

*A Writer's Strategy Guide:
Your Guide to Breaking
Free, Starting Right &
Keeping on
Track*



Strategizing For Success

As every small business owner knows, if you're not having fun and enjoying your work, it's tough to stay motivated. And if you're not feeling motivated, it's nearly impossible to grow. If you have the intention of making an income from your books, you *are* a small business owner, so you need to think like one.

There are three aspects to your particular business: writing, setup, and marketing.

Writing is straightforward, involving only the actual writing, the rewriting, and editing.

Setup includes everything from getting your ISBN numbers to getting the book cover designed. Even if you're not going the self-publishing route, you'll have some of the same tasks required for setup, such as designing and setting up your website, designing or having a design made for social media headers, getting professional photos taken, etc.

Then there is the marketing. Both independent authors and authors with traditional publishers need to do marketing on an ongoing basis.

Many solopreneurs simply exist, working hard day after day, without ever loving their business, and sometimes even coming to resent the very things they used to enjoy.

Maybe you still look forward to your day-to-day tasks but have trouble achieving your goals—or even knowing what your goals are. Perhaps business feels boring or stagnant, and you can't seem to reach that next level.

Maybe you've hit that wall called writer's block.

Whatever level you're at, whether you're in love with your business and writing daily—or not—the only sure-fire way to achieve success is to spend some time reviewing your wins, setting new goals, and planning your strategy for the coming months.

If that sounds overwhelming, don't worry. It can be easy, and even fun.

REVIEW & CELEBRATE THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Before you look forward, spend some time looking back. As one vintage ad proclaims, "You've come a long way, baby!" It's time to celebrate!

You have likely accomplished a lot in the past 12 months, even if some days it doesn't feel like that's so.

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Think back to how performed over the past 12 months and make a list of how you've grown and improved. Keep the following life and business areas in mind as you make your list:

- Family & Relationships
- Financial
- Reputation
- Audience Reach
- Charity & Volunteer Work
- Business Vision
- Spirituality

Then write down where you were then, versus where you are now for each of these areas—and any other areas that are important to you.

You may wonder why life and business are combined. The reason that's so, is that you need to have everything in balance to reach your greatest level of success *with happiness*. If some of the areas are out of balance in your life, sure you might make a lot of money, but will you have those you care about around you to celebrate that success? Or replenish your soul by giving back to others?

“Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance and order and rhythm and harmony.” Thomas Merton

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THEN	NOW

To-Do:

To make this exercise easier, set yourself up effectively right from the start.

1. Keep a word-count calendar. Start with your end objective, then work backwards. If you want to write an 80,000-word novel, break that down into how many months you want that to take, then determine how much you need to write each week, each day. Check in mid-week every week to see if you are on track. If not, plan extra time to catch up so you can make your goal.

Completion of an 80,000-word book would look like this:

$80,000 \div 12 \text{ months} = 6666.6 \text{ words per month} \div \text{writing } 20 \text{ days per month} = 333 \text{ words per day. That's roughly one single-spaced page.}$

$80,000 \div 3 \text{ months} = 26,666 \text{ words per month} \div \text{writing } 30 \text{ days per month} = 888 \text{ words per day, or roughly 2-3 pages, single-spaced.}$

Decide what you want and be diligent so you can reap the rewards.

2. Keep a marketing and promotions' calendar. You want to include things like promotion dates and results, affiliate promotions, guest blog posts, ad campaigns and how they perform, and anything else you'll want to remember or reference later. Be intentional about doing something every day to build your audience.
3. Create a writing and business diary. This can be as simple as a Google calendar or a notebook with a new note for each day or week. Spend a minute or two at the end of every day and jot down anything you might want to remember later. For example, you might make a note about a goal of being published in the *Huffington Post* or getting re-tweeted by Marie Forleo.
4. Create a "yay me" file. Here is where you'll record all the good stuff. Glowing emails from readers, exceptional reviews, and even particularly flattering photos should be saved and pulled out whenever you need a pick-me-up.

There are lots of ways to build this file, but don't be afraid to get creative. A fun scrapbook with plenty of color will lift your spirits every time you see it.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR 'WHY'

Before you can set goals or achieve anything in your business or your life, you have to understand what really drives you. What is it that truly gets you up in the morning when all you want to do is roll over and go back to sleep? What forces you to pick up the phone to call yet another potential client? What keeps you going, even when you want to give up?

Your "why" is personal. It's yours alone, and no two "whys" are exactly alike. More importantly, there's no right or wrong "why."

Perhaps you already know what your why is. Maybe you want to help single moms make a better life for themselves. Maybe you want to earn enough money to travel the world. You might want to start a cat rescue, spend more time with your kids, or go on a mission trip to Africa. Maybe you just want to make a million dollars.

Once you know what drives you, every decision becomes easier, so before you start setting goals, let's spend some time thinking about why you do what you do.

Answer the following questions:

If money and time were of no concern, what would I do with my days?

Looking back at the past 12 months, what events or accomplishments made my heart light up?

YOUR BUSINESS VISION

You started your writing career with a vision in mind. You probably daydreamed about what it would look like when your book was well-received, made an impact, and/or made lots of money.

