

Take on Board Podcast – Episode 283



# Transcript – It's time to RSVP: Reflections on 2024 and goals for 2025

Helga Svendsen 0:00

Hi folks, it's December, 2024. Indeed, if you're listening to this on release date, it's the 18th of December.

Helga Svendsen 0:08

So this is the final fresh, shall we say, episode for 2024 and as has been my practice for the last couple of years, this is the RSVP episode, the reflection episode.

Helga Svendsen 0:25

So the RSVP formula is something I developed a couple of years ago to help me reflect on the year and set some plans for next year. And so I've turned it into a worksheet, a play sheet, and I do it every year with some of my groups and share it with you. So if you would like to do this process as well, there is a download in the show notes to do that.

Helga Svendsen 0:47

So how does RSVP work? It is four steps.

Helga Svendsen 0:52

R is for review or reflect. So looking back over the year that was.

Helga Svendsen 0:58

S is for superpowers, so coming up with what you're awesome at and what you should do more of.

Helga Svendsen 1:04

V is for values. What are the values or emotions or feelings that you want to really focus on for the coming year?

Helga Svendsen 1:12

P is for purpose or plan. Start with the end in mind. What's your plan for next year?

Helga Svendsen 1:19

So if you go to the worksheet, there are a range of prompting questions. I will give you a very brief overview now and then my reflections for each so review and reflect on the year that was.

Helga Svendsen 1:31

Some of the things that you might like to think about in your reflection and review on the year. What are the things that you're proud of? What are the challenges that you faced? What would you change about the year? What didn't serve you well, what surprised you, and what word or phrase sums up how you feel about the year that has just been?

Helga Svendsen 1:56

So for me, oh my gosh, if you could see my worksheet, it is an absolute mess. Makes sense to me, but it's a complete mess of notes and arrows and highlighters and all sorts of mess there. But let me try and sort through for you some of the brainstorming that I had around my reflection and review of the year.

Helga Svendsen 2:20

So when I thought about the boards that I'm on, so one of the boards, the board that I chair, well, let's just say the CEO had some unexpected health issues and was off work for all of 2024 this meant that we had an acting CEO in place for most of the year, and then went through a process to recruit the new one. The new CEO is now in place and, oh, I think it's just great. It's great for the board. It is great for the staff. It's great for the leadership team to have that in place and to have that kind of certainty in settlement, even though there is a lot on his plate.

Helga Svendsen 2:55

So that was a really great thing. Well, should I frame it that way? I don't know if you can say a great thing to recruit a new CEO in the circumstances that we did the recruitment, but it is certainly one of the most important roles for a board and a board chair is recruiting the CEO. So that was a big tick for me this year, and something I'm quite proud of.

Helga Svendsen 3:17

On my other board, we've got a refreshed board. We have three new board members, and we're only a board of seven, so almost half the people are new. So it's been really fabulous to have some fresh eyes and different energy and different perspectives. So that's been a really good year, too.

Helga Svendsen 3:32

I'm on a couple of committees as well, and they've just been rolling along well, and I feel like with one of them that that I'm having some input that is making some positive changes, which is great.

Helga Svendsen 3:44

So what about work? Essentially, the year rolled along nicely. For those that have been tuning in for a couple of years, you will know that my word for the year previously has been ease, not easy, but ease. And there was a lot about this year that was ease. So Take on Board KickStarter was run earlier in the year, and it filled quickly, which was fantastic. Take on Board Accelerator, likewise, and for this year. So this time last year, we're in recruitment phase. We're in the middle of it now for the 2025 program, and I can't resist heads up folks at the time of recording, which is about a week before you're listening to it, there's only seven spots left. So if you're keen on joining a support crew, a cheer squad and a brains trust, all in one, get on it. There's a link in the show notes, and one of the groups is already full, but there's spots left in the other two groups, so get on it anyway, advertisement for my own program aside.

Helga Svendsen 4:44

The other thing I noticed about this year was that I didn't have any Take on Board events. There was no breakfasts and so on. And it actually made me wonder whether I've taken ease a little bit too far. So that was an interesting reflection for me.

Helga Svendsen 4:59

When I think about health. Yes, yes. I'm a woman in my 50s, so I think about these things. So there were some ups and downs, and look at the risk of too much information. Folks. I had low iron, which led to, again, at the risk of too much information a couple of colonoscopies and gastroscopies, which are never much fun. All is fine, but there's nothing like a few surgeries to really focus your mind on health, so on the upside and again, those who have been listening in for a couple of years will know that I've been searching for the last couple of years something to really work with my strength and flexibility and hallelujah 2024 was my year, so a new pilates place has opened up just down the road, and I am doing reformer pilates. There I go about two or three times a week, and I love it. It's easy to go to, it's easy to book into. I found myself going pretty regularly, although I should be there right now, but I'm recording this instead. Anyway. Other than that, I've been pretty good.

