

Karen's Word for the Year 2013

My word was . . . (drumroll please): **WORD!**

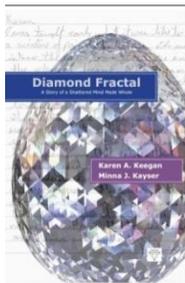


#1 My first goal was to take our pastor's challenge and **read The Word through in a year chronologically**. I was already in the habit of reading through the Bible, either sequentially or chronologically—but at my own pace. That's like driving across the country, stopping whenever you like and staying as long as you choose in one place before moving on. Reading the whole Bible in a year was like flying from NY to LA—you get there quickly, see things from a different perspective, miss a lot of details, notice the mountain peaks and canyons (the big themes), and get a sense of the flow of the land. Both methods of reading have their pros and cons. Maybe both are valuable. But my preference is to drive. I get to see more, experience more, notice more along the way. But for this year, I got to cruise at a comfortable speed and got some tasty peanut snacks en route.

#2 My second goal was a little more ambitious. In his book *Just a Minute* Dr. Wess Stafford explores the power of words. Once spoken, they can define a child's identity—for good or for ill. My father was a prolific letter writer (I have kept boxes of handwritten missives from him over the years). And so I got the idea that I could have a daily ministry of encouragement through the written word—not electronically, but by old-fashioned snail mail (you're welcome USPS).



I handwrote one letter a day for the entire year—that's 365 cards, stamps and envelopes. (If you want to read how I accomplished that, see below.) The results? In return, I received numerous handwritten letters, emails, and verbal acknowledgements of appreciation. The thing is . . . I really didn't expect *any* response, so was quite unprepared for the joy I received from others. Some told me the letter arrived exactly when they needed some extra encouragement. Some told me they read the words multiple times. Sometimes I'd send a letter, forgot I sent it, and had the person thank me for it many weeks later. I had to act like I knew what they were talking about! Having a poor memory has its annoyances, but also some delightful surprises. 😊



#3 And, finally, I completed a three-year project: **I co-authored a book!** Minna Kayser (one of my ministry partners) and I recounted "our story" in *Diamond Fractal—A Story of a Shattered Mind Made Whole*. It is Minna's story of healing and redemption from a horrendously abusive childhood. It's also Karen's story of inner healing in the process of helping Minna work through her emotional turmoil. It's the story of how M&K Ministry began. It's a God-story. Though not a how-to manual, the book encourages therapists who work with Dissociative Identity Disorder to explore with their clients the power of inner healing prayer.

You may order a paperback or e-book copy through Amazon in about a week or in paperback through CreateSpace today.

<https://www.createspace.com/4345782>

Want to know what my word for 2014 is? Sorry . . . you'll have to wait a year to find out!

365 Letters and How I Did It

First, I invested in a stash of birthday cards/notecards/stationery, stamps, and envelopes.

Next, I began by creating a database with 7 columns (I used Access, but Excel would work too):

- Every day of the year
- First name, Last name
- Source (e.g. MK classmate, Sunday School kids, Holland friends)
- Birthday
- Sent
- Notes

Third, I went through my family and friends' birthday list and plugged in all their names 3-7 days before the dates of their birthday (depending on how long I thought a card would take to arrive in their mailbox) and put a checkmark in the birthday column. That took up 102 spots.

Then I compiled other lists of friends and acquaintances (work, ministry, Sunday School kids, prayer supporters, neighbors, etc.) and filled in some more names. I still came up short, but found I needed those extra slots for sympathy/anniversary/get well/thanks cards that arose during the course of the year. Some people got more than one card. I decided that was okay.

At the beginning of each week (or two), I'd pick out appropriate cards or stationery, write a personal note (the only stipulation I made for myself was that each note had to include something I appreciated about the person) and address the envelope. In the stamps corner, I'd pencil in the date that I wanted to mail the letter. Keeping them in order on my desk, it was then a simple matter of slapping on a stamp and mailing it on the appropriate date. (I might mail a week's worth at a time if they weren't time-sensitive.)

Finally, I checked off the names in the Sent column.

One of my favorite responses:

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: I had to write you this morning to tell you what an unexpected blessing your card was that I :
: received yesterday. I have no idea why you wrote it but I believe it was the prompting of the :
: Holy Spirit. You probably had no idea how much I needed that yesterday nor did I realize that :
: the very next morning that card and those words would be my saving grace. Your note and the :
: fact God knew last night when I read it that I would need to remind myself of those truths today :
: because of some events that happened will always amaze me. Thank you more than words :
: can convey. :
:.....