

Hello 2025

Playbook

# PUTTING A BOW ON 2024

Another year to put a bow on. A year where it felt like outside stressors like climate change, elections and war were fraying everyone's sense of safety and stability. Professionally, I saw many - often dizzying - transformations where leaders and their teams needed to completely re-think and adapt their organizational purpose and design. When I heard the American economist John Fullerton say at a gathering I attended, "We are not living in an era of change. We are living in a change of era.", it really resonated with me. Change is no longer a one-off event, rather we need change to become a daily human practice. And all year I have been trying to think of a word we could invent that would replace "change" to make it more fitting to the time we are living in.



The quote "*looking to the futurepast, we are treading forward*" I saw at the Biennale in Venice. And to me it represents a powerful interplay between reflection and progression. It suggests that we carry lessons, memories, and wisdom from the past (our "futurepast"), and we can use them as steppingstones to move forward with purpose.

That is why I would like to invite you at the end of a long year to pause and to take some time to reflect backwards and forwards with my Playbook 2025.



Onwards with love!  
I look forward to connecting with you and working on things that matter in 2025,

Barbara

# 2024: SKY HIGH VANTAGE

looking back on the year that was

**Storytelling:** What was your best story in 2024?

**Aha:** What was a breakthrough? A step forward in learning or perhaps seeing something in a different way?

**Shaken 'n stirred:** What moved you? What emotions were stirred (perhaps deeper than expected)?

**Feelgood:** What is your favorite compliment and / or feedback that you received this year?

**Failure:** What didn't go as planned?

**Sensory Tableau:** What were some sense-driven experiences that you remember from this year: textures, colors, smells, tastes?

**Discard:** What do you want or need to get rid of ?



## 2024 Story:

My first time in Tangier. A generous, open-hearted city where Africa meets Europe. I met many new people from art, science, business, philosophy, entrepreneurship, NGOs, politics, technology... wondering how can we bring all these perspectives together to create a new narrative?

# 2025: EXPEDITION FOR DISCOVERY

looking ahead on the year that will be

**Ready Set Go:** How will you begin your new year with intention?

**Walking the Talk:** What will it take to transform just talking into real opportunities in 2025?

**Ask a human:** How can you - instead of asking ChatGPT - have more conversations with humans to find answers to intriguing questions or challenges in 2025?

**Astonish yourself:** How will you create spaces to explore things that interest you?

**Keep it simple:** What are some things you could slightly improve in your life without really trying but that would have a big impact?

**Cleaning out your closet:** What do you want to seek out and revisit in the new year that has been there all along — but deserves fresh consideration?

**Keep complaining:** How will you be a good critic or in other words, how will you creatively, engagingly, and constructively complain to solve big problems in the new year?



Just a few things that caught my eye walking through different cities this year — they are always small impulses to reflect on what they are telling me in the moment.

# SEEING THINGS

Inspiration for reflection is often right under our nose



Outside a great little coffee place somewhere in Boston

Like that Foo Fighters song, I have a confession to make. This year I have not always been the calmest, kindest and most focused. I've lost my patience and sometimes taken out my frustration on others, things that I later regret. I'm a work in progress. And let's be honest: even among the most well-intentioned of us, there are cracks. We're only human. This sign was a gentle reminder for me. The world is short staffed. But people keep showing up day after day. Let's be kind. Optimism can be found in acts of kindness. It is the force we can use to make it through this crazy life together. And for those of you who may be flawed like me: let's commit to improving and striving to be better, kinder, more understanding and patient: it is all we can ask from ourselves, whether we're leaders, partners, friends, parents or colleagues.

At this year's House of Beautiful Business in Tangier, I attended a dinner around "How to be a Stranger". It was about exploring the delicate balance between having an outsider perspective and feeling a sense of belonging. Something I can relate to having grown up as a "third-culture kid". For me it comes down to conversations. Having conversations are key, especially in today's fragmented and divisive world. In Tangier, I was reminded that the most unheard person is the one who disagrees with you. So, let's keep an open dialogue to learn about others as well as ourselves, to try to truly hear other viewpoints by distinguishing between policies and people. And the next time you are in conversation with a group a people, try to "be more a croissant, less like a donut". So, that others are easily invited into your circle of conversation. How will you support individuals who see the world differently in 2025?




This gentlemen at the dinner in Tangier felt very comfortable all evening pouring us fresh mint tea, being quiet in his own space while still belonging.



I never considered that character traits might have scents associated with them like these candles I discovered at Target.

And one final thought inspired by these candles. Whether you like parties (me) or enjoying the calm that comes with cancelled plans, we all have something strange, possibly weird, and exciting to offer the world. Embrace your authenticity. Authenticity is about delivering quality work while staying true to your principles and personality. The last thing we need is more of the same. Lean into your "strange" and create whatever it is that keeps you up at night. Embrace what's weird about you. The world needs it.



A BLANK  
CANVAS FOR  
YOU TO WRITE,  
DOODLE, OR A  
SPACE FOR YOU  
TO JUST ENJOY

**HAPPY 2025!**

**ALWAYS CURIOUS TO HEAR  
YOUR THOUGHTS AND  
FEEDBACK!**

**EMAIL**

**INFO@BARBARA-KEARNEY.COM**

**MOBILE**

**+ 49 177 7710444**