Helga Svendsen 6:00

On the personal front, I did pretty well. I had a number of holidays, and for those that listened in mid year, the space for space framework really helped me to work out things. Like, I don't know that I'm not so good at boundaries in the day to day, like, I'm not so good at knocking off at five o'clock and always making sure I have a decent lunch break and all of those things. But I am good at taking holidays and blocking out time, so that's how I now leave space in the cup. The space for space framework has also been helpful.

Helga Svendsen 6:33

So just to refresh so the space for space framework that I talked about on the podcast in the middle of the year, and also, there's a download for that as well, talks about leaving space in the cup, so not filling things up so much that it's full to overflowing, but leaving space in the cup. And the framework for that is to...

Helga Svendsen 6:52

[S] silo your time. So for me, that's taking holidays.

Helga Svendsen 6:55

[P] Plan, so for me, book the tickets, book, the accommodation book, whatever it's needed.

Helga Svendsen 7:02

Thirdly, be accountable [A]. So tell somebody what boundaries you're putting in place so that they can keep you accountable. Thirdly, celebrate when you get it right.

Helga Svendsen 7:12

C is for celebrate. And then finally..

Helga Svendsen 7:15

Echo, put something in place to do it all over again. So much like the RSVP framework, I found it helpful for me. I put it out to the world because I feel I found it helpful. So I'm hoping it's helpful for others, and likewise, my space for space framework, similar, very helpful for me.

Helga Svendsen 7:33

So one of the other things in that framework, like I said, Echo, that is repeat the good practices. So one of the things I put in place for that is having a remedial massage about once a month. And what I've noticed about that is that I put that in place when I was up in Noosa in the middle of the year, on holidays, reflecting on space for space. And before I came home, I sat myself down, up on the top of Noosa Hill, and said to myself, so Helga, what are you going to put in place, to echo this space and to leave space? And I thought, Why not book a massage? And I set up there, and I got online, and I booked it in immediately. So what I'm now finding is having a massage once a month is obviously awesome for my muscles, but it's not just a physical refresher for want of a better word. It's a psychological one, because it takes me back to that moment in Noosa. Takes me back to that reflection about space for space. And so it's a really good psychological reminder as well about leaving space in the cup.

Helga Svendsen 8:32

Finally, my final reflection, I guess, around the personal side of things, is that I left space in the cup for family stuff, for other personal stuff. So things like my 90 year old mother comes over for dinner once a week. So I make sure I have time for that it is pretty much quarantine time. It has to be something pretty urgent that I won't do that.

Helga Svendsen 8:53

Make time for my partner, for my cat, Mungo, for volunteering on the YWCA Asista program, a program I love if you are looking for a program where you get to mentor a young woman, highly

recommend link in the show notes anyway and space to be a foster carer. So my partner and I are respite foster carers, so we make sure we can make the time for that when we're called upon as well.

Helga Svendsen 9:19

See loads of stuff in the reflection. So those of you who've done the RSVP process before, or even if you knew, my recommendation to you is you just brainstorm everything, make the big mess about all of those different things, and then and only then, after you've done the brainstorm, come up with your three observations or themes about the year that was. We then put that together with superpowers, values and your plan. So what I'm going to do now is just tell you some of the prompting questions for those next three areas, and then I'm going to give you my full RSVP statement, and you'll hear the RSVP statements of a couple of others from the team. On board community as well.

Helga Svendsen 10:01

So that's reflect second stage, superpowers. Things to think about the here, when you're in the zone, what are the sorts of things you tend to be doing?

Helga Svendsen 10:12

Secondly, what are the sorts of things that people say you're awesome at? What do people say you're good at?

Helga Svendsen 10:19

And thirdly, what gives you energy? What are those things that really give you energy?

Helga Svendsen 10:24

So there's some prompting questions for you when thinking about your superpowers.

Helga Svendsen 10:28

Third step, values. So think about what your key values are. The worksheet has a list that you can play with, and there's also an online tool that I use as well. I'll make sure I put a link to that in the show notes as well, and we'll update the RSVP worksheet at some stage, so it's got that in there too. So think about your key values. Think about what you're passionate about. Think about the people

you admire. Think about if this isn't do more, but think about your own eulogy and what people might be saying about you there. Those are the things to reflect on in developing your values.

