

Three Steps to a Great New Year

*A Self-Guided Year-end Reflection & Planning Exercise
developed by Shana Montesol Johnson,
Executive / Leadership Coach*

Step 1

Take Stock of 2017: Loved It / Loathed It

Part A: Loved It

What were the best moments of 2017 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 – and who – am I grateful for in the past year? What is the smartest decision I made this year? What experiences, projects, commitments, trips, relationships, and / or activities did I find to be enjoyable, energizing, meaningful?

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. Use the back of this page for extra space, or additional pages as needed.

Step 1, Part B: Loathed It

What were the worst moments or seasons of 2017? When was I the least happy? When did I struggle? What do I regret? What were the experiences, projects, commitments, trips, relationships, and / or activities that drained my energy, triggered my stress response, and / or drove me crazy? What would I like to let go of from this year?

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

(Bonus points if you can identify what you learned or gained from these difficult experiences!)

Step 2

Get Clear

Read through your answers in Step 1, noting anything surprising, or any themes. Next, in each of the spaces below, complete the sentence “I want _____”. Don’t edit, or think, “That will never happen!” – just write whatever comes to mind that you want in 2018. It doesn’t have to be a traditional goal like “get a promotion.” Maybe you want to feel a certain way — more calm, relaxed, and focused. Perhaps you want to take more risks or experience adventure. 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 2018. It’s better to choose one goal and focus on it, rather than having a long laundry list of New Year’s resolutions that have little to no chance of being fulfilled.

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, Facebook, phone, carrier pigeon) within 1 week to let them know you have completed your action.

Why build in accountability?

Research suggests 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 when 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.
Here's wishing you a joyful, meaningful, and impactful 2018!*

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 coaches in a range of areas, including leadership development, executive presence, emotional intelligence, communication skills, career strategy and transition, stress management, building resilience, and work/life balance. She has a passion for coaching women in global careers to help them step into greater self-confidence, service, and organizational impact.

An American of part-Filipino descent who spent most of her childhood in Latin America, Shana lived and worked for more than a decade in Asia. Her facilitation and coaching work have taken her to China, India, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and the Philippines. Shana relishes cross-cultural work and has coached clients of 30+ nationalities across industries such as: international development; financial services; advertising; pharmaceuticals; business process outsourcing; business consulting; academe; and government. Her clients have ranged from Fortune 100 multi-national corporations to family-owned businesses to United Nations agencies and non-profit organizations.

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 individual and group coaching on "[What's Next?](#)" 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.

Shana is happily married, and has two daughters and no pets (much to her kids' consternation). She blogs occasionally at www.developmentcrossroads.com.