and we think it's a perfect opportunity to take stock and look back at what's been accomplished during the last 12 months. and this year, to go back over the last decade too. This kind of review can bring amazing new clarity that can make the next year (and decade) truly the best yet – if you know how.

There are a ton of people, books, and even apps out there telling you what those most effective ways are.

We've kept it simple for you, honed from years of executive coaching with leaders around the world. Here are our three essential, broad-stroke strategies

for leveraging this end-of-the-year process in a way that helps you hit the ground running into the next decade with high energy, laser focus, motivation, energizing momentum.

LOVE WHAT WENT WRONG IN 2019

If you've failed, don't beat yourself up or anyone else either. You tried. You put yourself out there. Instead, reframe your mindset and embrace the screw-ups as opportunities. Failure gives our best and biggest lessons in life. For this reason, failure has become popular in research studies and is cited everywhere as a source of inspiration, from board rooms to university commencement speeches. Read our blog post about one of the most inspiring ones we've heard [here](#).

So, make failure your best friend of 2019. Hug it. Sit down with it. Take time out, alone or with whomever else was in it with you and imagine you can turn back the clock.

Ask yourself,

“What would I do differently, if I could push rewind?”

“What did I learn (that I won't do next time around)?”

It's a sure bet you'll never fail like that again. It's much more likely you'll look back one day and be grateful for that failure for guiding you to greater success.

MAKE YOUR “NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS” SMART

We don't agree with all the naysayers about the futility of making new year resolutions. We love leveraging this time of year as a great opportunity to course-correct and reboot our lives.

Creating new habits and goals that will effectively help propel us into the future we want to create for ourselves, however, requires both a specific mindset and skillset.

First, your general mindset. Are you making your goals list based on what others think you should do, be, change? If yes, then stop. Take a deep breath and exhale. Inhale what you want to be and do, in your own terms, without censoring yourself.

Second, make sure your resolutions are SMART. Many fails because they set overly ambitious and unrealistic goals without clear markers of success. In brief,

here's the framework for creating your list. This is the way to set goals with your team too, by the way:

- **Specific:** Set concrete, clearly defined goals based on what you really want. Answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how. If it's work-related, then be clear about what a good job is (why?) and what it looks like in terms of time (when), quality (how well), quantity (how much), cost (at what cost) and percent change (from what to what).
- **Measurable:** Whatever the goal is, be very clear about how you'll know you're making progress. Think about how much and how many?
- **Achievable (Motivating):** Be optimistic and aim high but be realistic. Your goal should be a stretch, but something you can actually achieve. Consider what may be the obstacles that may get in your way and calibrate your willingness to overcome them.
- **Relevant:** Your goals need to matter enough to you so that you'll be motivated to stick with them. Ask yourself why are they a high priority? How well do they fit into your current life- work? Fill in the blank: "I am doing this so that...." How will they make a difference?
- **Time-bound:** Set a reasonable timeline for your goals, and a way to track them. Without a deadline, a goal is just an idea.

Stay focused on the small steps and celebrate wins along the way. Think marathon, not sprint.

To help you with this core process, download our SMART Goal Generator Worksheet here.

Cynthia Indriso



CREATE MOMENTUM – BEGIN RIGHT NOW

Many fails with resolutions because they take on too much, too fast, in the month right after the holidays, from a place of where they've come to a full stop. An all-or-nothing attitude of trying to go from zero to 100 overnight is unrealistic and self-defeating.

So as soon as you finish reading this, use the remaining time left in this year as a “trial period.” Think of it as practice time. It doesn't matter if you miss a day. Call it a “warm-up period.”

With the pressure off, you can give yourself space to more realistically assess your resolutions and to adjust them as you go, and before you get to January 1. You'll start to feel the change and the difference, so when the first day of the year arrives, the more difficult early days will be over. You'll already be feeling the momentum and the sense of accomplishment that boost your energy and self-motivation.

NOT TOO TIGHT, NOT TOO LOOSE

We know from our work with leaders that they tend to be the most goal-oriented, as well as the most self-critical and self-demanding. So to stay on course and manage stress, it's essential to be at ease and spacious with any slip-ups you make. The next morning is a new day. Forgive yourself. This opens up the space to reassess and course correct as you go. Focused, yet relaxed enough to tweak your goals or even allow them to morph into something more meaningful and realistic, especially as you learn and move forward through any challenges. [The most effective leaders are compassionate with themselves, as well as with others.](#)