



2014

Lessons, loves and the moments that moved me
— in the year that was —

BY RACHEL MACDONALD

This year felt like a series of divine assignments, stacked neatly upon each other.

It was a year of mind-boggling highs.

Where bold intentions were scrawled on Post It notes, shoved under crystals... and made manifest.

Where I softened, stretched, released, rejoiced.

It was one of guidance AND resistance.

2014 was the year I drilled right down into my 'me-ness,' with intention.

It was EPIC on all fronts.

My wise and luminous friend [Ezzie](#), who I've had the pleasure of deepening a friendship with in the past twelve months, said to me in a reading before the last New Year dawned:

'This is a coming of age year. Time to stand up as a leader, being prepared to shoulder responsibility as well as to enjoy the fruits of a long labour. Not a comfortable time, necessarily, but a time of coming into your power in a whole new way. It's also a year of laying foundations for what's to come in 2015.'

Which, in such a simple way, says so much.

My word for the year was SOAR, and true to that declaration, there was plenty of rising up, stepping up and rocketing higher (rapidly.)

As is the divine paradox of life, as I rejoiced in all that **elevation**, I was also called to tend to my **foundations**; to go to ground and dig my feet in to deeply question old beliefs, old ways of being and old ways of doing things, which as Ezzie hints at, often isn't a particularly *comfortable* experience.

You know what I mean.

Frustrations. Growing pains. Transcending upper limits. We can tag it with whatever label we like, but beyond surface-level friction, I think the most noteworthy thing about discomfort is it's a SURE SIGN we're making progress... and progress is *a/ways* welcome 'round here.

So, without any further ado, let's take a look at the year that was.

{ 2014's BIG THEMES }

// Infinite possibility.

// Magic and manifestation.

// Faith in uncertainty.

// Freedom in devotion.

// Immersion.

// Introversion.

// Disentangling from 'busy.'

// Softness.

// WHOLENESS.

{ BRIGHT-EYED & BLOG-HEARTED }

The stand out of 2014 was without doubt creating Bright-Eyed & Blog-Hearted (BE & BH), the eight-week blogging and personal development course that has knocked me sideways in the best of ways since February.

Far out, it's been *huge*.

750+ incredible women in two rounds.

A Facebook group full of spirited, supportive, go-get-em women that has brought me to tears on several occasions.

The bowl-me-over feedback.

The life-changing transformations. (for me, and the girls.)

The insane, immersive, content creation process (shit, I'm never doing THAT again.)

The opportunity to embrace my 'teacher essence' in a whole new way.

The welcomed media and speaking features/ opportunities that have come since.

All. Of. It.

I'm immensely proud of this creation and honestly feel like I can't quite express the impact it's had on me, but I will say this:

I'm utterly grateful that the original idea sauntered into my psyche, and moreover, for the people who helped me bring it to life (I'll come back to them later.)

BE & BH, you've been a game-changer.

RANDOM SIDE SNIPPET # 1:

CREATE WHAT YOU WISH EXISTED.

When I'm creating anything, my primary focus is on creating a transformative experience. What that means is I zoom in, firstly, on how I want people to feel — because it all starts there, as the inimitable [Danielle LaPorte](#) would attest to — and then, I devise the strategy, the features and the important movements that will take them from here to there.

I'm also a huge advocate of creating the product that would have helped *you* out.

In other words, create what you wish existed.

{ BE & BH :: ROUND TWO }

Because the content was already created and we'd more or less learned the ropes as we went, the second launch of BE & BH was a stark contrast to the craziness of the first.

I went in with a clearly defined intention of bringing as much ease to the process as I could (which is not to say that it was 'easy' — I'm yet to hear of a launch that has been a total breeze) but it did feel infinitely more manageable.

We also moved house smack bang in the middle of the launch. Literally, the same week; an experience that involved just Ramai and I and 54789 loads to the car, to the storage shed, back to the house, over to the new house, and REPEAT, which meant I was basically offline for significant chunks of time.

Turns out, that was a good thing, as it allowed me to play with what it means to have true faith, without the need to control or micro-manage an outcome.

