

# Shrink Rap: Making a List, Checking it Twice

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As the year winds down, we find ourselves disengaging from our everyday projects and focusing in on the holidays. It's a natural time to reflect on the past year. Our association at this time of year to "making a list" is, of course, a gift list. But the list I have in mind has a different focus than what you plan to give others. Think of it as a gift to yourself — a year-end mental status check-up and review. And I'd like you to reflect on it at least twice: once as you make it, and again later after you've had time to think about it. This list will be filled with your answers to the following questions, as they relate to this past year:

1. What did I learn about myself this year that really matters to me? What insight did I gain that I will be sure to take with me into the new year? What am I willing to do to make sure this insight is not forgotten?
2. What did I learn about others that really matters to me?
3. What appreciation of others has gone unexpressed? To whom have I not expressed my appreciation and what's stopping me from expressing it?
4. What resentment am I holding that has gone unexpressed? Whom is my resentment aimed toward? How long do I want to hold this resentment and let it bother me? What would it take for me to go ahead and express it? If I'm unwilling to express it, what would it take for me to just drop it?
5. What experience of opening my heart to others do I want to remember? What did I open my heart to and feel deeply about with those closest to me? To those in the next circle of colleagues and acquaintances? To those who are in my community? To those regionally and nationally? To those throughout the world? What did I open up to at all these levels that touched me deeply?
6. What experience of closing my heart to others do I need to remember in order to protect myself? How did I close my heart to those nearest to me? To those in the next circle of colleagues and acquaintances? To those who are in my community? To those regionally and nationally? To those through-out the world? What did I close up to at all these levels that was too overwhelming, too painful or threatening for me to let in?
7. What was the single most pleasurable experience I can remember in this last year? What made it so pleasurable?
8. What was the single most unhappy or miserable experience of the year? Would it be valuable for me to take this memory into the new year or, if I'm able, to forget it forever?
9. When did I feel the most contented with or proud of myself this year? What allowed me to feel this way?
10. What did I not do enough of this last year? What did I do too much of this last year?
11. What is the one personality characteristic I want to exhibit more to people this next year? What is needed for me to show more of it?

After you've considered your answers, jot them down so you'll remember them. After a couple of weeks, go back and review your answers and see if you want to change any of them. Check your list twice, and see which answers are naughty or nice. Keep this list in a place where you can glance at it periodically to remind yourself of your answers. And if you find yourself resisting thinking about or writing down answers to these questions, at least be willing to ask yourself why you are unwilling to address them.

Enjoy the Holidays!