



## An appreciative year in review

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Before writing this article on an appreciative year in review, I went through the exercises I'm going to describe and came to a realization.

Truly reflecting is a very difficult exercise and not one you can just suggest to anyone to do. It takes effort and concentration. So why do it?

The purpose is to make sure we're not misspending our money or more importantly, our lives, pursuing things or opportunities that aren't meaningful to us. As the past year fades from memory, why not spend a few minutes considering the highlights, both good and bad, of 2014?

You may even want to consider writing down the highlights for future reference. It can be an enjoyable experience to look back at previous years' highlights to relive some of the memorable occasions. I also encourage going through the exercise with someone else as shared experiences can lead to some of the best memories.

After reflecting on the past year, it's time to look at the upcoming year. What do you see on the horizon that has you excited about 2015? This would also be worthwhile to have in writing so you can tuck it away for next year's reflection. Seeing what actually happened as well as what surprises occurred that you hadn't even considered at the start of the year can be insightful as you repeat the exercises in future years.

Life is made of those planned transitions and unforeseen events so why not embrace an approach celebrating what makes your life unique? One of my favorite authors and speakers on the topic of living an appreciative life is Edward Jacobson, who wrote "Appreciative Moments," which is full of useful exercises for living a more fulfilling life.



Please Note: Auckland, the city in the rear-view mirror, is hundreds of kilometers away from Wellington, the city in the foreground.

Ed was gracious enough to prepare a workbook for readers of this column using the metaphor of driving a car. Gazing through the rear-view mirror consists of reflecting on 2014 while peering out the windshield is looking ahead to 2015. If you're interested in receiving a copy of Ed's workbook, please visit [www.ToYourWealth.com/wellbeing](http://www.ToYourWealth.com/wellbeing) and enter the code—MIRROR.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the column, I suspect most people won't take the time to complete these exercises but I'd be willing to wager those who do will live a more rewarding life. It's time to live your great life now!



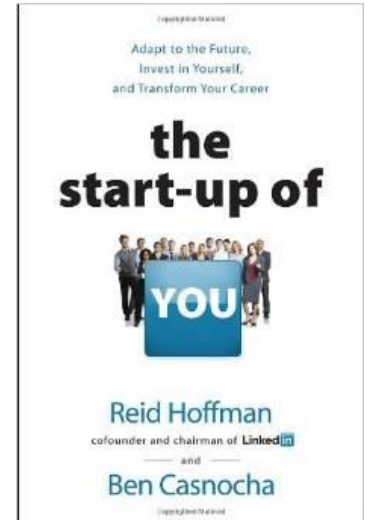


## Mike's Book Review: *The start up of you-Adapt to the future, invest in yourself and transform your career*

This is a great read from authors Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha and is written for anyone employed (or looking for employment) who is concerned about the changing landscape of employment. The disruptive creation of our modern economy has mandated we change the way we view and manage our careers. Reid Hoffman, one of the co-founders of LinkedIn recommends adopting the strategies of a startup entrepreneur – nimble and constantly reinventing themselves. Here are some highlights of the book from the publisher's summary.

*"This book isn't about cover letters or resumes. Instead, you will learn the best practices of Silicon Valley start-ups, and how to apply these entrepreneurial strategies to your career. Whether you work for a giant multinational corporation, a small local business, or are launching your own venture, you need to know how to:*

- *Adapt your career plans as you change, the people around you change, and industries change*
- *Develop a competitive advantage to win the best jobs and opportunities*
- *Strengthen your professional network by building powerful alliances and maintaining a diverse mix of relationships*
- *Find the unique breakout opportunities that massively accelerate career growth*
- *Take proactive risks to become more resilient to industry tsunamis*
- *Tap your network for information and intelligence that help you make smarter decisions"*



## Tax season has arrived – organizers to be mailed to FSG clients



Now that the holidays are in the rear view, it's time to turn our attention toward other annual calendar events--in this case tax filing. Although not nearly as festive, proper tax filing is an important element of your financial life cycle.

Financial Service Group clients who have taxes prepared by us should expect tax organizers to be mailed by the end of January. Be on the lookout and get a jump-start on preparing for tax season.

## Office closed January 23

FSG will be closed on Friday, January 23 for our team's quarterly planning meeting. We will reopen Monday, January 26 at 8:30 a.m.

