

Word of the Year

Based on Christine Kane's model, adapted by Nancy Vande Hey

The Word-of-the Year practice dives right in at the BE level. When you choose a word to guide you through your year, it becomes your touchstone. It reminds you not just what you want to DO but also of who you want to BE and who you are in Christ.

This doesn't mean you don't take action. It simply means that your actions are now inspired from the BE level, the person God is inviting you to grow more and more like. In fact, you'll probably take more action than ever by growing with His grace!

Resolutions are fine, but they often come from our minds and, as such, are motivated by lots of "SHOULD's." They are task items, waiting to be checked off. Which means they are rarely inspiring and have little motivation to offer after a week or so. A word, however, contains energy and images and meaning. Remember John 1:1? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now we're talking about things our hearts and souls can get excited and sing about! And this is how transformation begins. This is how you start to grow with grace.

5 things that can sabotage your Word of the Year success:

1. Trying to pick more than one word. The key is to focus in on just one by the end.
2. Doubt. "Really? THAT word?" Just go with it! No over-analyzing. Consider James 1: 6-8
But he should ask in faith, not doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed about by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, since he is a man of two minds, unstable in all his ways.
3. Impatience. Give it time to unfold as to why you felt led to that word.

Listen to Lamentations 3:24-26:

*The LORD is my portion, I tell myself,
therefore I will hope in him.*

*The LORD is good to those who trust in him,
to the one that seeks him;*

*It is good to hope in silence
for the LORD's deliverance.*

4. Neglect or abandonment of your word. Don't switch after a week or a month.
5. Demanding control. Allow God to be in control of how this word will shape your next year.

Meditate on Proverbs 3:5-6:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
on your own intelligence do not rely;
In all your ways be mindful of him,
and he will make straight your paths.*

Here is your very own Idea Generator List of possible words you could choose. As you read through them, see if one stands out for you.

It's tempting to choose four or five, believing that you can do it all! (Or that you're too messed up to narrow your flaws down to one helpful word!) At this point, at least narrow it down to three possibilities. Remember, one word gives you focus. We want to narrow to one eventually by the end of this exercise. Then if you master that one word, you can choose another one in six months.

Compassion	Openness	Power
Delight	Discipline	Allow
Generosity	Awe	Artfulness
Effortlessness	Awareness	Attention
Wealth	Faith	Beauty
Gratitude	Kindness	Joy
Abundance	Health	Focus
Creativity	Presence	Ritual
Willingness	Acceptance	Heal
Change	Courage	Order
Growth	Confidence	Clarity
Freedom	Self-Love	Pioneer
Mastery	Action	Peace
Patience	Wisdom	Strength
Friendship	Forgiveness	No
Fun	Forgive	Yes
Grace	Release	Deliberateness
Laughter	Trust	Commitment
Love	Knowing	Savor
Expansion	Risk	Breathe
Exploration	Gentleness	Integrity
Adventure	Play	Listen
Serenity	Spirit	Life
Resolve	Prayerfulness	Bless
Contemplate	Welcome	Blessing
Prudence	Humility	Tender
Enough	Perseverance	Adoration
Imagine	Temperance	Self-control
Faithful	Progress	Abba
Strong	Brave	Authentic(ity)

Now, write down the word (up to 3 words) that you are contemplating choosing.

Why do you think this is a great word for you this year? (If you chose more than one, answer for each word.)

If you embodied this word daily, what would be different for you in an average day?

How do you already live or embody this word?

Are there ways in which you do not already live or embody this word?

List ten things you could envision happening in the next 12 months if you lived this word daily:

List two specific triggers that might make you “shrink” or to run in the opposite direction of your Word.
(Example: If you chose “Prayerful,” one of your triggers might be shame. You look at other people who you perceive as being more prayerful and then you shame yourself. This keeps you stuck in one pattern over and over again. Awareness will help you recognize the trigger before it can take hold.)

What obstacles have kept you from living this word until now?

List five new habits or practices you might incorporate into your life to embody this word more fully.

List at least five goals—big or small—that you'd like to accomplish this year, based on the word you are choosing.

What would be a “homerun” for you in the coming year? This can be a big dream or simply a way that you live each day. Write as detailed and imperfectly as you can!

Is there a scripture verse that goes along with your word?

If you have been answering these questions for more than one word, now is the time to just choose one. Go with the one that resonates the most with you or flip a coin if you have to, but narrow it to one word at this point.

I choose the word: