

Reflection – Organizing the Past Year

The exercise is on the next page.
This is done intentionally so that you will
not read ahead and anticipate your response.

It is natural for our minds to move into the exercise as we read through it,
but our minds will naturally begin working on the exercise also.

My Spiritual Exercises work best if
you wait until you are ready to begin, before you actually begin.

Print the exercise out and place it someplace safe.
Wait until you've set the time aside to actually enter into the exercise.

Don't read ahead, and don't anticipate.

When you are ready to begin, quiet all distractions,
and start your timer for a full hour.

You've made time for internal work, make the best of this time.

Materials Needed

Paper of some sort: Preferably on the larger side.

Drawing materials: Colored pencils or pens or crayons.

Timer: something other than your cell phone.



Reflection – Organizing the Past Year

“There are years that ask questions and there are years that answer.” – Zora Neale Hurston

This is a visual and tactile exercise. It is similar to the work you might do in diagramming an essay or planning for a big event. Yet with this exercise we will look back in reflection. You will move the events of the past year from your heart onto paper, spending time with your memories in a tangible way. This is a private exercise, it is intended to be a tool to help you recall the year, a creative aide in your time of reflection.

On a piece large paper, map out the past year. How you do this is up to you. It can be in a timeline or paragraph form, floating circles or words. It will depend on how you see the months. Even though we experience them in a linear fashion (i.e., one after another), we don't always keep them in our memory that way.

After a moment of centering and prayer, take a moment to reflect on your memories, and begin to work. Record what happened during the months of last year. What were the milestones? Did someone leave your life? Did someone enter it? Did you get a new job, go back to school, or graduate from school? In addition to the *milestones*, record your feelings and thoughts.

Work in color or use a monochromatic theme, use words or images, go big or keep it small, make a mess or be neat – there is no right or wrong way to enter into this exercise. Simply enter in. You are creating a visual representation of the year.

Once you have gone through the months in the past year, sit back and look at the visual representation you have created. Pray and ask God for his perspective.

Now, make note of ways that God “showed up” for you during this year. Ways he answered prayers, or let you struggle through to find your own answers. Ways he provided comfort or sent a friend with something you needed. Did he provide direction? Did he push you? Did he confront you? Perhaps he disappointed you? As you reflect on his actions in your life (or their seeming absence), make some notations on the page. Make these notations different from the other writings or images on the page. Perhaps use a different color or style of writing.

Take your time, and journal. Allow the exercise to create a greater spiritual awareness of how the year may have played out in the larger schema of your life. How did the events and God's presence change or enhance your journey?

How was God at work through you – through your story?

It is often helpful to share what you have learned with a trusted friend. Think on someone who would be willing to listen to what you have learned, and get in contact with them .

Feel free to reach out if you are interested in sharing with me: lisa@dailypax.com

