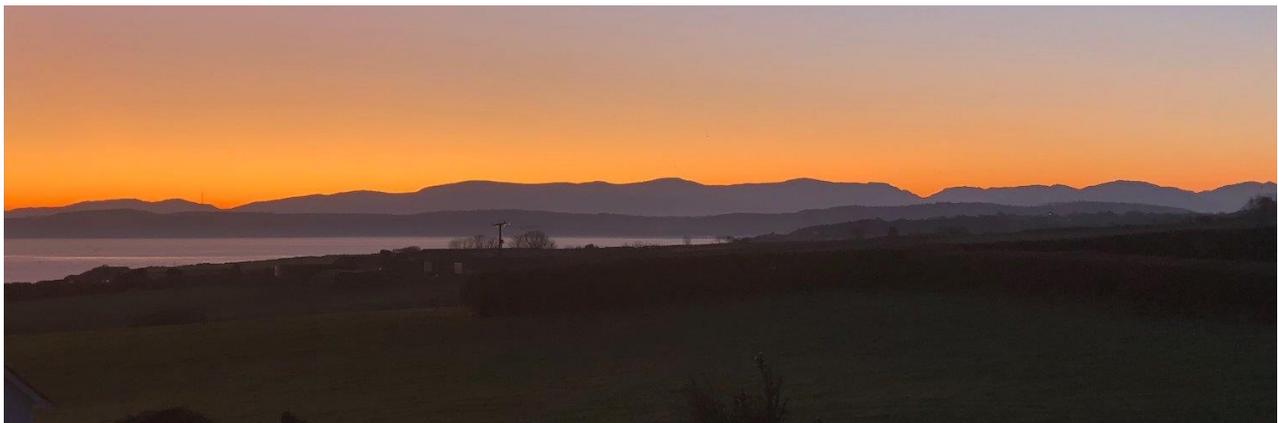


## How your 2020 reflections can shape 2021

**On 1 January 2020 at 5.35am, I stood on my balcony and photographed the most incredible sunrise. Silhouettes of the Welsh mountains – embraced in a warm orange hue - fell neatly into the calm Irish sea on the Anglesey coast. What a fabulous start to the New Year. Full of possibilities and new experiences.**



*Little did I know how different 2020 would be.*

And now, here we are in the twelfth month, looking forward to 2020's demise. A year like no other. Nobody has escaped the impact of Covid-19, whether personally or professionally. But we have got to the end of the year, and that is an achievement in itself.

In the following weeks, I would suggest you reflect on your journey through 2020. Take the opportunity to constructively reflect on your challenges and your progress. From doing so, you can learn from your experiences and start 2021 with an understanding that will help you make better choices - for you personally and for your career development.

I have completed this exercise as part of my coaching course. It has been hugely insightful, so I wanted to guide you through it too. My list of key questions might steer you best, or you might prefer to work with one of the models I highlight.

However you choose to reflect, be constructive, be kind to yourself, and be honest.

### **Questions to help you reflect and learn**

Grab some paper or your tablet. Make a cuppa. Now sit quietly and reflect on the following questions. By writing your answers down, your brain engages fully. You will also have something to refer to in future months.

#### **What was your best action or decision during 2020?**

This could be a personal action, or a professional one. Why do you choose it? What has it enabled? Was it hard to do?

## Have you done something in 2020 that made you feel proud?

Was it an action, an experience, or something you were involved in? Think about why you are so proud and how that feels to you.

## With the benefit of hindsight, how would you have handled 2020 differently?

Think about the decisions you have made and how you reacted to events around you. Has this impacted on others? Could your different actions have changed an outcome?

## What can you learn from 2020 to take forward into 2021?

Again, reflect on your personal situation as well as your professional progress. How do you intend to act on these learnings? Do you need to create a plan or establish a timeframe?

## What has been the greatest personal lesson for you in 2020?

This might concern your family and friends, or it might relate to your personal character and how you learnt to handle a situation. Why do you choose this example?

