

My Word for the Year 2023

NURTURE

Read to know why I feel it is important
for you to define your word for the year.

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Happy New Year!!! I hope everyone is ready to take on 2023 by storm. The transition from one year to the next always makes me feel so refreshed; like I'm turning the page into a new chapter of my life. It's encouraging for me to look back on the previous year and see what trials and blessings Almighty has brought me through, then come up with ways to sharpen myself in the upcoming year.

This time of the year the talk about new year resolutions gets peak. There are many, rather most of us who struggle with setting up resolutions, thus an alternate way is to define or set a focus word for the year. The practice of choosing a "Word of the Year" is that, instead of setting a lot of different New Year Resolutions, you select one single word to be your focus for the year. That is 'a single word that summarizes what you need, what you want to focus, or what you need to improve on' during the upcoming year.

In short, a word for the year! Serves as your anchor and also encourages you to consciously (and subconsciously) consider this focus word when making choices and decisions throughout. You can use that word to set goals or intentions for each area of your life but have them all tie back to the single word. For example, if your word of the year was "Discipline", it could mean going to the gym, sticking to a morning and evening routine, no longer being late to office or meetings, discipline in expenses and much more.

Every year I find a quiet place where I sit in isolation, spend time on happenings and actions of my last year, and after reflecting upon everything, I choose a word that shall define my next year. Last year it was '**Resilience**'. My last year was a mixture of progress and relaxation, calm and concern, days full of activity and energy and then quiet days and days of extreme deadlines and pressure, days of despair and then days of excitement for growth. Allah has been kind as He always does. With all the experiences last year presented, I am ready to take along the learnings of last year and step into the new year with renewed energies and eyes full of dreams.

As I am closing the chapter on this year and stepping into the next, I cannot help but feel grateful. I did grow this year, I became more resilient as a person, as a believer, as a professional, as a humanitarian, and as a being. I did things; I experienced things and I learnt things; I stood firm in the face of many adversities and seriously, what could be better than that.

Seeing how the past year had been for me, this year I wanted to pick something that would help me sustain with the redefined the purpose of my life and help me continue with the strength that I had decided for last year. A hope that I could hold onto, something which could give me energy and positivity. I wanted something that would push me through the edge and help me make decisions that would allow me to rise; to learn; and become a new better me.

So this year, I chose the word **“Nurture”** (Nurture means “to care for something and helping it grow) and by choosing “Nurture as my word for this year I mean to Nurture my faith | Nurture my relations | Nurture my Skills and Profession | Contribute to Nurture the society around me by any means I can.

I want each day of 2023 to be defined by the word **“Nurture”**. While I am setting ‘Nurture’ as my word for year, I know that it is not a trampoline, where I am down one moment and up the next. It’s more like mountain climbing without a trail map. I know it will take its due time, strength, and most importantly, help from people around me. I am aware that I will experience setbacks along the way, but eventually I hope to reach the where I want to and look back at how far I’ve come.

I’m going to put more effort into taking care of myself and those around me first. My word of the year for 2023 will entail ‘the process of caring for and encouraging the growth or development of someone or something’.

I want to nurture . . .

- My Self. Because making time for self-care is essential. I want to focus on my physical health by staying active and strengthening my body. I want to cherish things and take actions in present, instead of waiting for the perfect moment. This is a continuing exercise but I am actively attempting to take the time to understand myself better. To have a deeper understanding for myself, to be more aware of how hard life can be sometimes and how I should allow myself grace.
- My faith by prioritizing the Almighty and his directives on all days in all matters to the best of my knowledge. I can’t even count the number of times I’ve hurried through my day, only skimming through the a few pages in Quran and squeezing in much hurried prayers. I want to offer meaningful prayers and nurture my relationship with Almighty.
- My relationships by more often and regularly checking-in on family and friends and cheering them on. Because whether you just met someone or you’ve known them your entire life, relationships always have room to grow deeper. I want the conversations I have with people to be more than just surface-level, and the memories I make with them to be noteworthy.
- My thoughts because our thoughts hold the power to drive our emotions, words and actions. When we dwell on something for too long, that can leave room for us to fall. I want to capture any negative thoughts, lies or false hopes that could be clouding my mind, and replace them with the positive ones. Are my thoughts constantly growing me or dragging me down?

- My Profession by giving myself time to learn, reflect and grow. I want to give my utmost attention to the projects I am working on and deliver the best I can to those who entrust me with their organization's and people's futures. I want to nurture my knowledge and skills that can keep me afloat with the rapidly changing world scenarios.

I want to experience the phenomenon of "Nurturing" in every capacity and in every form. So that when I sit down to reflect on 2023, I see a better me, with identifiable changes at which I can look back with happiness and get motivated to embark on another year of life.

I hope my reflections on last year and word of year for 2023 and the objective behind it, gave you some perspective and motivated you to define a word of year for yourself. At least, to me, setting my word of year has become a tradition now and it helps me in staying focused. I would love to hear your thoughts on having a word for the year and what that word is....

Happy New Year! Let's move on to 2023 with excitement, hope and so much more.

Warm Regards;

Sara Afzal

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