

Plan your best 2019

1 Write it down!

Those who write down their goals and plans are much, much more likely to achieve them. So even if you don't follow any other of these steps, this one is a must for me.

There are so many planners out there that I cannot begin to list them. If you don't want to use a pre-printed version, maybe you'd like to create your own bullet journal from a notebook. A quick look around Pinterest will give you thousands of ideas. And just to save you a little time, here's some to start you off from my Get Organised Pinterest Board:

<https://pin.it/amhu5sx2welf36>

Just bear in mind that everything you see on Pinterest and Instagram is the sanitised perfect version. Most pages of my bullet journal are not that pretty but they are functional and that's the real aim!

2. Visualise it.

Imagine this is the end of 2019. You're reflecting that 2019 has been the happiest, most successful and most fulfilled year yet. Someone asks you what 3 things are you most proud of? What's your answer?

These 3 things are your goals for the year. Reflect on what didn't make that list – these things may be things you often feel you 'should' do, they may be things that often appear regularly on your New Year's Resolutions list. You know the ones that get ditched mid-January. There's even a day for it. 17 January 2019 is the official Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day. People ditch their resolutions because they were short-term thinking, fuelled by focussing on the excesses of the previous few weeks. Instead, create goals derived from

connecting meaningfully with the vision of what would make you happy this year.

3. Capture it.

That feeling – of having had the happiest, most successful and most fulfilling year yet – what does it bring to mind? Is there a word or phrase that you can use to remind you of this intention throughout the year? Mine for 2018 was ‘Relaxed and Confident’. It helped me through all sorts of tough meetings and dips. I used www.canva.com to create a poster that I printed off and put in my workroom and office as well as downloading it and putting it on my phone. You could go fancy and have it printed out on canvas or framed. Put it where you can continuously connect with it to keep the vision of your great 2019 in mind.

4. Break it down.

When you look at those 3 things, what did you do to make them happen? This is your strategy for your goals.

5. Break it down even further.

Plan how you can achieve these things. Even if you're just planning your plan (a personal favourite of mine) that's ok. So if you're writing down that you will come up with your plan on your first day back at work, that's cool. As long as you know that you will get into the detail of how you are going to achieve those major events.

6. Brainstorm.

Get a sheet of paper and just write down everything you can think of that will help you get to your goal. Don't reject any potential course of action. Discount nothing at this stage.

7. Be prepared for obstacles.

What things are likely to get in your way? How can you overcome these obstacles? What approaches have you tried in the past? What works or doesn't work? What resources are available to you? Who can help you?

8. What's step one?

From your brainstorming, consider which idea is going to move you closest to your goal.

For each idea, you need to know the sequencing of each action (what has to come first) and the sort of time frame you need. Most people underestimate the time anything takes, especially new actions. I'd suggest allowing around 20% more time than you think you need unless it is something you've done before. And if you finish early, that's great! You can either get stuck into the next part of your plan or go and do something nice for yourself.

Prioritise your ideas and actions in accordance with what is going to give you the most return.

9. Schedule it.

When are you going to take step one? For each month of this year, what are you going to do to move you to your goal? What are you going to do for each week in January? And then each day. If you're not taking daily action towards your goal, you may not see the progress you would like. It doesn't necessarily have to be big time-consuming action, but a little everyday will get you further than one big chunk of work for a couple of days and then nothing. This is a marathon, it ain't a sprint.

10. Be aware of distractions.

What actions would you be tempted to do that do not move you further towards your goal? Something that often distracts me is scrolling through social media. I now use the screen time function on my iPhone to limit my time. I also regularly review my screen time reports to see how long I'm spending on various sites. It definitely adds up. I've cut my social media usage by about 10 hours a week in the last year. That's 520 hours a year to spend on something else! What is your number one distraction and how can you limit that?

11. Check in.

Keep checking back in with your goals. I do monthly and quarterly reviews and I find this keeps me on track for my goals. It helps me refocus my energy, check if I am wasting time and resource on things that are not helping and it enables me to celebrate my successes. This celebration is a positive reinforcement of all that is going well, making it easier to carry that behaviour forward into the future. When are you going to check in?

12. Be flexible.

When you're reviewing, be open to being flexible. Things change. Remember Charles Swindoll quote: 'Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.' Your plan will not go perfectly, you will encounter obstacles you didn't foresee and you will have setbacks that you hadn't anticipated. That's life. But you will also have unexpected opportunities and new ideas. Don't be too rigid in your approach.

You've got a great 2019 ahead of you and I'd be excited to hear about it. Use #brightrebelgoals to share your goals with me and others. Sharing your goals can help keep you accountable so go for it!