

The Uncensored Caregiver Podcast

with Master Certified Coach Iryna Ishchenko

Episode 38: Farewell to 2023

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I have to confess, I don't like New Year resolutions. They always feel so random. The calendar changes from December to January, and all of a sudden, we are expected to declare something big and impressive that most likely won't happen because as soon as the holidays are over and Christmas decorations are away, we are going to forget about our resolutions and just keep going with our routines. At the same time, I like to dream, plan, and get ready for the year ahead. It starts with reflecting on what I am leaving behind, what I have learned, what I have celebrated, and what I want to take with me into the new year. I'm inviting you to do the same, and in the next 2 episodes, I'm going to take you through this process. Let's talk about it. If you'd like to go through this process with me and you're probably listening to this episode on the go while driving or doing some chores.

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I suggest you listen to the end to get the overview of what I am suggesting to do, then sit down with your pen and paper and the beverage of your choice, and listen to this episode again making pauses to write down your answers. Okay? Let's start with the reflections first. Whether it was too many events happening in your life, or on the contrary, it seems it was all the same and nothing was happening, the good place to start could be your calendar. You can start with your calendar going through it month by month or even weekly, and writing down the important events, gatherings, gatherings with your friends and families, all kinds of celebrations, travels, the projects you're working on, and the milestones that you had. And when you write them down, look for the significant events in different areas of your lives, in your personal, your

family lives, relationship with your friends, your professional or academic lives, business adventures, what was significant in your local community of your friends or local community, your religious community? Did you start, stopped any hobbies or creative projects? What did you do for the relaxation or self care? Were there any events on your calendar related to that? What habits define you? Another question that I like that was offered by a friend of mine was, what was your first this year. What have you experienced for the 1st time? And I actually like that question because it made me think during the whole year what would be my first this year. And I kept that running mental note of what I would be talking to at the end of the year as my first. So it's actually quite helpful.

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Here are some of my examples. One of my firsts in the year 2023 is actually this podcast. Also, I continue enjoying my rowing training, and I started throwing on the water for the 1st time, and I'm very happy about it. Another first, my child started driving himself this year. And it's the best thing ever both for him and for me, because for him, it's his growth into independence, and for me, it's the freedom of scheduling my life around his schedules to be able to chauffeur him to places. And at the same time, I miss the conversations that we have in the car together. And he misses that. We are trying to compensate it in a different way, but it's a sad first for us.

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One of my defining habits for these years, actually, is the subject of rowing that I can bring pretty much to any conversation, including this episode. And speaking of which, the new boys in the boat movie is absolutely worth watching. I highly recommend it. Okay. Moving on with our review. How would you describe your past year in 6 sentences. Here's what these sentences could be. The widest decision I made the biggest lesson I learned fill the blank.

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The biggest risk I took, fill the blank, the biggest surprise of the year, fill the blank, the most important thing I did for others. My biggest lesson from the last year was actually not new. I already had this lesson. I learned this lesson, but, apparently, it's something worth repeating for me. So my lesson is never take no for an answer. I was in a very difficult, for me, situation last summer. I felt crushed and helpless because it was me against a huge institutions, and my child's well-being was at stake. To me, it seemed that I couldn't have any control of what was happening.

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So I had a pity party for myself. I cried. I actually cried a lot. I felt all the emotions appropriate for that moment. And then I decided that I would find a way to resolve the problem, and I did, only because I didn't take no for the answer. It was a really, really good reminder for me. The most important thing that I did for others was starting this podcast and starting an in person support group for the caregivers in my area, because I believe all caregivers should have access to help, whether they can work directly with me or not. That's a big mission of mine, and I'm always looking for more ways to make it bigger.

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If you have ideas, let me know. Here are more questions for you to think about. What are you the most proud of? Who are the 3 people who influenced you the most? Who are the 3 people you influenced the most? What were you not able to accomplish? What is the best thing you have discovered about yourself. What are you the most grateful for? By the way, answering I don't know is not allowed here. You know. Take the time to focus on these questions, and you will find the answers. And I'm telling you this because these are the questions I'm asking myself, and my mind also tries to escape into the I don't know land. And I'm bringing it back to these questions because I also have struggles and challenges, and they are the first things that come to my mind.

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So I consciously refocus not only struggles and challenges, but also on the good things, because struggles and challenges are not the only thing that are present in my life, and they are not the only things that present in your life, sometimes we need a conscious effort to pay attention to the good stuff that is always present. That's why I don't take I don't know as my own answer. And that's why we want to bring up the greatest, the most memorable, and the most joyful moments from the last here to remember how they felt, how they tasted, how they smelled and sounded, and who was with you in those moments, or probably you were on your own, and what you were doing in those moments. Pay attention to the to those moments, not necessarily whole days or specific events. One such moment for me, for example, was driving in the rain with my son and listening to a specific song that he was sharing with me. I don't even remember where we were going and what was going on on that day, it's quite possible it was a hard day with bad news and big challenges, but what I actually remember is that happy moment and that music that I enjoyed and the company I enjoyed and that combination of the rain running down the windows, and the sound of that music. I will link this on in the description of this episode in case you are curious. Now choose your 3 biggest accomplishments from the last year.

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And those big accomplishments are big for you, by your standards, by your definition, in your specific circumstances. For someone, it could be keeping everyone alive and fed. For someone, it can be getting up every single day. Maybe it's not giving up on your dream no matter how audacious it is and how many obstacles you have on the way to get to that dream, it doesn't have to be winning a Nobel Prize or running the ultra marathon. That those are awesome achievements. And if you have them, that's fantastic. But those are not the only accomplishments to be considered. One of my biggest accomplishments is the decision not to allow anyone to mistreat me.

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It's a boundary I have set, and I am proud of myself for keeping that boundary. That is my achievement. And along with that, what were your 3 biggest challenges in the last

year? When you think of your achievements and challenges, think about what have you done to either get those achievements or to overcome those obstacles. Who was on your side helping and how? What have you learned about yourself in those achievements, and what have you learned about yourself when you overcome the challenges? What needs to be celebrated? And who needs to be thanked and celebrated with you? There may be some things that still needs to be forgiven. Either forgiving someone or forgiving yourself, the end of the year is a good time to let it go and forgive if you haven't done it yet. And if you are not ready yet to forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, it's okay too. Just make a note of it for yourself. What three words would define your year 2023.

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If you made a movie or wrote a book about your past year, what would be the title of it? Mine would be go slow to go fast. It's the phrase that was pretty much chasing me this year, and it was a sign for me if we think about the signs when we make decisions. And it's the approach that I consciously take that I need to slow down and not to be in a hurry if I want to get to my dreams and big goals. So what is your title of your book that describes this year? And after you have thought of all these questions, and hopefully found your answers, what else is left to say? Maybe there is something that I didn't mention. Maybe there is something that sits in you, and nobody is asking you about that. Write it down. Is there anything else you want or need to let go of because you want to start a new year fresh. Think of it.

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Write it down, say it aloud, bless and release. Let it go. Before I say my farewell to 2023, I'm going to thank it. For all the challenges that pushed me to grow personally and professionally. I'm grateful for the joyful, happy moments I had, for the amazing people that I've met, for all the opportunities to serve that I've had this year, for all my mistakes and for all the decisions that I have made. They all made me who I am today. Thank you for being with me in this year. I am Master coach Iryna Ishchenko. And I'm looking forward to continue talking to you in 2024.