What did it look like, this dream of yours? How did your ideal days roll out? Where did you spend your downtime?

Chances are, your vision has changed . . . but you probably still have a dream of what you want your writing business—and your life—to look like.

Spend a few minutes and write out (in as much detail as you can) your short and long-term business and life vision.

1 year:

5 years:

GOAL SETTING

Now that you know what you want your business and your life to look like, and more importantly, **why**, it's time to set some goals to help you get there.

When setting your goals, keep the S.M.A.R.T. model in mind. Goals should be:

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Achievable**
- **Results focused**
- **Time-bound**

For example, you might set a goal to earn \$200,000 (specific, measureable and result focused) in 2017 (time-bound). If your earnings from your books in 2016 were \$150,000, then your goal certainly meets the achievable requirement as well, making this a good (SMART) goal.

If you're planning to create a new book or finish one you've started, look at the end-goal. Maybe it's 80,000 words. Break that down into how many words you need to write a day or week to make a specific deadline.

While SMART goals are safe and expected, there's something to be said for dreaming big, too. What if you took, for example, a goal of adding \$50,000 to your income, and followed Grant Cardone's advice and multiplied that by 10?

In *"The 10X Rule: The Only Difference Between Success and Failure"* Cardone makes the case that the only way to really achieve greatness is to dream bigger and push yourself further by setting goals that others might consider unreasonable.

Try setting at least one goal in each of these areas, and don't be afraid to take your initial goal and multiply it by 10:

Family & Relationships

Financial

Spiritual

Charity & Volunteer Work

Book Projects

Book Sales

BREAKING IT DOWN: A YEAR AT A GLANCE

Now that you know what your goals are, it's time to break them down into manageable chunks. It's much easier to think about adding 100 people to your mailing list this week than it is to consider the monumental task of adding 5,000 people in a year's time.

Use the table below to break your big goals into smaller, more manageable pieces. Start with the month you're in now.

YEARLY GOAL	MONTHLY GOAL	WEEKLY GOAL	ACHIEVED

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CREATE DO-ABLE TASKS

Reaching your goals won't just happen. You have to put in the work in order to achieve the things you desire.

You've already broken your goals down into monthly and weekly milestones, so now it's time to **plan the tasks to reach those milestones**. For example, if you set a goal of adding 100 people to your mailing list each week, then you need to drive 500 new people to your page (assuming 1/5th of them actually opt-in and/or buy your book).

It may be that you can add people organically through engagement on Facebook, Instagram, or other social media.

Or you might accomplish this by running paid Facebook ads, sharing your URL on Twitter and LinkedIn, or buying solo ads.

In either case, you'll need to test and track to ensure you're spending and sharing in the correct numbers to reach your goal.

WEEKLY GOAL	TASK TO ACHIEVE	TASK TO ACHIEVE

RESOURCES I NEED

No business—or life—operates in a vacuum. You need help. People, tools and training are all critical to your success. Some examples of necessary resources include:

Business Tools

- Web hosting
- Mailing list manager
- Shopping cart
- Social media presence
- Landing page creator
- Webinar host

Business Training

- Email marketing & list building
- Facebook ads
- Blogging/content marketing
- Technology training

People

- JV Partners and affiliates
- Virtual assistants
- Editors
- Graphic designers
- Video/audio editors

The list above is just to start your thinking, it's not complete. Only you know everything you need.

When you think of your goals and vision, make a note about the resources needed to accomplish those goals. Some of them you likely already have, some you will need to research and add to your current list.

What's missing from my business and life that will help me achieve my goals?

ACCOUNTABILITY & SUPPORT

Aside from the tools and training you'll need to achieve your goals, you'll likely want support and accountability from others as well.

Who will keep you motivated when you just want to give up?

Who will offered needed criticism that's balanced with caring for your success?

Who will share different ideas and perspectives with you to help increase sales?

As a writer and business owner, you need a solid support system to help you get the right things done. These support people might include:

- Your spouse or significant other
- Your business/writing partner (if you have one)
- Your mastermind group
- Your accountability partner
- Your business and/or life coach
- Your writing group
- A knowledgeable coach

Which of these do you currently have? Which do you need? What roles will they fill in your goal setting and business growth?

PERSON	ROLE

A LIVING DOCUMENT

The goals and task lists you've created are only the beginning. You'll continue to add to them as new ideas occur, and old ones turn out not to work (or you hate doing them, or they've lost their importance).

So don't look at any of these as a MUST-do list. Look at them as a CAN-do list instead.

Here's the really important thing, though: ***Do something every day.***

Pick one thing that will move you closer toward your goals each and every day, and once in a while—say once per quarter—revisit your goals and your vision and ask yourself, "Is this still what I really want from life?"

Then make your decisions accordingly.

Whatever your dreams, isn't it time for you to emerge?



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Have questions about anything covered here, or maybe other writing questions? Drop me a note at Linda@ThePublishingCircle.com.

If you'd like me to be your coach, be sure to join the Watch And Launch program!

*"In all you do, BE the blessing."
Linda Stirling*

