



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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Health & Wellness

Your Covid Year In Review And 10 Things To Let Go Of In 2021

By Kathy Caprino

As I sit here writing this, I'm waiting for the results of a Covid-19 test I took recently as I was potentially exposed to the coronavirus last week. It's a very interesting phenomenon when a crisis that's been impacting millions of people around the world comes one step closer to your own door. For me, this experience has generated an even greater feeling of compassion and empathy for so many people who are grappling with this disease within their families, or living on a daily basis with the gripping fear that it might impact their loved ones and the people they serve and support every day.

As we know, this has been a year of absolute firsts for so many, with devastating losses for millions of people, but also positive experiences for others, including growth and unexpected success for some key businesses, industries, and sectors. And there's been an enormous amount of learning and stretching in between.

As 2020 comes to a close, I've been reading some thought-provoking posts from colleagues and writers who have taken the time to provide reflective reviews of their lives this year, and the learnings they've gleaned. These posts are fascinating for sure, but in honor of this year like no other, I'd like to offer something a bit different that I hope will be helpful.

Instead of a "review" of the year, I suggest that we also decide to take action unlike anything we've ever done. That we commit to letting go and shedding (as far as we're able) the top ten things in our lives that keep us stuck, unhappy, ill, depressed, thwarted, and anxious. That instead of making New Year's resolutions of what we want to create (80% of which we'll never achieve), we finally get clearer on what we need to let go of, once and for all, and actually do it.

Why do we need this "letting go" process? As a former therapist and now in career coaching work with professionals who come for help to build something more, better or different, I've seen that there are five critical steps we need to take when we want to transform anything, whether it's personal or career-related.

Those steps are:

1. Step Back for an empowered perspective

First, you have to understand yourself much more deeply and intimately than you do now, and also see yourself in a more positive light, and believe that you are worthy of a happier life.

And for more success and fulfillment, it's essential to identify exactly what you'll give up everything for—your top life priorities, core values, standards of integrity, non-negotiables, as well as your authentic style, preferences, and ideals.

2. Let Go – of the thinking, patterns and behaviors that keep you stuck

In virtually everyone's life, there's something that's blocking us from accessing more success, joy, reward, health or fulfillment. Do you know what that is? The first place to look is where there are repeating negative patterns in your life—terrible bosses, toxic work cultures, being passed over continually, back-stabbing colleagues, draining responsibilities, financial challenges that never abate, etc. We need to look at the patterns that repeat, attempt to identify how we are potentially participating in or sustaining these patterns, and do something concrete to shift that dynamic.

3. Say Yes! to your compelling visions

Thirdly, we need to stop denying what we desperately want, and say Yes! to it. That doesn't mean you're going to chuck all that you've worked so hard for, and lose everything. I means you can start now to take some small, risk-free steps to bring into your life a bit more of what you want and need, now. So often, we have huge, wonderful visions for how we want to live and work, but we cut ourselves off at the knees believing none of it is possible. We think thoughts like, "These dreams are just too ridiculous" or "I'm not worthy enough to have that kind of life," or the most common negative mindset, "I'm desperately afraid to go for what I want for fear I'll lose what I already have." And that mindset stops us from doing anything that would help.

4. Explore it and try it on

To achieve what we really want, we can't just dream about it. It's action that will get us there, but action like no other we've taken before. It's consistent, committed, brave microsteps that move us forward and give us new information and learning about ourselves and about what we're capable of. It's the type of action that says to us, "If I can do this, I can do anything!" and helps us get good with the paralyzing fear that so many people possess about moving forward to their most thrilling lives.

5. Create it S.M.A.R.T.

Finally, you can't go from Point A to Point Z (from misery to thrill) in a week, without any effort. This process requires a plan (with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound goals) as well as an accountability structure and ongoing support system to keep you going when the going gets tough. To stretch beyond where you are today, you need a shift in consciousness. It's not going to fall in your lap—you have to reach out and grab it, and then do the inner and outer work of change, and keep doing it.

So where to begin? As this difficult year comes to an end, let's focus on the "Letting Go" phase—with a fearless identification of what you no longer want and will no longer tolerate. Below is a list of questions that will help you explore what you've learned this year about the top 10 things you're truly ready to let go of forever, and why you need to.

Those things include:

- People who don't support you
- Mindsets that cripple you
- Relationships that are toxic
- Behaviors and habits that sabotage your success and hurt you
- Jobs and careers that are completely wrong for you
- Leaders and managers who harm you
- Friends who are destructive
- "Help" that is unhelpful
- Trauma and fears from the past that need to be released
- Weak boundaries that need to be strengthened

As a year-end review to identify what to let go of, ask yourself these questions:

1. What are you focused on doing that no longer brings you joy and reward. Why do you keep doing it?
2. What fears and beliefs have been with you since childhood that keep you locked into an unsatisfying life and career?
3. Who told you that you can't speak up and stand up for who you are and what you want and did you internalize those beliefs?
4. Who did you crave love from most as a child and who are you still trying to be to get it?
5. What self-sabotaging behaviors do you find you engage in over and over, and haven't received help to release (or the "help" you got didn't work)?
6. What mindsets do you have that you know are not positive or healthy that you're ready to shift?
7. Which people in your life need to be ejected from your sphere because they are cruel, unsupportive, jealous and continue to try to keep you down?

8. In what ways are you continuing your perfectionistic overfunctioning that makes you feel so tired, resentful and depleted?
9. Where do your boundaries need strengthening so you can finally say NO!
10. How are you communicating from fear, not strength, and continually apologizing and weakening your message when you shouldn't be?
11. Who are you protecting in your life that shouldn't be protected?
12. What job have you been holding onto for years that you know is wrong for you?
13. What habits, addictions or chronic self-sabotaging behaviors need to finally be addressed and healed?
14. What brings a feeling of deep shame and unhappiness when you think about how you behaved or responded to someone?
15. Who has been continually unsupportive or demeaning and nasty to you, and needs to be finally removed from your life for you to move forward the way you long to?
(Perhaps your narcissistic boss or a family member who hurts you?)

It takes bravery and strength to eject out of your life what no longer serves you at the highest level. But once you do it, and once you take the reins and build stronger boundaries to build and sustain a happier, more satisfying life and career, everything will transform. And what becomes possible is nothing short of miraculous.

Wishing you a beautiful 2021.