



#032

# THE CLEVER WEEK

MERRY EVERYTHING

Hello First name / there,

Today I looked at the calendar and had a freak out moment when I realized that we only have a little over two weeks left until the end of the year. How did that happen?! I had so many things I was going to do before January 1... and now it's nearly here.

One thing I will make time for is doing my own annual review. As a freelancer, I don't have a supervisor who will assess my progress and suggest opportunities for growth, so it's important that I do this for myself. I'll use a simple Google Doc and review my calendar from the past year. (I'll be trying [this fun tool](#)!) What were the big events? Notable projects? I'll also look back on my old task lists. What took the most time? Which tasks did I dread, and which ones were the most fun?

Most importantly, after reviewing all of this, I'll ask myself: What have I learned this year, and how can that help me make next year even better? If I stay on top of things, those answers can get rolled into monthly or even weekly goals. If not, that's okay, too—I'll set a reminder every so often to take a look at my notes.

How do you assess your own career growth? And how do you plan for a great new year? Hit reply and let me know! I'll take all the inspiration I can get.

Happy New Year,

*crystal*

P.S. We're taking a break to spend time with our loved ones, work on our annual reviews, and create fun new things for Cleverly. We'll be back in January with more tips, tricks, and inspiration. Happy holidays!

## bookmark this

A few interesting things we've read lately...

### **It's time for a growth workbook** →

The end of the year is the perfect time to step back and assess your career growth. These reminders will be helpful as we review 2021!

### **Productivity resources** →

We're adding these books to our to-read pile. We can vouch for [When](#) by Daniel Pink, which asks insightful questions on how we can best structure our work day. What productivity books do you recommend? Hit reply and let us know!

### **Why everything breaks when AWS is down** →

Last week, our painstakingly time-blocked Tuesday went up in flames when Amazon Web Services went down, and most of the tools we use went with it. We appreciated this explainer on why this happens (even if it didn't make our Tuesday any easier).

## free & fun

Every now and then, we like to bring you some fun and free things to make your work day a bit brighter. This week we've got a January desktop wallpaper for you—enjoy!



DOWNLOAD HERE

## heads up

## COMING UP NEXT MONTH

**SATURDAY  
JAN 1**

**New Year's Day**

The holiday falls on a Saturday this year, so be sure to confirm whether your office will be closed that Friday!

**MONDAY  
JAN 17**

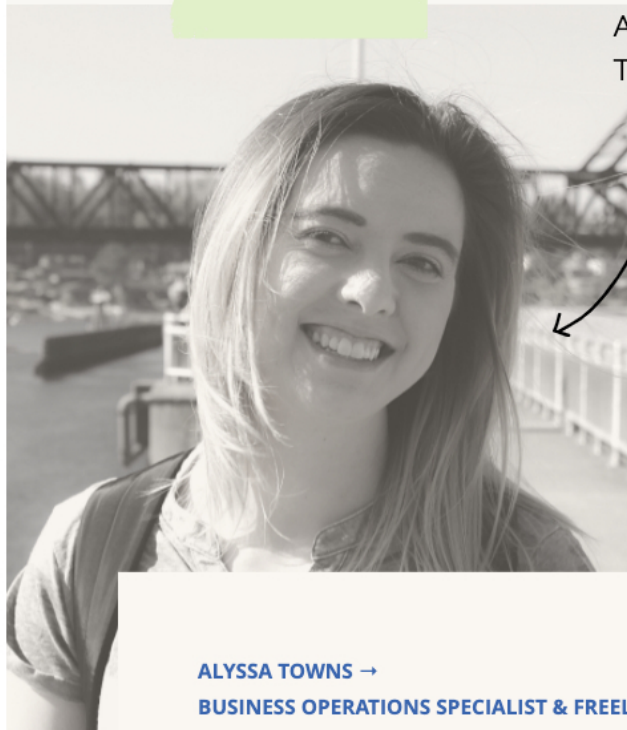
**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Many offices will be closed for this federal holiday celebrating the renowned civil rights leader. Make sure you set your OOO response!

