

**HOW TO MAKE**

**2026**

**THE**

**BEST**

**YEAR**

Welcome!

# This is where your best year begins.

You deserve a year that feels better, brighter,  
and more fulfilling than the last one.  
And you're capable of creating it.

xo Mel

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This workbook is the secret to making it happen. It's backed by research and rooted in common sense:  
When you take a moment to see where you are, you make it possible to choose where you go next.

**Here's how to get the most out of the experience:**



## Print This Workbook

Research shows that handwriting strengthens memory, focus, and insight. You form deeper connections when you write by hand. So, print if you can. Or use this workbook as a guide and jot down your answers elsewhere.



## Listen to the Companion Episode

Find **How To Make 2026 the Best Year:  
6 Questions You Need To Ask Yourself Right  
Now** on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or YouTube.  
You'll get helpful context, guidance, and  
encouragement.



## Do This With Friends or Family

You can do this by yourself, but I've spent years doing these questions with Chris (and now with our kids too) and it always deepens the experience. When you share this with someone you trust, the reflections and insights tend to run deeper. Share the link, [melrobbins.com/bestyear](https://melrobbins.com/bestyear), with the people in your life.



## Keep Your Phone and Calendar Close

Have your camera roll and calendar by your side. These will help you remember the highs, lows, and other moments you forgot happened this year.

## Part 1

# Looking Back

You're here because you're ready for more:  
more clarity, more control, more growth.

And that starts right now.

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You've already taken the first step by downloading this guide, and that single move puts you miles ahead of where you were yesterday.

**But here's the thing:** You can't just rush into goal-setting and expect your world to change.

You want to know the real secret to my success – even when life gets challenging?

It's all here in this workbook.

I've done this year-end ritual for 22 years with my husband Chris and our three kids, and it's the reason I can reset, refocus, and create a better year on purpose.

### Here's why it works:

You can't decide where you're going until you're honest about where you're starting.

That's what you and I are doing next.

The first three questions in this workbook uncover your highs, your lows, and your biggest lessons of the year.

Take a breath.

You're ready.

“

An amazing year doesn't happen by chance.  
It happens by choice.

”

Before jumping into the questions, open your camera roll or calendar. They'll give you the clearest snapshot of your past year.

## What moments stand out to you?

You likely don't remember everything you experienced – but your photos and calendar don't lie. Use them as your starting point. As you scroll through each month, note the big moments, the hard moments, and the smaller, quieter moments that defined your days. Do this with zero judgment. You're not evaluating your year; you're just jogging your memory and gathering the moments that shaped it.

January

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February

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March

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April

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May

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October

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November

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December

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You had a lot of life these last 12 months –  
wisdom that will help guide you in the new year.

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# Question 1

**What were the low points of the past year?**

Don't judge or limit yourself. Just write.

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What low points stand out to you from your camera roll or calendar?

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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What did you need most during those low moments?

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## Question 2

What were the high points of the past year?

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What high points stand out to you from your camera roll or camera?

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2. 

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5. 

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“

When you tell the truth about what knocked you down, you're being self-aware. And that awareness is the starting point for change.

”

What were the common threads across your best moments?

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# Question 3

## What did you learn about yourself over the past year?

Everything that happened in 2025 taught you something. When you stop and name the lesson, you turn experience into wisdom you can use.

High Point

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What I learned about myself based on this high point

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High Point

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What I learned about myself based on this high point

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High Point

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What I learned about myself based on this high point

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## Low Point

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What I learned about myself based on this low point

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## Low Point

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What I learned about myself based on this low point

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## Low Point

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What I learned about myself based on this low point

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“

The highs and the lows aren't just memories.  
They're data you can use to make a better life.

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## Bonus Section

# The Check-In: Your Life Right Now

Reflection gives your brain clarity. Rating each area of your life helps you identify the patterns, the pressure points, and the places where you felt most like yourself this year.

Check or circle the number that best describes how you feel and explain why,

	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Health</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Work or School</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Money</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Love Life</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Friendships</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Happiness</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Fun</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Spirituality</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Meaning &amp; Purpose</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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	HATE IT					LOVE IT				
<b>Self-Love</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Why:

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## Part 2

# Looking Forward

You've pulled out the highs, the lows, and the lessons. Now it's time to turn all of that into a plan.

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These next three questions are inspired by a strategy tool that businesses use, and I've tweaked it to make it work even better in your personal life.

It cuts through the noise and shows you what matters: what you need to stop doing, what's worth continuing, and what you're ready to start.

It's strategic without being complicated — and it makes your next steps obvious.

So take what you've learned, trust what stood out, and let these next questions steer you in the direction of making this the best year.

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*There's a big difference  
between quitting something  
out of fear and quitting  
something because it no  
longer aligns with your values.*

”

## Question 4

### What are the things you are going to STOP doing in the next year of your life?

Quitting the things that no longer serve you is one of the smartest moves you can make. It frees up your time, your energy, and your focus for what matters.

I will STOP ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why does this need to stop?

What has this cost you so far?

What will change when you stop?

I will STOP ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why does this need to stop?

What has this cost you so far?

What will change when you stop?

I will STOP ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why does this need to stop?

What has this cost you so far?

What will change when you stop?

## Question 5

### What are the things you will continue doing in the next year of your life?

Continuing what's working keeps your momentum going. You're not starting from scratch. You're rolling forward the habits, relationships, and choices that already make your life better.

I will CONTINUE ... \_\_\_\_\_

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What proves this is working for you?

How did this move your life in the right direction?

What's one simple way to keep this going next year?

I will CONTINUE ... \_\_\_\_\_

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What proves this is working for you?

How did this move your life in the right direction?

What's one simple way to keep this going next year?

