



Couples who pause to reflect together, thrive together

**How to do a Year End Reflection Ritual
that makes you both feel supported & seen,
and sets you up for a successful new year**

Doing a year-end reflection and completion ritual together is a powerful way to witness and weave your experience of the last year together. It allows you to feel a closeness of experience, and get a view of how each of you experienced this last year in a similar way and differently.

As partners, one of the biggest gifts we can give each other is to witness each other's experience of the previous year and point out just how much the other person has done and become. We tend to forget or discount our accomplishments or achievements and we tend to gloss over the more subtle ways in which we have shifted on the inside to become better, stronger people. Through reflecting, witnessing and speaking out loud what we've seen our partners go through, move through, achieve, and rise up to is gold.

Inevitably, we have also had experiences during the year that were hard, challenging, disappointing and sometimes even heart breaking. It's the nature of human existence, and it's one of the ways we can support each other as partners – to witness the struggle or the pain, to hold space for our partner to have their emotion, and to support each other to see the wisdom gained and how we can move forward into the coming year, stronger.

Lastly, pausing at this time together gives us the space to gather up the wisdom of what we've learned about our partnership and about the life we are co-creating together, to really check in to see if the life we are living is what we both desire. Having a honest conversation within the construct of a year end reflection about what we've both learned and illuminating what's working and what's not, empowers us to make changes in our partnership and life to create the year ahead more in alignment with what we each both desire.

The structure for the year-end reflection ritual is outlined fully in the 2019 Power Pause & Reflection Ritual Wisdom Booklet. This is how we recommend using this process in your partnership.

- 1. Sovereignty first. Do the reflection ritual first for yourself:** After doing this ritual many times over the years, we have found the most empowering way to approach the joint reflection ritual is to do our own personal reflection first – using the Wheel of Reflection in the Power Pause booklet. By doing your personal reflection ritual first you get to have your experience of what happened in the last year and form your own thoughts and perspectives. Then when you get to the joint ritual, you can be open to listening to each other and finding the perspective about the previous year that fits the two of you, because you have stood in your personal truth already.
- 2. Create an intentional space to share and witness each other's previous year.** Outside of kids, work, and day to day life, it is essential we create intentional space with each other that is about our CONNECTION. Pick a couple of hours during a morning, afternoon, or evening, or even an entire day that is just about the two of you reflecting together.
- 3. Go through the Wheel of Reflection – each of the 4 stages one by one – sharing individually and witnessing each other.** Start in this order: Surprises, Successes, Shorts and Wisdom. You can do it in one of two ways:

Option #1: Each person shares their entire reflection for the section and then the partner reflects what they heard (What I really hear you saying is...) plus adds on what their partner may have forgotten (What I really saw was...). For example, one partner would share all of the surprises from the year and then the other partner would witness them + add on other surprises they witnessed throughout the year.

Option #2: Popcorn style. In each stage, go back and forth until all things have been spoken and then reflect for each other. For example, if you're doing Successes, one person would say a success and then the other person would say a success. Keep sharing until all has been said. If one person has more than the other, help each other remember other ones (or for the partner who is more prolific, you can group yours together).

4. **Share what you would both love to RELEASE and LEAVE in 2019.** Complete this step with a simple intentional act like writing it on a piece of paper and burning it. Or doing a toast with each other that says THIS IS COMPLETE. And as a bonus, ask each other how you can support each other in this releasing as you step into the new year.

5. **Talk about your partnership and life and what you both desire from the partnership and from your lives in 2020. Keep it light, not too deep, it's just about setting the stage for the new year. Something like:**
 - a. **What would we LOVE to have more of in our partnership in 2020?**
 - b. **What would we love to have more of in our lives in 2020?**

**Then Call 2019 Complete.
And open up to dreaming 2020 in!**

Tips for Creating Connection Through this Experience

- written by Noah, who was resistant at first...

1. **Make it fun.** When Christine first invited me to reflect on the year as a ritual, it was kind of scary. In my imagination, I saw a cave and torch light with bellowing smoke. Kind of like a scene that merged The Lord of the Rings and Wiccan for Dummies. And in reality... when I got over my resistance and let myself TRY this with Christine as a fun way to connect, it was not like that at all. What we find works best is to set aside an evening together. For example, have a yummy dinner at home that is dedicated to gratitude for the last year. Curl up on comfy chairs in living room, sipping a glass of vino or Pellegrino or tea and then and take turns sharing from each of the 4 directions.
2. **Yes & Rule:** I learned this great tool in my Improv training. It's called "The Yes, And Rule". No matter what your partner says, your role is to say yes to their perspective on what happened. Though your point of view may be 180 degrees different on an event, in this process, their point of view is equally true as yours. In this rule you first have to RECEIVE what the other person is saying. That is the YES! Not just kind of receive but really with a genuine heart see and witness this experience. Then you can ADD ON in a way that EXPANDS the energy, but not in a way that contracts the energy or makes the other person wrong. So after you fully received the person, you can say, "AND I'd love to share some of my experience too, is that okay with you?" Your partner can say YES or NO to this. A No is okay if they just need to have their experience. You can share yours during your experience. If it's a YES just make sure you are truly sharing not making the other person wrong. The good news is Yes & Rule applies to both of you, and your point of view will get honored as well. Set this rule up BEFORE you reflect.

3. **Be gentle with each other.** Most of us are actually pretty hard on ourselves, and when we come together what we need is an honest, loving presence that can help us see what we don't. The field of love thrives where it trusts it can be vulnerable without fear of being criticized or being seen as less than. So be a COMPASSIONATE CHAMPION for your partner by getting curious, celebrating, witnessing and offering the compassion they may not be able to give themselves. For example, the temptation might be to say, "Hey what about... or why didn't you say X?" But it can work better to simply say, "I noticed you did not mention X, and I think that was a big part of our year. What I see is..."

4. **Co-lead:** In most partnerships, one partner tends to lead. In this process it works best if both of your voices are heard. This might require allowing space between sharing. Christine and I each lead two of the sections of the Wheel of Reflection, and we tend to popcorn some and others we tend to do full shares then offer reflections. It is perfectly fine if one of you has more to add in a particular direction, but it is important that all voices are heard.



We wish you courage, connection & compassion
in your partnership. May your partnership support you each to thrive.

With Heart,
Christine Arylo & Noah Martin