### featured workstyle

Sometimes we learn a life-changing tip or trick from one of our peers by just watching them at work. We'll be giving you a glimpse into someone else's work day—get ready to be inspired!

*Interested in being featured? Email us at [hello@thecleverly.co](mailto:hello@thecleverly.co).*



ALYSSA  
TOWNS

**ALYSSA TOWNS →**

**BUSINESS OPERATIONS SPECIALIST & FREELANCE WRITER**

**What's the best piece of work advice you've received?**

The best piece of work advice I've ever received is to apply even if I don't feel fully qualified. Like many women in the workplace, I let imposter syndrome scare me away from applying for jobs and freelance opportunities in my earlier days. I've had multiple female mentors tell me to "do it scared and apply anyways," and all of the best opportunities I've had in my career thus far have come with a feeling of being

in my career thus far have come with a feeling of being nervous and seeking growth.

### **What is your daily startup routine?**

I like to say I'm a morning person, but not in the traditional sense. I love mornings, but they are my sacred time (and I'm generally not ready to chit chat until after my morning coffee, but more on that later).

I usually wake up between 6:30-6:45 am, preferably before my alarm goes off, but that's not always the case. My first act of business is telling my cat, Yeti, "good morning." He's always super stoked when my husband and I wake up. One of us feeds him breakfast, and then I make a cup of coffee (right now, I'm big on my Nespresso). I usually spend some time with my [MAGIC journal](#) or my latest [Book of the Month](#) pick, with my coffee in hand. (I'll try to sneak in a morning walk and coffee run in the spring and summer months instead of journaling or reading.) As I wake up, I get ready for work (which now requires minimal effort since I'm WFH). I grab something for breakfast if I'm hungry, fill up my [water cup](#), and light an [Evil Queen](#) candle at my desk before reviewing my calendar and to-do list for the day.

### **What is your daily shutdown routine?**

I implemented a strict daily shutdown routine during the pandemic. I block my calendar every day from 4:00-5:00 pm for a walk, jog, or at-home yoga session to help me start disconnecting from the workday. I always try to remain available by phone, but I power my laptop down and put it AWAY. That means entirely out of sight and off my desk (usually, I put it in my closet). Just as we used to pack our work bags before leaving the office, I strongly believe in having a way to visualize shutting down work for the day. Once my laptop is put away for the day, I won't touch it again until the following day (\*exceptions made for rare circumstances!).

### **How do you keep track of tasks?**

I live and breathe by the power of pen and paper. I'm a stationery enthusiast, and some of my current favorites are the [Do Good Daily Notepad](#) by Oh Happy Dani and the [Passion Journal Elite Black](#) by [Passion Planner](#). I love all colored pens, but I'm particularly a fan of these [PILOT G2 metallic gel pens](#). I also use the Notes app on my Mac when organizing tasks for my day job, and I'm trying to get into the habit of using [Notion](#) for my freelancing work.

### **What's your favorite phone app?**

Don't make me choose just one! My favorite phone apps are [theSkimm](#), [Cacti Wellness Collective](#), Chick-fil-A, Starbucks, Spotify, Instagram & Twitter.

### **What's your favorite Spotify playlist for work?**

[Productive Work](#) for the win.

### **What's a tip or hack you learned recently?**

Chrome makes it so incredibly easy to start a new Google Doc. If you type "docs.new" into the address bar, Chrome will direct you to a new document. It blows my mind every time!

### **What is your favorite and most useful account you follow on Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn?**

Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn.

Favorite Instagram accounts: [@womenscollectivebox](#), [@newhappyco](#),  
[@babeswhohustle](#), [@pepandpartyco](#), [@cactiapp](#), [@hellofears](#),  
[@selfcarespotlight](#)

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**"WHAT THE NEW YEAR BRINGS TO YOU  
WILL DEPEND A GREAT DEAL ON WHAT  
YOU BRING TO THE NEW YEAR."  
— VERN MCLELLAN**

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SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

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**CLEVERLY**

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