



## 2021-22 Annual Reflection

The 2021-22 Annual Reflection is a journey of structured reflection, designed to help you take advantage of the liminal space around the holidays to discover and align yourself with the work you're meant to do in 2022.

**Be warned: the exercises contained herein are challenging.**

They're supposed to be.

Inside each of us is the work we're meant to do. The gift we're meant to give to the world. The story we're meant to tell. Most of the time we're too busy to pay attention, but every year around this time the world takes a breath, slows down, and gives us the opportunity to access this gift. It's on us to take advantage of that opportunity.

I wish you the best of luck in diving deep, and bringing your unique story to the world in 2022.



# Instructions

## Exercises:

1. Eulogy
2. Five Lives
3. Devil's Advocate
4. Gap Analysis
5. Defining Success
6. Postcard to the Future

Each exercise runs between 10-30 minutes depending on how in depth you choose to go, making the **total time to complete this entire reflection approximately 2-2.5 hours**, although you can certainly spend more time if you like. You can do it all in one sitting, or split it over multiple sessions.

## Important Tips Before You Get Started:

- Please copy/paste this into a Google Doc of your own, so you can make changes directly on the document.
- For all journaling prompts, focus on writing, not editing. Don't allow yourself to edit, just let yourself flow in a steady stream of consciousness. [Here's why.](#)



# To begin, a poem

## **Time**

Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day  
Fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way  
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your hometown  
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way

Tired of lying in the sunshine, staying home to watch the rain  
You are young and life is long, and there is time to kill today  
And then one day you find ten years have got behind you  
No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun

And you run, and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking  
Racing around to come up behind you again  
The sun is the same in a relative way but you're older  
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death

Every year is getting shorter, never seem to find the time  
Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines  
Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way  
The time is gone, the song is over, thought I'd something more to say.

—Pink Floyd





## **EXERCISE 1 (20 MIN): EULOGY\***

Imagine that you are at the end of a long, rich life. You've accomplished everything you wanted, behaving honorably and building meaningful connections with your family, friends, and colleagues. You are proud of yourself for leaving a great legacy and for having led an organization that brought great value to the world.

You've done your work here and feel ready to go. So when you learn that your days are numbered, you take the news in stride. A lot of people who appreciate and admire you want to pay their respects, so they organize a 'living funeral.' In the ceremony, a dear friend will stand in front of the audience and read a eulogy.

**Spend >20min and write the eulogy that you would like your friend to give.**

*Please don't be humble or shortchange yourself by limiting this in any way. If it's possible for anyone, it's possible for you, and you only get this one shot. This kind of eulogy can become a north star for your life. It can help you discover who you want to be and how you want to act in order to feel complete when you leave your life.*





## EXERCISE 2 (30 MIN): FIVE LIVES\*\*

If you had five other lives to lead, what would you do in each of them? I would be an NBA player, a physicist, an astronaut, a fiction author, and a monk. You might be an entrepreneur, a scuba diver, a cop, a writer of children's books, a football player, a belly dancer, a painter, a performance artist, a history teacher, a healer, a coach, a scientist, a doctor, a Peace Corps worker, a psychologist, a fisherman, a minister, an auto mechanic, a carpenter, a sculptor, a lawyer, a painter, a computer hacker, a soap-opera star, a country singer, or a rock-and-roll drummer.

### Instructions:

1. Whatever occurs to you, jot it down. Do not overthink this exercise. *The point of these lives is to have fun in them—more fun than you might be having in this one.*
2. Look over your list and select one. Then do it this week. *For instance, if you put down "country singer," can you pick a guitar? If you dream of being a cowhand, what about some horseback riding?*





## **EXERCISE 3 (10 MIN): DEVIL'S ADVOCATE\***

Imagine that you have just died and have not had the time to change anything in your life. Spend at least 10min answering the following questions in the third person, as if you were your own "devil's advocate," substituting your own name for the "X":

- What dreams did X not pursue?
- What fears did X not overcome?
- What loves did X not express?
- What resentments did X not resolve?
- What apologies did X not make?
- What gifts did X not give?



## EXERCISE 4 (20 MIN): GAP ANALYSIS\*

Consider the things you would have to do in the future to justify such a beautiful eulogy.

Consider that you don't have five lives, but only this one.

What changes would you have to make, to fulfill on your one weird, precious life?

What changes are you scared to make?

