

Hello 2024



Playbook

ONCE AROUND THE SUN

It has been an intense year. A year with heightened uncertainty and instability in the world - in business, in leadership. Not only supporting clients going through change, but also riding my own change curves this year, was a great reminder for me that we all have different orientations. Some of us may embrace it more willingly than others, but we're all more or less open to it at different times, depending on our circumstances. But it also re-affirmed to me that we all have choice amidst change. We possess the ability to tap into our resilience, to take control and responsibility of what we can and start shaping the space we want to move towards. As teacher and author Pema Chödrön says: To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest.



And now, the end of the year is arriving. Short days and long nights. Let's pause for a little while amidst the noise of the world. I invite you to make some (hopefully) useful reflections and insights.

Hugging a newly made friend goodbye the other day, we said: let's make 2024 a year of joy and gratitude. Small acts of generosity, of speech, of reaching out, can mean more to those receiving them than the people doing them can ever know. Regardless if at work, with your friends and family or strangers. Do what you can. And receive the kindnesses of others with grace.



Onwards with love!
I look forward to connecting with you and working on things that matter in 2024,

Barbara

2023: BIRD'S EYE VIEWS

looking back on the year that was

Lessons: What did 2023 teach you?

Themes: What were things that kept coming up for you? What did that tell you?

Simple Nourishment: What simply satisfied you?

Bravery: What was a moment that took courage?

People time: What role did others play? When and how did you connect in the way you needed most?

Culture List: What was read, watched, seen, listened to, that had an impact?

Conclusion: Any unfinished business you are taking into 2024?



Speaking of bird's eye views. In July, I was in South Korea and took a trip up to the North Korean border. Surreal moment to stand there, looking through binoculars, peering into one of the most isolated countries on earth, trying to make a connection.

2024: TREASURE HUNTING

looking ahead on the year that will be

Narrative: What are some elements that you want as part of your 2024 storyline?

Rearrange: What might you need to put in a new order (from furniture to meetings)?

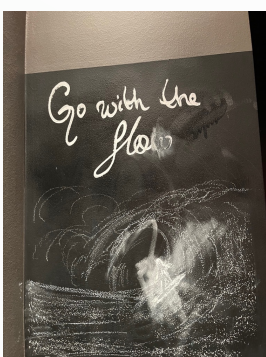
Return: What is something you are taking with you from 2023 that you want to revisit?

Utility: What will “being useful” look like for you?

Conversations: What space do you want to create for meaningful dialogue and connection?

Nature: What encounters with or in the outdoors do you want to experience ?

Fish out of water: What would you like to try or learn professionally / personally in 2024 that you haven't before?



Just a few things that caught my eye walking through different cities this year – they are great impulses for me as I go treasure hunting for my 2024 reflections.

SEEING THINGS

Inspiration is often right under our nose



Public pay phone (yes, they still exist!) seen at a canal in Venice (September 2023)

All you need is love. And compassion. Both exert pleasant feelings and have many neurobiological benefits (from motivation to reducing stress). No matter what is at the center of issues at work, remember that your team members are whole human beings. They aren't just workers at XYZ Corporation. They are fathers and sisters and grandmothers and uncles. They are hobby cooks, sports-lovers, foster home parents, elderly parent caregivers, cancer survivors, recovering addicts, human beings. I know, we always say leaders need empathy, but what I think they really need to show is love and compassion. Why? While empathy has many benefits, it can be a poor guide, clouding our judgment and ability to take decisions as well as encouraging bias. Effective leaders move beyond empathy. Because when you ask "what do you need" you kick-start reflections and take a step toward people feeling they are seen and heard.

Walking through Munich, I stumbled upon the "Zuhörraum" - The Listening Room. This amazing little, beautiful designed booth, run by a non-profit, invites people in to share stories, their joys, their worries, whatever they want to share. There is always someone there from their team to listen to you.

Listening is such an important leadership skill. Often underestimated or even thought of as easy (it's not, but you can learn it!). If you are truly able to actively listen, without judgement, without interruption, the impact is powerful. When we are able to listen, human connection emerges and flourishes.



Zuhörraum in Munich: Run by momo hört zu e.V, a non-profit that promotes the culture of listening and appreciation. (October 2023)



The wonderful Cooper and Straw coffee shop in Dublin where you can leave a kind word for the smiling baristas via QR code. (November 2023)



The impeccable, classy Shilla in Seoul where the staff go out of their way for each guest, myself included. Respect goes a long way. (July 2023)

With current geopolitical tensions and uncertainties, kindness should not be considered a luxury. Nor should it be considered a weakness in leadership. Kind leadership brings in all the different elements of authenticity, transparency, warmth, building trust, and empowering people. What drives engagement today? Feeling valued, respected, developed and cared for.

SO FRESH
AND SO
CLEAN

ENJOY THE
LUXURY OF
AN EMPTY
SPACE, YOU
CAN USE
HOWEVER,
FOR
WHATEVER
YOU WANT

HAPPY 2024!

ALWAYS CURIOUS TO HEAR
YOUR THOUGHTS!

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