

# Three Steps to a Great New Year

*A Self-Guided Coaching Exercise*

*developed by Shana Montesol Johnson, Career/Executive Coach*

## **Step 1**

### **Take Stock of 2016: Loved It / Loathed It**

#### **Part A: Loved It**

What were the best moments of 2015 for me? When did I feel I was at my best? What made me feel happy and fulfilled? In what moments was I [aligned with my core values](#) and playing to my [strengths](#)? What am I grateful for in the past year? What experiences, projects, commitments, trips, relationships, and / or activities did I find to be enjoyable, energizing, meaningful, enlivening?

Jot down as many ideas as come to mind, either in the form of a bulleted list, a mind-map, a drawing – however you feel most comfortable. You may find that referring to your calendar, or flipping through photos on your phone or computer, may help jog your memory.

## Step 1, Part B: Loathed It

What were the worst moments or seasons of 2015? When was I the least happy? What were the experiences, projects, commitments, trips, relationships, and / or activities that drained my energy, triggered my stress response, and / or drove me crazy?

Again, jot down as many ideas as come to mind, in whatever format (e.g., bulleted list, a mind-map, etc.) you prefer.

## **Step 2**

### **Get Clear**

Read through your answers for questions 1 & 2, noting anything surprising, any patterns or themes. Next, in each of the spaces below, complete the sentence “I want \_\_\_\_\_”. Don’t edit, don’t say, “That will never happen”, just write whatever comes to mind that you want now, and into the new year. Complete the list in one sitting.

**I want...**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

## **Step 3**

### Take Action

#### Part A: Design Actions

Look back on your “I want” list in Step 2. Choose **one item** that you’d like to work on in 2016. It’s better to choose one goal and focus on it, rather than having a laundry list of New Year’s resolutions that we have no chance of keeping.

Write your chosen item here: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some actions you could take to bring that one item closer to reality? Brainstorm some potential actions here:

## Part B: Commit

From your list of potential actions in Step 3, Part A on page 4, **choose one action** that you commit to taking in the next week. Write it in the space below.

**Hint:** *If you can't identify any action you could take in the next 7 days, you may need to break down your actions into smaller, discrete tasks that will take no more than 30 minutes. Once you've done that, choose an action from that list.*

## Part C: Build in Accountability

Choose someone whom you will ask to hold you accountable for taking this action. Let him/her know that you will be in touch (via email, SMS, WhatsApp, phone, carrier pigeon) within 1 week to let them know you have completed your action.

### Why build in accountability?

*Research has shown that people who write down their goals, share this information with a friend, and send weekly updates to that friend are on average 33% more successful in accomplishing their stated goals than those who merely come up with goals.*

Write the name of your "accountability partner" here: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the date on which you'll contact him/her with an update on your action: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part D: Lather, Rinse, Repeat

At the end of the week, after you have completed your action and reported to your accountability partner, go back to your list of actions and choose a new one you'll commit to for the coming week. (Or, as appropriate, brainstorm and refine further actions.) Keep doing this every week and you'll be well on your way to achieving your goal.

*I would love to hear how this process works for you.  
Feel free to drop me an email at [shana@developmentcrossroads.com](mailto:shana@developmentcrossroads.com).  
Here's wishing you a joyful, meaningful, and impactful 2016!*

## About the Author

**Shana Montesol Johnson** is a certified executive and leadership coach who helps global professionals to leverage their strengths in order to be happier at work, enhance their effectiveness as leaders, and amplify the impact of their work on their organizations and the world.

A Harvard graduate who earned a coach credential from the International Coach Federation, Shana has coached clients of 30+ different nationalities working at organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the World Health Organization, Telstra, Daimler, and Western Union.



An American of part-Filipino descent who spent most of her childhood in Mexico, Shana has lived in Asia since 2004. In addition to her work developing leaders, Shana is a career strategist and coach to global development professionals and expats seeking greater clarity on what's next in their careers and lives. Through the [“What’s Next?” coaching program](#) she helps clients to identify the work that plays to their strengths, aligns with their values, supports their priorities, and makes a strong impact in an area of the world to which they are passionately committed.

Based in Makati, Philippines, Shana coaches clients in person in Metro Manila, and globally via Skype. She blogs at [www.developmentcrossroads.com](http://www.developmentcrossroads.com).