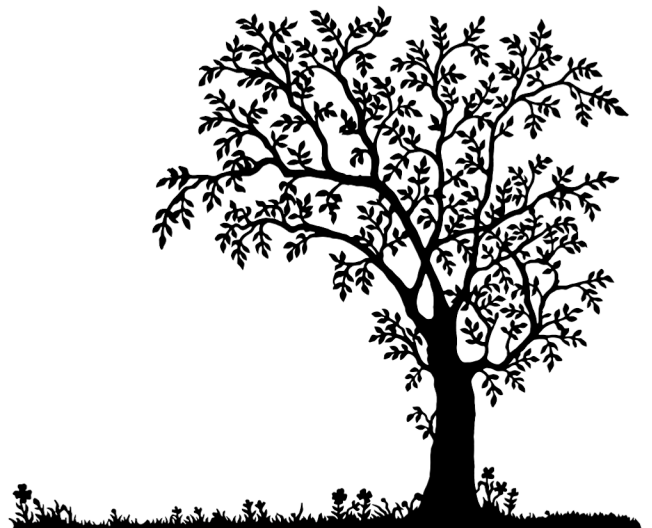


YEARLY ROADMAP

Exploring the last year and
building the one ahead.

By
Jim Lucas



YEARLY ROADMAP

What is this?

This guide will help you reflect on the last 12 months and plan for next year.

How will it help me?

The end of the year symbolises change, and many people like to start fresh. It's an opportunity to build on your successes and learn from your mistakes.

Life can be fast and busy, making it difficult to connect with your experiences. You miss the chance to learn from your emotions and find helpful meaning in your activities.

This guide allows you to slow down, look at your life in the last 12 months and choose what you want to build in the future.

How is it different from other guides?

This guide uses Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). If you like to apply it personally or professionally, it will help you shape your life using a familiar method.

What you will need

- One to two hours of uninterrupted time (to look back).
- One to two hours of continuous time (to look forward).
- A printed version of this booklet.
- The willingness to be honest, brave and compassionate.

LET'S BEGIN

Remembering last year

Let's begin with an experiential exercise

This exercise will help you explore purposeful events from the last 12 months. If you'd prefer to listen to an audio recording, click [here](#).

Sit yourself down in a comfortable position. Place both feet flat on the ground and gently press them down. Notice the contact between the ground and your feet.

Drop your shoulders and close your eyes. Take a short breath in, pause, and slowly and gently breathe out.

Let your mind wander back over the last 12 months.

Imagine many photographs placed on a table in front of you. Slowly move your gaze over them to notice you in each photo. There you are in various aspects of your life.

There you are in your friendships.

There you are in your work.

There you are with your health.

There you are in your romantic relationship.

There you are as a parent.

There you are as a member of your communities.

Remembering last year

Focus on the memories that brought a smile to your face.

Remember the events that made you cry.

Recall a moment you felt scared to do something important, and you did it anyway.

What can you remember doing in these aspects of your life?

What activities filled you with a deeper sense of meaning or appreciation?

As you see you in your life over the last 12 months, describe who you have been.

What do this action and this experience tell you about who you are and what is personally meaningful?

Open your eyes and move immediately into the next part of this exercise.

Writing Exercise

Write about one of the best moments from last year.

Go slow and write for 20 minutes.

(Set a timer and keep writing for 20 minutes. When your time is up, stop.)

- Write about what you felt in your body.
- Describe the emotions you felt.
- Note the thoughts that went through your mind.
- Point to what you did.
- Explore how your actions touched other people. *(Put yourself behind the eyes of someone you care about, and wonder what they appreciate.)*

Start writing here:

Writing Exercise

continued...

Writing Exercise

continued...

More Helpful Questions

Which three accomplishments gave you the most pride?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Whose company have you appreciated the most and why?

What have you discovered about yourself this year?

More Helpful Questions

Do you notice anything you continue to hold on to when you look back?

(Think about issues that keep you awake at night. What do you dwell on? How do you continue to blame yourself? How do you continue to blame others?)

If you could or knew how, what would you like to let go of?
What would it take to let go, and what would you sacrifice?
How might it liberate you to let go?

BREAK TIME

Well done.

You've completed part one.

Now, take a break.

Stand up and move your body. Gently stretch your arms out and reach the sky.

