



## **Life Hack For Making 2026 Your Best Year Yet**

When we come to the end of the year, what's "normal" is to start looking at all the things we want next year to bring. We set wishful resolutions that we know have little chance of being fulfilled. We make a to do list of things to make us feel accomplished.

It's true that sometimes we get lucky, but I'm not willing to leave my future up to chance. Can you relate?

If we really want 2026 to be our best year yet, it's worth clearing the slate from last year and doing some deeper planning for the year ahead. And it helps to have a shift in mindset (and self awareness).

Here are some hacks and practices I've applied through the years to make "next year" more fun and joy filled than the last.

1. Get complete with the current year: When we start something new without letting go of unfinished business, the new thing has little chance of being more than a compensation. Your new year will likely be full of justifying, making excuses, or compensating for what you didn't accomplish. The weight you didn't lose. The money you didn't save. Places you didn't travel to. Or relationships that didn't find peace.

Whatever is unfinished from 2025 will carry its aftertaste into your new plans. I like to take a business review approach to this by making a list of what was incomplete. Write it down! Ask yourself what was at the cause of the incompleteness. Ask what you can take responsibility for that caused that result. For example, I didn't achieve it because I gave into distraction. I didn't know what to do, so I did nothing. I made excuses, and so on. By recognizing the source of being stopped, I have information I can genuinely reflect on. With that, I can choose whether I want to work on my reasons or set different

goals that really matter to me. And then, let it go. Rip up your list. Burn the page. Do whatever it takes to truly let it go.

2. Chose goals for the new year that are consistent with the commitment beneath common goals. That may sound simple. Like, I really do want to lose weight, save money and travel. But, wanting something and being committed to it are very different things. Being true to a commitment requires a deeper level of self awareness. It's the commitments behind what we want that are the key to keeping the promises we make to ourselves. The commitment behind wanting to lose weight might be to feel more attractive. It could be to feel more healthy or have stamina. To feel comfortable in my clothes. It's the deeper desire that would call you forward when faced with temptation.

3. Dig deeper into self awareness. Understanding the underlying commitment(s) is one thing. Battling the negative self talk that comes with it is something else. I've yet to hear negative self talk that isn't rooted in believing someone else's version of who you are supposed to be. Of how things are supposed to be. And ultimately, what is right or wrong, good or bad.

The critical thinking it takes to complete the previous year and to choose deeper commitments can teach you a lot about yourself. There is a level of self awareness that lets you transcend the perceived need to measure up and impress others. And, that's the kind of awareness that can make 2026 your best year yet. Take time to reflect and ask yourself the hard questions first and the quality of your next year can only get better.

My deepest wish for you is that you come to know yourself with a depth of self awareness that brings that kind of freedom.