

confidential draft

SPARKS

A YEAR'S WORTH OF PROMPTS, VISUAL CUES, AND FUN STUFF FOR THE
CREATIVE WRITER, ARTIST, OR JOURNAL-KEEPER



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week one: RESOLUTIONS YOU CAN'T BREAK

Ah, the new year. Another chance to get it right or to give up around three weeks in and go back to eating chee-tos for breakfast again. (Or is that just me? Ahem.)

Whether or not you're starting this creative journal process at the start of a new year, or just making a symbolic new start in your creative life in the very middle, it's never a bad idea to make some goals. Call them resolutions if you'd like, or call them pacts with yourself, or call them road maps for self-growth....anything you call them is okay as long as you're MAKING them, since you can't get to the destination if you're busy trying to find the map.

This week, think about your creative goals and how they've changed over the months and years that you've been pursuing your Art activities. Have they changed? How much have you learned? Are you satisfied with your life and your progress?

Here's your chance to take that new start.

And feel free to eat those Chee-tos. You only live once, after all! Sit-ups can be done afterward, if you're feeling particularly guilty.

A FUN LITTLE BLURBIE

These are some fun questions that were being passed around livejournal.com around the end of the year to sum up your year at a glance. Try answering them in your journal, either in words or in pictures, to help you see where you've been so you can plan where you're going!

1. What did you do in 2003 that you'd never done before?
2. Did you keep your new years' resolutions, and will you make more for next year?
3. Did anyone close to you give birth?
4. Did anyone close to you die?
5. What countries did you visit?
6. What would you like to have in 2004 that you lacked in 2003?
7. What date from 2003 will remain etched upon your memory, and why?
8. What was your biggest achievement of the year?
9. What was your biggest failure?
10. Did you suffer illness or injury?
11. What was the best thing you bought?
12. Whose behavior merited celebration?
13. Whose behavior made you appalled and depressed?
14. Where did most of your money go?
15. What did you get really, really, really excited about?
16. What song will always remind you of 2003?
17. Compared to this time last year, are you: i. happier or sadder? ii. thinner or fatter? iii. richer or poorer?
18. What do you wish you'd done more of?
19. What do you wish you'd done less of?
20. How will you be spending Christmas?
22. Did you fall in love in 2003?
23. How many one-night stands?
24. What was your favorite TV program?
25. Do you hate anyone now that you didn't hate this time last year?
26. What was the best book you read?
27. What was your greatest musical discovery?
28. What did you want and get?
30. What was your favorite film of this year?
31. What did you do on your birthday, and how old were you?
32. What one thing would have made your year immeasurably more satisfying?
33. How would you describe your personal fashion concept in 2003?
34. What kept you sane?
35. Which celebrity/public figure did you fancy the most?
36. What political issue stirred you the most?
37. Who did you miss?
38. Who was the best new person you met?
39. Tell us a valuable life lesson you learned in 2003:
40. Quote a song lyric that sums up your year:

IF THERE WAS NOTHING STOPPING YOU, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? BECOME?

And moreover, if there really was nothing stopping you -- which, by the way, there ISN'T -- why wouldn't you do all those things that you really want to do? Use your journal to dream...and moreover, use your journal to PLAN those dreams. Find the obstacles and BREAK THROUGH them, turning every one of those What If's into WHEN I's.... (yes, you can.)

What goals do you have for yourself? What goals do you have for your art? What would you like to learn, to be, to receive? How are you working

These are some of the ways that people have talked about, either online or in email, regarding their end-of-year journaling practices.

TRY ONE!

* Tera Leigh, of <http://www.teraswish.com>, says, "I do some pages about things that happened in the world, and some about what happened in my life. For example, this year I've watched more TV so I'm doing a page about that (Reno 911 being my current obsession). I am also doing pages about movies, plays, and other entertainment I've seen this year, our favorite restaurants, all the cities I visited during work-travel this year, etc." She also suggests going to CNN.com for pictures and things.

* Lynn A., creative soul that she is, added, "How about books read, friends seen, old and new, goals accomplished, most trying time, best time, most memorable days.....hmmmm. Could be fun to do a year in review!!"

* Belle Wong, another highly creative artist, told us her family's tradition: "It's not technically "end-of-year journaling", I guess, but on New Year's Eve I bring out all the gel pens and a 16 X 20 black illustration board and we as a family do a gratitude poster, which gets hung up somewhere where we can all see it for the rest of the year (well, in theory, anyway. Since we always seem to be renovating, the gratitude poster does tend to get lost). Ward does calligraphy so he always gets to do the title.

Then, on New Year's Day, I pull out this humungous sketchbook I bought a few years ago - I think it's 16 X 20, too, although it might be a bit smaller - take out a stack of old magazines, scissors for everyone plus glue sticks, and we all sit down and do a family vision collage. The fun thing (for me, anyway) is to look at last year's collage and see what things have actually happened in the past year."

* moeckie said this about her end-of-the-year practice: "Last year was the first time I did an end of year recap in my journal. I had a page with blocks of color on it, and I filled in snippets of info, like my address, phone number, swaps I did, number of books I read (these are kept in the "Books Eaten" journal), places of note I went, events that happened to me personally. This year I may go a bit more in depth, but I'm not quite sure yet." (I loooove the color block idea.)

are all things quiet on new year's day?

HOORAY! ANOTHER YEAR!

What are these guys celebrating?

How can they be a metaphor for how you feel or have felt?

What's under the mustache-guy's hat?

Is this celebration of a fresh start, or of goals completed?

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS DOWN IN YOUR JOURNAL, AND THEN LOOK BELOW.

(Not tryin' to get all psychological on ya here, but if you see the celebration as a completion, you're more likely to complete your own. It's a visualization thing. Scary, huh?)



toward them in this new start? Make a chart or a plan and let yourself be silly once in a while, too. Without silly, there's no joy in life, right?

WORTH A MILLION.

**WAYS TO
RING IN THE
NEW YEAR
(LITERALLY
OR FIGURATIVELY):**