



Book Review

Your Best Year Yet

by Jenny Ditzler

How many of us make New Year Resolutions after Christmas (e.g. lose weight, get a new job or a new relationship) only to see them barely last to the end

of January? That was me for most of my life! However, when we gave up trying to have a family, it felt important for me to shake off my feelings of failure and enjoy success in other areas of my life. So, about ten years ago, I started using a book called "*Your Best Year Yet*".

It's nice that the book starts positively, by asking you to review the previous year and to acknowledge what you DID achieve, no matter how large or small, from getting a new job to learning how to bake a cake. (You see, you CAN achieve things!) Then you're asked to look at your disappointments. What did you want to achieve, but didn't? What didn't go so well? So what did you learn from both processes? What helped you achieve the things you did and what contributed to your disappointments?

From there you can look at all the roles you play in your life (e.g. husband, worker, pet owner, friend, daughter, artist, neighbour, etc) and how you feel you're doing in each of them. You then look at your personal values. What do you care about? What *really* drives you?

I think it's really useful that the book then asks you to look at whether or not those values are currently reflected in your roles. This can often pinpoint why you're feeling dissatisfied. (For example, you may be doing well at work financially, but if the work itself doesn't match your values, you will find it difficult to really care about it). From the mix of roles and values, you then choose ONE role that you're going to focus on in the next year (which will make the biggest difference to your life overall) and the goals you want for that role. Other goals will come from other roles and you're encouraged to choose a maximum of ten (less is preferable). Yearly goals can then be subdivided into weekly and monthly goals, together with milestones, to keep you on track.

You're also asked to write three guidelines for the year and also a new paradigm (an overall statement which confronts and changes a belief that has been holding you back).

I've found that it's a good book to use alone, or as a couple (as we do), or it can be good to do it with a friend (then you have someone to check in with regularly to see how you're both doing). I don't always find the time to do it (it takes a minimum of three days) but when I do, I look back on the year feeling rather proud of myself! We've particularly found it good to do between Christmas and New Year, as it helps us to feel excited about the year ahead.

Caroline Dearden

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