## What was the biggest risk you took in 2020?

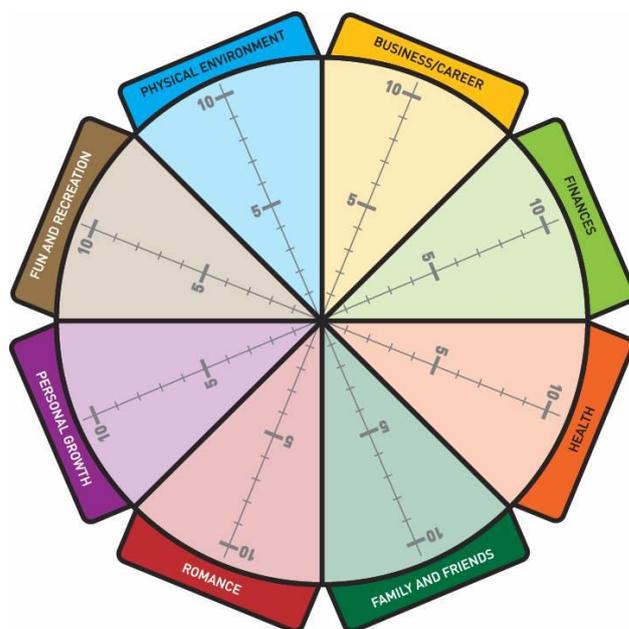
Taking risks can be a positive thing. And if it doesn't work, you can always learn from it. Why was it a risk for you? Now you know the outcome, does it still seem as risky?

## What advice would you give yourself for 2021?

This might be a bullet list of points or a short letter to yourself. By writing it down, you can refer to it in future months.

## Reflection using the Wheel of Life

You might prefer to use a visual structure to guide your reflection. The Wheel of Life is one of my favourites.



The wheel is a reminder that, to progress smoothly, your life must be balanced. Many different areas will matter to you. These might include your career, personal relationships, your health, and your finances.

Sit quietly and consider each area in turn:

*How happy are you with this area, scoring from one to ten?*

*What changes could you make to increase your score?*

*What action does this require during 2021?*

By assessing how happy you are with each area (and what you can do to improve the situation), you identify where to focus future efforts. A more circular 'wheel' ensures a more balanced life.

Be kind to yourself though. It has been a tough year and we have all taken knocks in different areas of our lives. We must now learn how to positively move forward from here.

## Try Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

A five-stage cycle, Gibbs has been a staple of coaching for many decades. Designed to help you reflect on key situations, returning to it in future months lets you assess your progress.



### Step 1: Description

Consider questions such as: What has happened? Who was involved? What did you do?

### Step 2: Feeling

Consider questions such as: How did you (and others) feel before, during, and after the event?

### Step 3: Evaluation

Consider questions such as: What was positive about the situation? And what was negative? What did it teach you?

#### **Step 4: Conclusion**

Consider questions such as: What would you do differently if this happened again? Do you need new skills to help you?

#### **Step 5: Action**

Consider what you can do from this reflection. Create a list of actions and a suitable timeframe.

### **Win seven hours of ema career coaching**

I hope your reflections bring some positive learnings to build from during 2021. Allowing yourself the space and time to do this exercise is incredibly valuable. It will also help you clarify your purpose and discover how to make the most of the year ahead.

With that in mind, we have a Christmas competition for you.

The prize is seven hours of ema career coaching for free. Breaking it into manageable sessions, we will tailor our support to your needs. That might include clarifying your future aspirations, interview coaching, or helping you to build the best possible CV.

#### **How to enter**

Provide three reasons why you think you would benefit from our free coaching. We will select the most constructive answer to find our winner.

Email your entry to: **[anne.elliott@emaconsultancy.org.uk](mailto:anne.elliott@emaconsultancy.org.uk)**

The closing date is **31 January 2020**

Finally, I will be taking another photograph as the New Year dawn breaks over the Welsh mountains. It will close my reflections on such a turbulent twelve months and open my eyes to the potential of 2021. Our future can be influenced by the choices we make. Make sure your choices are based on sound reflection.