

Strategy for reviewing, evaluating the current year and forward planning for the coming year
Cycles within cycles within cycles – what will you choose from your spiral curriculum?
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In the Four Quartets TS Eliot wrote that ‘at the end of all our exploring we come back to the beginning and know the place for the first time’.

As you stand at the ending of the year having reviewed what has happened: successes, room for improvement, what went right, what went wrong that was a gift to learn from, what you had planned and what actually happened, the actions forming the evidence it is time for a hard look – that famous Paddington Bear hard stare – at what earns the right to move with you into the next year.

There’s a very technical, complex way to achieve this!

One, that if only everyone applied it with integrity, I am sure it would shift cultures and mind sets. It depends on a liberal dose of honesty with oneself sprinkled with trust. Being prepared to question maybe long held, much treasured assumptions that hang about encouraging us to think because they have been around for so long they are helpful and useful. Ummm!

Think again.

The technical way is simply this. Apply the formula of **love it, use it or ditch it**.

You may well ask how does that apply to me? You may have a manager ... a team direct reports ... a Board of Directors customers and clients to whom you are accountable. You may well feel this is an impossible formula to apply. Is it the **love it** part? Would it be the **use it** part? Or heaven forbid, would it by any chance be the **ditch it** part?

What earns the right to move with you into the next year? What will support you in meeting expectations and even more exceeding expectations? What will you **ditch**? What will you **use**? What will you **love**?

How will you be in charge of your choices?

Love it:

Love it works like this and you may dream up much better ways to apply this or any part of the formula. You keep only that which you love, that makes your heart sing, that makes you leap out of bed in the morning with joy. What you love doing. What you love being. What you love creating. What you love giving. What you love experiencing. What you love being part of. Get the idea of how this part works? Swapping the ‘what’ with how or who works too.

Great idea but what if there are parts of my job that I don’t love or even like and there’s no-one to ditch them to?

Good question! If it is absolutely impossible to shift it the solution is to see how you could transform it into something that you could like and even grow to love. Be inspired with how you can or could choose to change your perspective. How many possibilities could you dream up that would transform this unloved part? Who could you ask to help you find a solution? There may be someone who would light up and say with amazement ‘You don’t love that! I don’t believe it as it’s just the sort of thing that I love 100%. Give it to me NOW.

We often get ourselves trapped in assumptions that we allow ourselves to believe are true instead of questioning them closely.

Use it:

Use it works like this. Literally if you don't use something it needs to go. The questions to ask could be how useful is this process, procedure, way of doing things, how I am around this, how useful is this behaviour? If it isn't useful and doesn't enhance your working life or any other part of your life, it needs to go. On the other hand, if you don't use something is it because you don't know how to use it, that you don't have the training, that there's an information lack or that someone way back told you that you were no good at XYZ and you still believe them. Or maybe it is that you simply don't like it or feel comfortable with it. It's worth checking it out with someone who is skilled at whatever it is and let their expertise rub off on you. Ask them to be your mentor in this part.

Ditch it:

Ditch it works like this. Everything needs to come under very close and thoughtful scrutiny. From the items on your desk, the things in your bag or briefcase, what's on your computer / mobile / laptop, what's in your diary / on your calendar, what's in your mind / thought processes and I'm sure you can add more. It all needs to be taken out, cleaned, and evaluated.

What will survive?

What is important to you and your career? What earns the right to walk with you into the next year? What will support how you want this next year to be? How can what you carry forward support you thriving?

Oh no! I don't have to get rid of that do I?

You don't because you always have a choice. Pause a moment. Ask yourself whether it is a knee jerk reaction or an old pattern which encourages you to hold onto things well passed their 'sell by date'. Or is it that you may need time to get used to a new way of being and doing? Only you will know what is true for you and where your integrity sits.

Good luck and have fun with the process.

You may like to try the 29 things process as a start to get your love it, use it, ditch it muscles warmed up.

The recipe for this process is as follows: a copious quantity of black or green bin bags.

Take one bin bag. Open it out and find one thing that you can at this moment ditch – either a physical or non-physical item – and place it in the bin bag. The moment you have done this the clock is ticking. You have to find 28 more things to complete the bag. Once you have found them then tie up the bag and arrange for the contents to be disposed of appropriately. And ... yes you've guessed it You start all over again.

Please note: one item isn't one sheet of paper. Nice try. It's a whole pile of paper.

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