### **Instructions:**

1. Make a list of key changes. *Make a sub-list of changes that scare you.*
2. Ask yourself: "Am I ready to make these changes?" *The relevant commitment is not to the outcome but to the process. Analogously, the question is not whether you want to lose weight but whether you are willing to stick to the diet that gets you to your goal. This is an anthropological exercise, not a creative one. The goal is to really look internally to see if you're ready to do what's necessary. If not, that's perfectly ok.*





## **EXERCISE 5 (20 MIN): DEFINING SUCCESS**

### **Instructions:**

Whether you decided you were ready to make those changes or not, sit with your answer. Fully own your choice -- both its cost, and the impact it will have on your life.

From that space, spend at least 20 minutes journaling an answer to the following question:

What would success look like for 2022?

(Begin your answer: "I will know I am successful in 2022 when...")

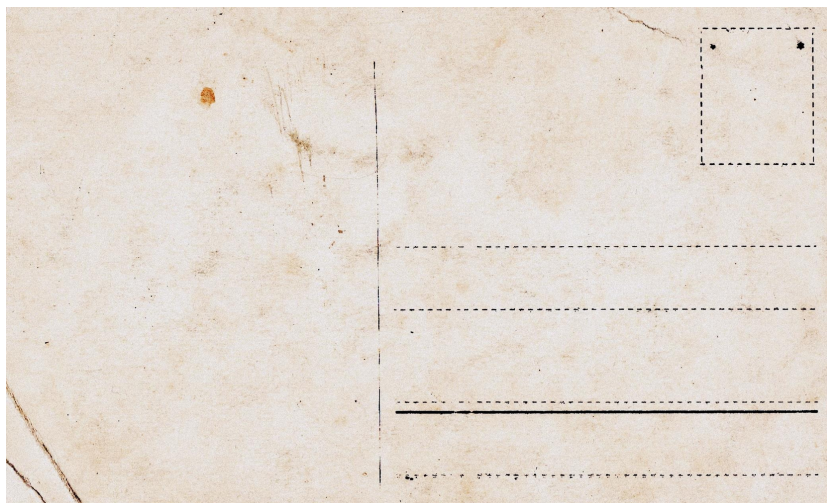
### **Bonus Instructions:**

Set SMART goals for yourself to achieve that success.

For example, set 1+ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Time Bound goals at each of the 3-, 6-, & 12-month marks.







## EXERCISE 6 (30 MIN): POSTCARD TO THE FUTURE

### Instructions:

1. Compose an email to yourself, which you will open on June 30, 2022. In this letter share your reflections from these exercises, your learnings and any commitments you are making to yourself.
2. Schedule the email to send to yourself on June 30, 2022, using Gmail's "Schedule Message" feature. *To schedule a message via Gmail in a desktop web browser, follow these steps: Compose a new email. Click the triangle next to the blue "Send" button. Click "Pick date & time" to customize when exactly you want the message to go out, selecting June 30, 2022.*

Start the letter like this:

*Dear [Your Name],*

*This is [Your Name] from the end of 2021. After reflecting on the life I want to live at this moment, I wanted to share some things...*



# *In Closing*

Thank you for everything you brought to the world in 2021, for everything you are, and for everything you are becoming. Thank you for taking the time to reflect on your one weird, precious life, and by doing so giving yourself the opportunity to create it more consciously. Thank you for being unabashedly you, and not anyone else.

This is it. This year. This minute. This moment. Even if it seems like this couldn't possibly be it, that feeling is it, too.

There will be a lot of moments in 2022. Cocreate them with the ones you love.



## The Summer Day

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

—Mary Oliver



# About & Help

The Annual Review Template was created by [Ryan Vaughn](#), founder of [Inside-Out Leadership](#), adapted in part from the work of the amazing humans below:

\*Fred Kofman

\*\*Julia Cameron

## About Ryan

Ryan Vaughn is an executive coach with [Inside-Out Leadership](#), a boutique leadership development agency supporting mission-driven founders to rapidly scale themselves as leaders, so they can thrive professionally and personally as their company changes the world. Leveraging 15-years as a founder/CEO/operator, formal training in psychology and NLP, and a decade of meditation & mindfulness training, Ryan has helped leaders from companies across the world (funded by A16Z, Foundry Group, Lightspeed Ventures, Seven Seven Six, Felicis Ventures, Y-Combinator, TechStars, Village Global and more) design a more conscious life and make key changes to improve their performance and satisfaction.

## Help, feedback and questions:

At any point in the process, please feel free to [contact us](#) with any questions, comments or feedback. We'd love to hear from you.

