

## Buttoning Up 2007

Five steps to closing out your year in style  
By **Melissa McFarlan**

As someone invited along for the ride on other people's life journeys, I've had the peculiar honor of observing what does and doesn't work on the road to success. This varies widely, depending on the person; still, there are fundamental factors that affect the likelihood of moving forward or stagnation. One of these is "misperception" (i.e. warped thinking). Like a slick pair of sunglasses the egoist can't bear to remove in a bar, many people are fascinated with seeing their lives askew.

"Warped thinking" causes us to miss the wholeness of our lives. Nine times out of ten, my clients aren't choosing to look through rose-colored glasses; they're choosing to look through mud-slimed ones!

Their positive perspective narrows. Remember our egoist back in the bar, who by now is entangled over drinks with someone whom he could have avoided, if not for his poor eyesight? Taking the time to see the truth—the whole, 360-degree perspective—can help a person acknowledge the successes they've had, and spotlight things left undone.

What causes a person to see unclearly? Time, overwhelm, and fear, or even extended comfort. Our lives are huge. With the pull of immediate concerns, it's easy to forget the despair we felt six months ago, or the many accomplishments we've made along the way. Interestingly, we can just as easily be lulled to sleep by an abiding sense of comfort, in which life's Technicolor energy becomes clouded, and secret desires for growth remain dormant. To acknowledge this might mean changing course, and we may be too comfortable or too distracted to meet that possibility head-on.

What's so bad about operating with "warped thinking"? Any thinking affects our outcomes. We "think" something will be hard, and avoid it for weeks, only to discover it easier than we'd imagined. We mistake a look for scorn and cease a relationship with someone. We begin to feel and look better, and cease to follow our self-prescribed regimens. Put simply, warped thinking hurts.

Freedom and power exist for those who see life as it is. At Electric Kites Success Coaching, we've developed The ReCHARGE Workshop where we employ a "coach-as-optician" technique that dramatically alters self-vision. This process is more empowering than hiding behind any glasses, rose-colored or otherwise. It works in two parts: Completion and Creation. This process involves examining one's life during a certain period, taking responsibility for the wins and losses, and ultimately letting them all go. There are five steps:



**Step 1: Take Stock – What happened?** Divide a page into three vertical columns.

- Wins/Accomplishments/Completions
- Losses/Failures/Incompletion
- What Does Completion Look Like?

Fill in the first and second column with notable events that happened with your career, friends and family, using your 2007 date book to prompt your memory. Remain objective and honest. “Failure” doesn’t mean YOU are a failure—it simply means the thing you were attempting to accomplish failed to “work.” You may have to include some items in both columns; ending a relationship, for example, may feel like both a loss and a win.

**Step 2: Rank Level of Completion** On a scale of one to 10, rank your current level of “completeness” according to this statement: “I’m OK with how it (each event) is and how it is NOT.” Sometimes just writing down an event will make it feel complete for you. Other times you may need to take an action (say writing a letter) in order to feel complete.

**Step 3: Identify what Completion Looks Like** Use the third column to record your findings, including a sentence about what it will take in order for you to feel OK. For example, “I have a clear, achievable plan in place about how I will boost my income in the next year, complete with a list of people to contact for higher-paying work.”

**Step 4: Define Actions to Come to Completion** Once you’ve established what completion will look like, break these actions down into one-time, daily, or weekly action steps. Here is where you may want to enlist an accountability partner to keep you on track.

**Step 5: Declare Yourself Complete** Savor your wins! Too often we complete monumental tasks in our lives and immediately move on to the next thing without celebrating! Also take a little time to mourn those things that may have not turned out exactly as you wanted. This will leave you clean and free to tackle new challenges with renewed excitement and purpose.

Close this process with the ritual words, “I (your name), declare 2007 COMPLETE, and look forward to 2008 with a clean heart and willing mind.” You are ready to begin the fun work of creating the year ahead!

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