Helga Svendsen 11:09

And finally, what I get people to do, or you can do, choose your own adventure, doing it at home. Once you've put it all together, what are your observations about the year that was? What are your three key superpowers? What are your three values you want to focus on more next year? Then you turn it into some three dot points about your plans for 2025.

Helga Svendsen 11:31

So here's mine.

Helga Svendsen 11:33

First up in the past year, I noticed firstly that my space for space that leaving space in the cup framework was really helpful for me to, well, leave space in the cup.

Helga Svendsen 11:48

Secondly, I noticed that on a personal front, I made a whole lot of positive change, pilates, going on holidays, putting messages in place, really doing good work in terms of leaving space in the cup.

Helga Svendsen 12:03

And thirdly, I noticed, on the professional front, I guess I held steady. Things were stable. I was responsive, but I wondered whether I'd let ease go a little bit too far.

Helga Svendsen 12:15

So my superpowers, my top three superpowers, one, listening, two, holding space and three, positive energy for building confidence. And what I noticed when I put my superpowers down, that connecting, which has always been on the hit list for me, had fallen by the wayside in 2024 so that was interesting for me to note as well.

Helga Svendsen 12:39

In terms of values, top three values, number one is love, number two is wisdom, and number three is health.

Helga Svendsen 12:47

And that was interesting as well. Health hasn't been top of my list of values. That's what happens when you have low iron, and all sorts of interesting ways of having to deal with that. So what does that mean for me?

Helga Svendsen 13:00

Purpose or plan number one, I will reconnect with connecting.

Helga Svendsen 13:05

So folks, there will be events, there will be possibly coffee lucky dips, there will possibly be some face to face stuff. There will be all sorts of different ways to connect, both for the alumni and beyond.

Helga Svendsen 13:18

Secondly, in leaving space in the cup, I want to leave space for me to create and grow new offerings for the Take on Board community. So I'm not entirely sure what that will look like. Part of it will be the events that I've already referred to. It might be, and I'm a little nervous about saying this, because once I say it, well, it's accountability, isn't it? So I will say it, possibly it's a couple of different workshops for chairs of boards or chairs of committees around psychological safety or emotional intelligence or well being in the boardroom. So I might bring a couple of different events together just for chairs.

Helga Svendsen 14:03

The other thing that I'm keen on doing for this podcast actually is some more on air strategy sessions. So if people are interested in reviewing your resume, or you're applying for a role, or you've got something about your board career you'd like to nudge through, and you're happy to have it shared on air with the Take on Board, community, get in touch.



Helga Svendsen 14:22

And thirdly, again, it's the space in the cup. It's continuing to focus on a personal level, on leaving space in the cup so that I can continue to focus on my health and focus on my family and focus on my friends and basically focus on all the people I love.

Helga Svendsen 14:42

So folks, that's it. That is my RSVP. My reflect superpowers, values and purpose statement for 2024 as I say, feel a little nervous about putting it out to the world, but there it is. Now, as I said at the top of the episode, we do this RSVP process as part of the Take on Board accelerator program. I also do it broadly as part of the final immersive for the leadership Great South Coast, Step Out Immersive and for a couple of other clients as well. But in particular, when we do it as part of the Take on Board accelerator program, we run through this process, and then people come up with their own statements, and some of them have very kindly agreed to share them with you.

Helga Svendsen 15:29

So let me introduce the fabulous Deb Colville. Deb is a director of Swan Hill Health, and she'll share some of her reflections about nature and what that means for her. Over to you, Deb.

Deb Colville 15:45

My observations is I've been shocked about my love of nature. I always knew it was there, but I've just really got into it this year, like I love a bat. I've got vaccinated so I can learn bat handling, which my everyone thinks is crazy, but I've just loved it.

Deb Colville 16:02

And learning to connect, like, when I see things in nature, or when I experience nature, to see the connections between like, you know, an insect and a plant, and to look all the time around me. So I'm seeing the world afresh, and I think that's been just an amazing, exciting thing and to stay sort of peaceful calm within myself, is that I've improved in that I reckon, this year.

Deb Colville 16:26

So my superpowers are my energy, like if I get out there with a bat, I am ready to get up the next morning and take the bat trap down, or find a read up about another bat, or read up about a plant. So that's been really exciting this year. So I value nature and my connection with nature, and that goes to the extent of, how do I relate to nature, who respects it? The Aboriginal community have got

a totally spiritual attitude or understanding of what excites me, but I don't see it as spiritual, so I want to work on that, and then my purpose is, is to sort of make better connections with people around me. And this might shock you, but that is like respecting my children so much that I go into crone I don't go into mothering them. They're adults. And whilst I love them dearly, I also respect their autonomy, their authenticity, that sometimes doesn't need a mother, needs somebody else in the world with a different kind of view of the world and relationships. That's where I'm going.