Which, when it comes to launching, is *impossible* anyway, friends.

I also had my intention for the number of souls I wanted to welcome to the course planted firmly in my mind (I find specificity works every time) so as I packed boxes and decluttered, you could find me repeating this mantra endlessly:

Be still and know.

Be still and know.

Be still and know.

I love it so much I still use it.

RANDOM SIDE SNIPPET # 2:

HOW I PREPARE FOR A BIG LAUNCH.

There's no doubt about: for a period of time, launches will require *all* of you.

I want to share some of my tried-and-tested ways to prepare for a launch BEYOND the business-y/ tech components. I see these as 'insurance.'

They are:

// To make sure I sweat and move in some way, every day, for clarity and peace of mind.

// Oracle cards, for cosmic guidance around any q's that may arise.

// Kinesiology, for everything. For balancing any wild energies, for soothing self-doubt, for aligning to particular goals (again, I align to the number of people I want to serve.)

// Time in nature. Daily. Too much inside time sends me cuckoo, but Mama Nature brings me back in an instant. Bonus points: bare feet on the earth/ sand for grounding.

// Core connection, primarily through Belinda Davidson's brilliant chakra cleanse meditation and other meditations I feel called to embrace. The form and length of time sitting in stillness doesn't matter that much — it's the consistent practice that does.

// Support crew. Something I've learnt about myself is that I'm not one to ask for group advice. If I haven't been able to find peace or come to a conclusion on my own through contemplation, I turn to a teeny handful of friends, my mother and my husband. Aka my wise council.

{ FREEDOM. MONEY. LOVE }

Perhaps the biggest, most humbling, wowser moment of 2014 has been the fact that my business — in her second year — has more than tripled, supporting myself and my husband as he's taken a 'gap year' to explore his next step of starting a business of his own.

As something that was definitely wedged in the dark recesses of the 'CAN YOU IMAGINE?!' box, it goes without saying that the impact has been extraordinary, and not just in the obvious sense.

I have:

// Learnt more about deserving and worthiness than ever before. (the first launch of BE & BH was KEY for this.)

// Come face to face with generational money 'stuff'; actively worked to break family patterns; and as a result, created a new 'abundance reference' that I look forward to passing on to my own children, and their children. It feels profound to put that in words.

// Embraced uncertainty and expanded my 'container.'

// I've also been more discerning and more 'future focused' with money than ever before. I got really excited about savings and investments in 2014 and look forward to learning more on this front in the coming years.

I salute my soul-biz for not only being the vessel through which I learned these valuable lessons, but also, for masterfully carrying our dreams this year.

I say this often, but thank you, thank you, **thank you Life.**

RANDOM SIDE SNIPPET # 3:

ON WORKING FROM HOME. TOGETHER.

On more than a few occasions, I've been asked about the dynamic with my husband and I both being home and the no-BS, honest answer is: *it just works* (because — *wink wink!* — we work at making it work.)

My man and I adore each other's company, and while I know can be easy to throw the 'you're just lucky' blanket over a situation, it bears mentioning that like any relationship, there are **conscious choices** we both make each day around:

- How we communicate with each other
- When we give each other space
- The ways in which we own our behaviour
- How quickly we apologise if need be, and;
- How accepting we are of where the other and how they might need support.

It HAS to be a team effort. Thankfully, more often than not, it is.

Practicality-wise ::

We've also always been fiercely independent as *individuals*, and seem to work in a flowy groove where either one or both of us is out exercising and meditating, then we meet back up for a late breakfast and head to our respective office areas, coming together again for a cuddle/ laugh/ shared bite to eat and chat when the desire hits.

Honouring the needs of our individual selves.

And together, celebrating and appreciating the time we spend together as a duo.

{ TRAVEL }

// As part of my role as assistant life coach trainer for Julie Parker's Beautiful You Coaching Academy (a commitment I thoroughly enjoyed), I flew up and down to Melbourne several times in the first half of the year...

... And again, for the Big-Hearted Business Conference in May, where Danielle LaPorte blew hidden tears out of our ducts with her 'decide to rise' closing sermon (her warm embrace is also worthy of a mention here.)

