

24 affirmations, lessons and contemplations for 2024

Does ill will have your holiday tinsel in a tangle? Grab some hot chocolate and realign your spirit with end-of-year insights to make this chilly season merry and bright from Rachael Hite



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BY [RACHAEL HITE](#)

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And with that, the 2023 season comes to an end. Friends, if this year has left you more upside down than right side up, you are not alone. Scandals, lawsuits, settlements and bad sentiment seem to be swirling like an ill-gotten snowstorm in our industry.

Some of my more popular lists in 2020, 2021, and even 2022 are jam-packed with what to do or stop doing, but this year's list, like 2023 itself, requires a little more of a heavy lift.

Chances are three ghosts from our pasts will not visit us and tell us what we did wrong and what we need to do next. Here are a few pep talks, lessons learned and maybe a little cheer to warm your cold hearts before the new year.

1. Being uncomfortable will create growth

Low inventory, high rates and mounting legal issues leave many uncomfortable and unhappy; you will have to grow and change your current methods to step outside of that comfort zone. Getting uncomfortable can sometimes lead to significant change and a new chapter in your business and life.

2. Consider new systems

Now is a great time to audit your current systems to see if they can be improved for efficiency and to match consumer sentiment. Your audience changes all the time. Choose systems that adapt to you.

3. Get out of your way and lean into your personal strengths

The biggest lesson we can all learn from this year is that your unwillingness to change and adapt will be the most significant barrier to moving forward. Do yourself a favor, and get out of your own way.

4. Gift yourself patience

Frustrated that things do not look the way you want? You are not alone. Be patient, and start researching solutions. The answers you need are out there. You need to be quiet enough to hear them.

5. Hold up your anger in the mirror

Why are you so angry? I've lost my cool more than a few times this year, and I'm sure you have, too. No need to be perfect, but when I'm riled up, I try to hold up that anger and ask myself what is going on and why I reacted that way. I also try to visualize how to handle it the next time, hoping that I can be less reactive.

6. Make a win board or folder

It's more important than ever to visualize the wins. Take a screenshot, hold on to the thank you cards, or even take a moment to write a win on an index card. Start tracking these and keep these reminders close by to reference often. It's also beneficial to see how the good stacks up against the negative.

7. You cannot make every horse drink

It's a worn-out statement, but it couldn't be more accurate. No matter how often you lead folks to what they need, they will not accept it until they are ready. Make peace with that, and spend appropriate time and energy where it's best received.

8. You will not be everyone's cup of tea

I'm pretty sure I make some folks choke on their tea when they read some of my topics. It's OK. I'm not your cup of tea, and you are probably not mine, but there is no reason we can't sit at the life table together and have a good conversation with different perspectives. The same person can be a villain to some and a hero to others. Let's embrace that part of humanity when we are working together.

9. Own up to your mistakes

I've made many. Learning how to have those conversations after the mistake is a true art. Learning to talk about what makes you uncomfortable and taking accountability for the harm or collateral damage you have caused (intentionally or unintentionally) is a skill you need to practice, just like prospecting. This skill will change your life and the way you do business.

10. Don't expect those around you to be mind readers

If 2023 has taught us anything, we must say what we mean and mean what we say. Don't leave anything up for interpretation. Everyone is crazy busy. Clear communication will save your sanity. If you need help, ask for it. If you need

something back in a particular timeline, set it. Get specific. Put everything on the calendar with reminders. Create a fail-proof system of expectations.

11. Treat diversity, equity and inclusion seriously

Don't let your privilege fool you into believing these issues are not serious problems. DEI benefits everyone and harms no one.

12. Read banned books regularly to keep your perspective in check

It creates empathy, which we all need.

13. Find a local non-profit in your area, and adopt it as a primary focus in your business

Giving back is good for you and your business.

14. If you want change in your local, state or national association, you must get involved

You can't just be appalled. The folks who sneak into those positions often run unopposed because everyone is too busy to devote the extra hours.

15. Be careful what or who you give your time to

When in doubt, give it to your family and friends first because they are the reason we are working so hard to begin with.

16. Don't be afraid to take up space

Even if you are in this part-time, you are worthy of being here if you want to be here. You have to start somewhere.

17. Stop looking at things as absolutes

We are human, and humans absolutely make mistakes. You are most likely doing better than you think. Just stop comparing yourself to others. What is right for you? What is right for your life? Go from there.

18. Document everything

You never know when you will need it. Write it down, take screenshots, keep your calendars.

19. Move your body, so you can keep moving your body

It doesn't matter how you do it; your future self will thank you.

20. Don't be afraid to work with difficult prospects

They may be the best referral source. Challenge yourself to help the people who need it the most.

21. Don't be afraid to speak up if you know something is wrong, especially if it involves bad leadership

We cannot fix the problems by looking the other way.

22. Take a look at all parts of your worst transaction this year

Break it down. Figure out the pain points, and put them back together. This will help prepare you for the next challenge ahead.

23. You don't have to forgive or forget

You can move forward. It's OK to ask for solutions and bypass the insincere "I'm sorry." This is especially important when it comes to your own personal safety. You need to focus on your health, safety and well-being. Don't forget for a second that there are folks out there with bad intentions. They might even be someone you know. Be aware of your surroundings and who you keep company with.

24. In every relationship you have, set expectations

If you need to, try this simple exercise to round this concept up. Create two columns. The first is what you need or expect; the second is what they can expect to get from you. This exercise is a great way to clarify what you want and how to get it.

Great expectations

This list is personal, and it's not going to resonate with all of you, but I hope it will at least get the wheels turning for what is important to you. Getting a handle on business planning in uncertain times requires reflection on all parts of your life. Because what is the point of all of this if it doesn't impact your life in a good way?

The holidays are rough for many folks. Period. Combined with difficult economic circumstances, all the energy and hope a new year should usher in may instead leave you feeling overwhelmed.

How do we eat this elephant? One bite at a time. I don't have all the answers, but I am willing to continue to work on the problems at hand that my customers have and maintain the motivation to try to be my best self while doing so.

You have to have a mission in this work. You must know why you want to do this, especially in times like this. I appreciate all the kind messages I have received this year on the difficult issues we tackled together on this platform.

I want you to know that I will continue challenging myself to work on the issues that will help us learn and grow together. I'm so proud of the conversations, perspectives and debates we have here.

Your voice matters, and the work that you do counts. Buckle up friends — 2024 will be a ride I'm sure we won't soon forget.