Deb Colville 17:35

Governance wise, I can speak up at certain times, and that's enough. I feel like that's how I use my skills, is to actually say, no, this is what my values are. What do the other people in the board think? And let's come to a more sophisticated understanding of, for example, Aboriginal patients who leave ED and don't get the care. And how do we reconcile that we may not necessarily be putting resources into getting that as good as we possibly can?

Helga Svendsen 18:08

Thanks. Oh, thanks. Deb, it was so fabulous to hear some of your reflections there. And I love how you're bringing nature into your own world. Reminds me to do it as well.

Helga Svendsen 18:19

Next up Coralie Nash, you are a total superstar. She's been in Board Accelerator a couple of times, as has Deb, who you heard from earlier. So you will have heard coralie's RSVP last year and well, let's hear from her about the comparison between last year and this year. Coralie over to you.

Coraline Nash 18:40

So last year's word for me was tsunami, which it was pretty disastrous. Well, that wasn't disastrous. It was just felt like a tsunami in a mess of tumbling. And so before doing this, I refocused on I reread what I had written for RSVP last year to see how far I'd come. And so this year, in the past year, I've noticed that I've been reflecting a bit more before acting or making decisions.

Coraline Nash 19:11

I've been saying no a bit more, but thoughtfully saying no to things. And it's been a period of rebuilding or refocusing of things. So after the tsunami has ended, well, I kept with the tsunami in the weather events, and I thought it was cumulus, like a cumulus cloud, which is like a cotton wool type of cloud, which is a fair weather cloud. That's what it feels like. That's what I want to go into. But it also feels like there's something building within that cumulus cloud. So cumulus clouds can

turn in for rain or can brush away and have fair weather again, but it just feels like there's something happening there. But it's not a tsunami which is positive.

Coraline Nash 19:53

My superpowers are resilience, caring for others and challenging, questioning and thinking big or focusing on or also focusing on immediate needs, but then having that bigger picture in mind.

Coraline Nash 20:06

My values are humour, authenticity and perspective, and my purpose and focus to achieve next year is building my knowledge and into leading through change, which is a big thing that's happening at work and also in the board that I'm on.

Coraline Nash 20:23

My focus is also from a personal perspective of some swimming, so progressing to ocean swimming, and continuing my Duolingo in two languages, and then also stretching my governance experience a little bit more. And I've put in a couple of applications for smaller health boards, whether I have a chance or not, who knows?

Helga Svendsen 20:45

Thank you so much for sharing so openly and honestly, Coralie as I say, you are a total superstar. And not only am I pleased to have you in the Take on Board community, I'm pleased to now be your friend on Duolingo as well, and we can learn together in the Duolingo world. All right. Next up, Caroline Pilot. Caroline did Take on Board KickStarter in 2023 she was right on the mark and went off and got herself a board role on a disability organisation called Mambourin, and then participated in Take on Board Accelerator this year. So Caroline tell us what the year has been like for you and what 2025 might bring.

Caroline Pilot 21:29

So this year for me has been a huge year of change, having left the corporate world in December last year, leaving big salary to earn big round number to start off with and becoming a student again at this ripe old age.

Caroline Pilot 21:45

So my first observation from this year has really been around personal growth. But in the past, when I've talked about growth, it's always been about my work and what I'm doing work wise, for me this year, I think it's been growth, not just professionally, but a lot personally, as me, as a person, and my second part was going into the year I sort of got about a quarter, a third of the way through, and started to really doubt my decisions, of what I had done, leaving the corporate world and was my why I left, compatible with reality in terms of, you know, the work I wanted to do, and can I keep a roof over my head?

Caroline Pilot 22:28

But thanks Coralie for helping me to really bring those values together. And then I guess my third one was around the pride and joy of doing life in a way that really resonates with my values, my passions, my strengths. And you've heard of me, heard me talk about my ikigai before, and I sort of do feel like this year has been a year of finding my ikigai, which will lead me to my 2025, bit.

Caroline Pilot 22:53

So my superpowers, I know, are around networking and stakeholder engagement and being a real connector to make things happen. Secondly, around really being curious. And in that curiosity is around really hearing and listening to people and hearing what's going on behind the problems, having that empathy to then know, well, do I need to do something, or do I just need to listen, or is there a way forward?