// Mid-year, Ramai and I hot-footed it to Bali for 11 days of bliss. And BLISS it was. It was our first time to the island and we reveled in the energy, the people and the food. It feels great to know Bali is 'just there' (well, in comparison to most of the destinations we've been to which are at least 15 hours away) and I can see it being an annual pilgrimage for some easy R & R.

// In September, it was time to trek back down to Melbourne again for Alexandra Franzen's Write Yourself Into Motion workshop, which was one of my highlights of the year. Seeing Alex rock her zone of genius was a delight that extended far beyond cerebral entertainment. The mark of a brilliant teacher; she inspired me to devote, simplify and do better... in every way.

// Speaking gigs brought me to Sydney twice — once for the Blog Society event in May, and again for the Radical End of Year Party in November with Gala Darling, Julie Parker and Melissa Ambrosini.

// We spoke to an audience of over 250 beautiful women (and one legendary dude), and for days after, I was moved by the fact I'd felt so *at home* up there with the bright lights beaming on my face. Buoyed by that beautiful crowd, self-trusting and knowing that I had something of value to offer. It felt really good, and I feel primed for more in the coming year.

// And.... as far as local travel love goes, I zoomed up the road to the Sunshine Coast on several occasions for quality soul sister time, and down the road to Byron for a mind-blowing sacred sonics ceremony, a weekend getaway with friends and many a lazy day at the beach.

We've had some big long-haul trips over the past few years, but in contrast, 2014 had a definite 'home-soil' flavour.

What will next year bring, I wonder?

{ALL-TIME FAVOURITE LESSONS + REMINDERS OF 2014}

// Being your authentic self liberates others. Truly.

// Your internal world is a reflection of your external world. I experimented with this throughout the year, observing WHEN exactly life seemed stagnant vs. when it flowed best and when my manifestations seemed to materialise effortlessly. The latter was without fail when I was 'doing the work' to nourish myself on all levels. As [Belinda Davidson](#) says, 'change your energy, change your life.'

// When you live with integrity and from your intuition, there's no such thing a 'bad decision' or a 'missed opportunity.' Decision-making becomes easy. Use that all-knowing inner compass, and use it often.

// Say yes to the things that scare you **quickly**, BEFORE you have the chance to over-think, over-analyse and allow your ego to take the reins. You'll never regret saying to something that helps skyrocket your soul growth.

// Conviction is sexy.

// Are you caught in a consumption rut? Read — or listen — outside your usual interests. Podcasts (and audiobooks) topped my list of Awesome Things in 2014. Tim Ferriss. BBC Philosophy. Serial. It was fun, and educational, to mix things up.

// Speaking of :: have FUN with life. Play, get messy. Get wild!

// Treat your 'dream people' like GOLD, always, and know that you will not and can not be for everyone. In truth, trying to be is a waste of the precious energy that can be funneled the way of your ultimate readers/ clients/ customers. Spend it wisely!

// If there's something burning inside you — some idea, some gift, some inner magic ready to be transmuted — do not wait a moment longer to start honouring it. Even in the most miniscule way. Your fulfillment depends on it. Your emotional health depends on it.

Nurture that gorgeous creative heart of yours.

{ LOOKING FORWARD :: 2015 VISIONS }

Here's (some of) what I'll be calling into existence in 2015:

// **A complete rebrand...** because it's time to align how my work is presented with how it feels (and how I, as the creator, feel.) Change is necessary, and I couldn't be more excited about this.

// **Another big BE & BH launch.** Coming atcha!

// **A collaborative two-day live event with my girl Tara Bliss.** (More to come on this one.)

// **Workshops...** because you've ever-so-enthusiastically asked for them, and because I'm burning to teach and connect with you in this way.

// **Travel.** Because, travel. ☺

And a few more that feel sacred for me right now, but will emerge when the time is right.

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What I can say is that without question, 2015 is going to be a year of:

Creativity. More words, more photos and inspiring, valuable creations for my tribe (yep, you.)

Connection. In meaningful ways online, in person and with my loved ones. I want rich, open, vulnerable conversations with the people I know and the people I'm yet to meet. Like-minded souls, I'm calling you in, hear!

