
Writing a Future Letter



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A Future Letter is a great way to help you focus on the goals you want to achieve in the next year.

Imagine that it is one year from now. You are reflecting back on the year and thinking about how things have evolved for you. What do you want to be celebrating? What accomplishments and achievements do you want to have made during the past twelve months?

The goal of this exercise is to identify your real goals for the year. This format should help you to connect with what you really want, not what you think you should do.

Dedicate a solid, uninterrupted block of time and write a Future Letter. Imagine that it is one year from now and you are writing a letter to someone you care about who would want to celebrate your success. Share what has happened and what you have accomplished during the past year. You need to decide if you are going to limit this to just your work life or whether you also include other facets of your life too.

While you can certainly write what is compelling to you, important areas to address are:

- What your work looks like (number of people that you are responsible for, types of client, budget agreed, working environment etc.)
- How you feel about your skill set, be it specialist or managerial
- Your strategies for getting things done
- What your typical day looks like
- Anything that is important to you regarding you or your business or both

Use the example overleaf as a model. For maximum effectiveness, balance what you would love to have happen with what you believe can happen. Better to write about what you believe you could accomplish than to write about something that feels too large a stretch for you right now.

Example

Over the page is an example of a Future Letter that John wrote to his close friend, Nick. There is no perfect letter. However you do this assignment is perfect. Simply use this to spur your thinking and get you started...

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Dear Nick,

It is March 25th 2009 and I am taking some time out to share some of the many wonderful things that have happened in my work during the past year. You have always been so supportive of me so I knew you would enjoy hearing about my success.

I started off the year with a solid commitment to make 2008 my best year ever, both personally and professionally. And you know what, it has been! I got really clear about what I wanted to achieve and then I took some time to explain to my team what we needed to achieve and to help them to set their objectives clearly too. It meant that I got much more done with the team but they also contributed towards my success because they knew what was expected of them and they too were motivated to achieve their own goals.

At the end of last year, I became aware that I felt quite isolated in my work. It was hard to find someone to collaborate with and enjoy the work alongside me. Well, I sat and worked out my existing support network and noticed that there was one particular person, Richard, who I would like to have much more contact with so we met up and discussed how we could help each other. It has been fantastic. I feel so fortunate to have found a way to beat the isolation that might have otherwise occurred if I continued doing everything on my own and never had anyone professionally who I could bounce ideas off regularly.

As you know, I'm a firm believer in continuing to build my skills as a Managing Director. So this year I attended a very practical course run by the Institute of Directors on leadership. Now I feel more confident and competent and I know that I am on the way to being a far more effective leader.

A key component for making this year great was creating a schedule that worked for me. It took a while to make it happen, but now I'm really pleased with the way my typical month and week look! I'm still working on delaying decisions on important matters but I'm getting there. At the beginning of every day, I spend ten minutes planning my day and only look at e-mails twice a day now. I also stop ten minutes before my working day ends and use that crucial time to just tidy my files and review things for tomorrow. You wouldn't think it was the same John - honest!

One of the biggest factors in my success this year was to fully believe in my own ability to make what I wanted to happen really happen for me. While I've always known deep down the importance of making a committed decision, writing out my goals and believing in myself, I had never really taken it to this level before. And it really has paid off and I'm delighted!

In closing, I want to share the gratitude that I have for you and the many other people who supported me in this endeavour. I really appreciate it!

Thank you and hope to see you soon!

John