Caroline Pilot 23:19

And the third one is around the integrity. And I've realised, for me, without integrity, then there's there's really nothing, and it's a big leader in the decisions that I make, in the things that I do.

Caroline Pilot 23:32

So next year, moving forward, my number one value is around equality and I guess that really sits with my board role with Mambourin, and I've just been made Chair of the equality safeguarding covenants committee. So I'm excited about the changes that we can do there and the things that we can drive but not just equality there probably there's so much going on in the world also speaking up when need be, whether it be around gender, whether it be about religion or stuff going on in Gaza at the moment, and really, yeah, being true to everyone deserving to live a good life. Personal fulfillment, bringing a whole new joy in my life around my walking, my hiking. I'm going to Spain next year to do an eight day hike. And not really being good in the past about prioritising myself so doing more of that, and family time with my granddaughter, being there for my family.

Caroline Pilot 24:24

My last one really hasn't changed, which is making a difference, but it's changing how I do that. So my making a difference now is through the work that I'm doing in public health and continuing through that work around being a driver within teams of cohesion and innovation. Yeah, I guess my thing is around, how can I be impactful moving into 2025 with that focus on equality, my personal fulfillment making a difference, and so it's probably being more, I feel like I found my ikigai in 24 but 25 is really consolidating and being a bit more, there's a word for it. But think of it. My head's bit cotton wool at the moment, but being more decisive in what I do and how I do it.

Helga Svendsen 25:07

Oh, okay. Well, if Caroline can do that with a bit of a cotton wool head, I know that she totally rocks it when she doesn't. So thanks, Caroline. Last but not least, the fabulous Amy Wells. Amy has also been around the Take on Board network for a while, and she even taught us an online yoga session. I think it was this year. Could have been last year. She's a star. So Amy, over to you.

Amy Wells 25:34

So in this past year, I noticed that I'd had a poor commitment to maintaining some personal goals, and I had assumed sincerity in others, and that I noticed I was in flow or happiest when I was doing my goal, impacting work when I was outside, and I had periods of adherence to personal goals.

Amy Wells 26:02

My superpowers are making others feel safe, negotiating uncertainties and monitoring current status to goals, drilling into details, but not needlessly.

Amy Wells 26:18

So next year, I will be focusing on trust, curiosity and determination are probably the three values that came out most clearly in that assessment. So to support those values, I am going to be pulling back out some old tools around some daily and weekly reviews that will help me get back onto track around making those commitments to self, around and it's especially around practices and routines, and that's a routine that I need to get back in with to and re establishing a connection with my yoga teacher, because that's probably a piece that's depleted since I've not been compulsory to go there, it's just been personal development.

Helga Svendsen 27:10

Okay, Amy reinterpretation is always welcome.

Helga Svendsen 27:15

Okay, folks, to all of you in the Take on Board community, thank you so much for being here, for supporting the podcast, for supporting me, for being part of the podcast, the Facebook group, wherever it is that you are showing up.

Helga Svendsen 27:32

If I can ask one more ask of the year, it would be this, can I please ask that you share the Take on Board community with one of your colleagues or one of your friends. I would love to grow the Take on Board community in the Take on Board listenership, and I know that the best way to do that is to get you to help me out. So go on as my end of year gift, please help me out by sharing it with somebody. Now finally, we cannot finish up without a couple of thank you's to the behind the scenes team. So Lisa Davis, my business manager, who just keeps things rolling along in the most beautifully efficient and easeful, if that's even a word, way. Thank you for all that you do.

Helga Svendsen 28:19

Buffy Gorrilla, who you are hearing from more regularly, folks with the Take on Board Times she just rolls this out every week, makes it all happen so effortlessly and connects so beautifully with me and the team and you the community. So thank you, Buffy for being with me since the start on this podcast escapade, and for continuing to just make it easy and bring incredible value to me and the Take on Board community.

Helga Svendsen 28:46

And finally, Jackie Cooper, my wordsmith, who brings you the Take on Board Digest, who brings Ideas to Action, who brought you the Broads on Boards podcast. If you haven't had a listen to that earlier in the year, please. Can I encourage you to do so? And who just so beautifully brings words together and totally gets me so thank you, Jackie, for all that you've done.

Helga Svendsen 29:11

Okay, that's it. Thanks to the team. Thanks to you, thanks 2024 you've been quite the ride, and see you on the other side folks, for the next couple of weeks, you'll be hearing the summer series. I'll

leave it till next week for you to hear what that entails. Thanks for being here. See you on the other side.

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