I will CONTINUE ... \_\_\_\_\_

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What proves this is working for you?

How did this move your life in the right direction?

What's one simple way to keep this going next year?

## Question 6

### What are the things you will start doing in the next year of your life?

Starting something new brings energy back into your life. It makes you more engaged, more curious, and more alive because you're learning, growing, and doing something that stretches you. Even one small new beginning can make your whole year feel more interesting and full of possibility.

I will START ... \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you want to start this?

What will this add to your life?

What's an easy first step to get things going?

I will START ... \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you want to start this?

What will this add to your life?

What's an easy first step to get things going?

I will START ... \_\_\_\_\_

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Why do you want to start this?

What will this add to your life?

What's an easy first step to get things going?



# Choose Your One Goal

Now that you've named what you want to start, you're ready to turn that energy into one clear focus for the next 12 months.

Pick what matters most, define it clearly, and give yourself a way to measure progress.

You can always choose another goal later, but science shows building momentum on just ONE goal is the key to lasting change.

## 1. Pull one START forward

Look back at what you wrote under "I Will Start."

Which one start feels most important to you right now?

Which one would make the biggest difference in your life if you followed through?

Which one feels like the most honest next step from where you are today?

**My ONE start to focus on this year is:**

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## 2. Turn it into a Goal

A goal is any desired outcome that wouldn't otherwise happen without you doing something.

If this start really worked, what would be true by the end of the year?

What outcome are you aiming for?

**The outcome I want from this start is:**

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### 3. Define what "Success" Looks Like

Don't stay vague here. Get real and specific.

What does success look like in daily life?

How will you know you've succeeded?

What would someone else notice is different about you or your life?

**I'll know I've succeeded when:**

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### 4. Make sure it feels like your "real life."

Big dreams are welcome, but this goal has to match your life right now.

Is this realistic for where you are today?

What do you need in place to succeed? (time, energy, boundaries, support, etc.)

What could get in the way — and how will you handle it?

**What I need in place to succeed:**

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**What could get in the way and my plan to handle it:**

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## 5. Start small to build momentum.

Progress is what builds momentum, and momentum is what changes your life.

What's the smallest first step you can take today?

What's one simple action you can repeat weekly?

What would progress look like by the end of the first month?

**My first small step is:**

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**My weekly action is:**

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**By the end of month one, progress looks like:**

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## 6. Tell someone.

Pick one person you respect and trust. Saying it out loud makes it real.

Who will you tell about this goal?

What do you want them to help you remember when it gets hard?

**I'm telling:**

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**What I want them to remind me:**

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## After you complete your first tiny action:

How did it feel to get started?

Now, make a list of other small actions you can take that will help you reach your goal:

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## Set aside 5–15 minutes each morning for your goal.

Small daily moves add up fast — you'll be shocked at the progress by year's end.

How can you make your daily action easier to remember?

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# You Did It!

You gave yourself the gift of time, honesty,  
and a real pause.

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**First, you did the part most people skip:**

You looked back at the year you just lived,  
pulled out the highs, the lows, and the  
lessons.

Then, you made decisions about what needs  
to stop, what deserves to continue, and what  
you're ready to start.

That's how change happens.

Not by wishing for a better year, but by  
choosing one.

But don't let this be a one-time exercise.

Come back to what you wrote. Add to it.

Keep noticing what's draining you, what's  
working for you, and what you want more of.

This is how you stay clear on what matters  
– and how you keep building your life on  
purpose.

Your highs and your lows aren't just  
memories — they're data for you to use.

And now you've turned that data into a plan.

You've laid the groundwork to make this the  
best year ever.

Now go make it happen.

“

*You're not here to stay the same.  
You're here to keep growing.*

”

# Keep Building Your Best Year

Now that you have the clarity needed to create the best year ever, keep the momentum going. Here are eight episodes I recommend listening to after you finish this workbook. Each one will help you strengthen your mindset, stay focused, and keep moving forward.

xo Mel



## 8 Things to Tell Yourself Every Morning (Ep. 324)

A short, practical reset for your mornings that calms anxiety, builds confidence, and sets your mindset for the day.

## How to Get Things Done, Stay Focused, & Be More Productive (Ep. 322)

Mel and Dr. Cal Newport break down the science of focus and attention, and give you concrete ways to stop procrastinating and protect your time.

## #1 Neurosurgeon: How to Manifest Anything You Want & Unlock the Unlimited Power of Your Mind (Ep. 312)

Dr. Jim Doty explains the neuroscience behind manifestation and gives a clear process for turning intention into reality.

## How to Get Motivated Even When You Don't Feel Like It (Ep. 208)

This episode teaches that motivation isn't a feeling you wait for, it's something you create through action.

## 3 Questions to Ask Yourself To Figure Out What You Really Want (Ep. 339)

Mel shares three Stanford-developed questions that help you get clear on what you genuinely want next. It's a quick, clarifying listen when you feel unsure or off track.

## Tiny Fixes For a Tired Life: 7 Habits That Make Your Life Better (Ep. 298)

Seven small, doable habit shifts that improve energy, mood, and control without a life overhaul. Perfect if you feel worn down and need realistic change you can start today.

## Focus On Yourself: 3 Signs You're Giving Too Much & What to Do About It Right Now (Ep. 223)

Mel and Dr. Pooja Lakshmin unpack the hidden cost of over-giving and people-pleasing, and show you how to set boundaries without guilt.

## This One Study Will Change How You Think About Your Entire Life: The Cornell Legacy Project (Ep. 344)

Cornell's Legacy Project distills decades of interviews with people in their 80s-100s into the biggest regrets and best advice for living well now. It's a wake-up call about what matters, what doesn't, and how fast time goes.