Take a short breath in, and gently and slowly breathe out.

Turn your attention to another task for at least 10 minutes. Make a drink or step outside. Look out the window and reconnect with your senses as you move your body.

Let yourself go absentminded. Let your mind and imagination wander for a short time. Let go of needing to solve any problems. Allow yourself to play and smile.

I'll see you when you are ready to begin part two.

PART TWO

Building the Year ahead

In part two, you are going to begin building the year ahead. We'll explore what you want, what might get in the way and how you can navigate those challenges using your ACT Skills.

Becoming You

Look back at what you wrote about last year. Rewrite what you found personally meaningful.

What would you do this year to build that pattern in your life if you had the courage?

Becoming You

What barriers appear when you imagine you completing these actions?

- Explore your doubts, worries and concerns.
- What feelings and bodily sensations arise?
- What would the *OLD YOU* do in this situation?

Becoming You

Choose from the following life areas and write down the most significant challenges in the year ahead. You can complete as many as you want.

Community

Health

Relationships

Self-Care

Nurturing Others
e.g. parenting or mentoring

Protecting the Planet

Work

Education

Spirituality

Hobbies

Using your ACT Skills

Pick one of your chosen life areas. What skills would help you increase your psychological flexibility?

Openness Skills (Willingness & Defusion Actions):

- What feelings could you approach rather than avoid? How could you nurture a more curious stance?
- What unhelpful rules have you tended to follow? What could you do to step back when they appear and let go?

Using your ACT Skills

Awareness Skills (Present Moment Focus & Flexible Perspective-taking Actions):

- What daily action would help you to slow down and engage your senses?
- What exercises or questions could help you explore new perspectives, e.g. observer, container, and compassionate angles?

Using your ACT Skills

Engaged Skills (Values Construction & Habit-building Actions):

- Note some values you want to spend more time constructing.
- What daily action would help you to build your values into a new habit?

Building the Year Ahead

Who would you like to spend more time with in the next 12 months?

What would you like to spend more time doing each week?

How would your values-based activity benefit you, others and your relationships?

What would you call it if you could title the next chapter of your life?

Well done.

You have completed the yearly roadmap.

And, of course, you have only just begun.

Here is a friendly warning.

The following 12 months will not go to plan and will not go smoothly. At least, that hasn't been how my life has worked out.

Nevertheless, when you build habits through carefully selected daily actions, you significantly increase the chances that you'll shape the life you want. My life has taught me that too.

Implement a System

I recommend you implement a system.

It can be a wall planner, a paper diary or a digital calendar. Use a system that you know will most likely work for you.

It needs to be simple and accessible.

I like to use a paper diary and a digital note-taker. I use OneNote (other brands are available) to write ideas, goals and reusable templates.

I use my paper diary to record my monthly schedules. A year is a long-time, and it has always helped me to scale my hopes and dreams down to smaller daily actions. I recommend you do the same.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Schedule tasks for your health on specific days and times each week.
- Stack a mindfulness exercise on top of an existing habit, e.g. I will complete a 5 minutes meditation after sitting at my desk to turn on my computer.
- Focus on a context where you tend to be more inflexible and nail down what you will do differently. For example, if you stare at a computer for too long, identify first what you will do to break that pattern and, secondly, what new values-based action you will take instead. In other words, *interrupt and expand*; interrupt your existing unhelpful pattern and introduce a further step to help you expand your flexibility in that context.

Well done, and keep going.

Thank you

Thank you for using this guide.

Jim Lucas designed and wrote this guide in 2022. You can download it here:

<https://openforwards.com/yearlyroadmap>

Please share

Feel free to share the link directly with other people.

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Feedback

I would welcome your feedback on any of the following:

- How the guide has benefited you.
- Sections or questions you found unhelpful.
- Recommendations for improvement.

For more information about training, supervision or consultancy in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, please visit:

www.openforwards.com.

Other ACT-related Resources

Here are some other ACT-related resources you may find useful

- **The ACT Roadmap** - A Guide for getting started with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- **APT in ACT** - YouTube Channel designed to help you build your competence in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.
- **ACT Practitioners Community** - An online community that brings together therapists, coaches, psychologists, and counsellors who want to practice Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), share our ideas and learn as much as possible to become highly skilled ACT Practitioners.