Consciousness. Continuing to devote to the soul practices that support me.

Courage. To steady me in moments of uncertainty.

Curiosity. Like I have since I began talking all those years ago, I want to continue asking life 'Why?' I want to keep exploring, expanding, honouring my wide and varied interests with an open mind and an open heart, and;

Care. I'm deeply committed to caring for my Selves — my spiritual self, my physical self, my mental and emotional selves — with fierce and unwavering

devotion in 2015. And, of course, extending as much love and generosity as I can muster to 'my peeps.'

{ GRATITUDE }

So many people have had a huge impact on me this year, but there are a few I need to extend a special thanks to.

Thank you to [Jess Larsen](#) for going above and beyond, for your damn clever insights and relentless dedication to your work (and mine.) You are truly a rare gem.

[Steph Blaszak](#) — you are a pro in every sense of the word, not to mention a total sweetheart. Can't imagine not having you on my team.

[Sian Richardson](#) — design genius extraordinaire and one of my longest Interweb buddies (whoa!) I'm so thrilled to be teaming with you on yet another project next year.

[Bayleigh Vedelago](#) — holy hell, you are talented woman. Thank you for capturing me from behind the lens this year, and for doing so with the biggest, brightest smile on your face.

[Roost Film Co](#) — a LONG overdue public thank you for creating such a rad intro video for BE & BH. You whipped that up like a boss. It's gorgeous. Thank you so much.

[Alex Olsen](#) — honey, when I think of you, my body feels flooded with peace. Exactly the energy you RADIATE. You are one of the most generous souls I've ever had the joy of knowing, and I'm so proud to wear your pieces and call you a soul sister.

Megan — sweet bestie of mine, as always, I adore you. We've shared so many laughs this year. We really just *get* each other. I'm frequently thanking my lucky stars for you.

[Tara](#) — lady, the love you extend my way and the light you bring to my life is simply BEYOND. No words. All gratitude. I love you dearly.

[Mel](#) — our phone chats mean the world to me, just like you do. You are magnificent, you inspire me.

[Julie](#) — are there even words? You've made me cry (happy tears) several times this year with yours. I find it hard to describe how much your friendship and gentle guidance means to me. You are one in a billion.

(OH GOSH, I could go nuts!) [Susana](#), [Jess](#), [Yvette](#), [Bella](#), [Mandy](#), [Nic](#), [Ash](#), [Claire](#), [Connie](#), [Claire](#), [Jasmine](#) — I think the world of you all. Love you.

[Ezzie](#) — the special blend of intellect and intuitive prowess you possess is simply divine. So grateful to have gotten to know you this year.

My BE & BH babes, my coaching clients and you, my reader — it's ridiculous how much I adore you.

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{ IN CLOSING }

I've seriously relished in the discoveries of this year, yet know 2014 is just a taste of what's to come.

Even writing that sends my senses into a spin.

Today, with this reflection warming my heart, I'm saying a huge thank you to the year that was for every delicious moment.

For blitzing my beliefs on what's possible.

For answering my prayers, honouring my intentions, for guiding me to the 'highest good.'

For every experience that helped me grow.

To every, single one of you reading, THANK YOU. You are cherished.

To tie this epic recap up with a bow, I want to share some words I wrote for the intro of the [Strategy Lab x Emma Kate Co.](#) calendar collab.

They capture all I wish for you too, in 2015.

HAPPY, HAPPY NEW YEAR! xo

** Hand-lettering over page by Emma Kate.*

let it be declared :: this is YOUR year.

You were put on this earth to SHINE...
and in 2015, shine you will.

May each and every month of the year ahead
bring with it welcome surprises, wild adventures,
deep belly laughs, connection, clarity,
and generous dollops of creative delight.

May you feel held, carried, and loved - always.

As the days roll gently by, may you know
in your heart that you are the conscious creator
of your life - the painter propped purposefully
at the easel - and may grace fall upon your shoulders
as you weave your magic, the way you do.

Shimmer, sweet soul.

With love
Rachel x