

Goal Setting
By James Patino
"Business Consultant for the Creative Soul"

Why fulltimeartist.com ?

It's because I'm a big proponent of goal setting. You have to know where you are going, in order to influence your daily decisions to ensure to ensure that they are in line with your goals. You need a reference point, direction, whatever you want to call it. Everyday, many times per day, the universe presents us with choices. Many of those choices are difficult and require some careful consideration before making them. By having clearly defined goals, you have a decision mechanism in place to help you make the right decisions that will move you closer to your stated goals.

If you think about it, there really are no choices in your past. There are only the decisions that you made and the impact they are having on you, right now. Once you decided to do something, or decided to take a certain action, the "other options" that may have been available to you, immediately disappeared.

That doesn't mean that the "other option" won't re-appear again in your future, it only means that the choice you made was your decision at the time and you've got to live with it. There's nothing you can do about it after the fact, except learn from it. Until someone devises a way to travel back in time to allow you to change your decisions, we have to learn to accept all of the decisions that we've made in our pasts and move forward.

There's no point in feeling sorry for yourself, or in second guessing certain decisions you may have made in the past. The key is to be aware of what you have done, and figure out what to do now! It's critical to try to learn from your experiences, your triumphs and most importantly, your perceived "mistakes."

This may seem a little confusing to some, but the point I'm trying to make it that we make decisions all the time. We make daily decisions about what to do, where to go, what to wear, what to buy, what to paint, etc.

What do you use to base your decisions on?

What do you utilize to ensure that the decisions you make are in your best, long-term interest?

**Do you just wing it? Play it by ear? Do what you feel is right at the time?
Do what feels good?**

Goal Setting is a valuable tool that you can utilize to help with your decision making process. In fact, I feel it is critical to the long-term success of your art business, or any business for that matter.

To me, goal setting is **writing down, clearly defined objectives** for a certain timeframe. I really like the idea of setting annual goals that allow you to set the course for what you plan to achieve in a certain year. You can do monthly goals, bi-annual goals, or 5-year goals, but annual goals are a great place to start.

Writing your goals down is important because it helps to crystallize your thoughts into clear, concise words. It takes what was just an idea, and turns it into a plan of action. I don't believe you need to make a long laundry list of goals that you pull out when you're at the mall and deciding whether or not to buy a pair of sunglasses. I believe you should have a small list of your most important goals for both your personal world and your business world. You should view them often in order to ensure that the decisions you are making are "on track."

The goals you set for your artistic career can vary greatly, depending on where you are in your career and what you feel you're capable of achieving during a certain period of time. Goals should be lofty, yet somewhat realistic. Goals should be clear, not too specific. Give yourself room to grow and challenge yourself.

Example:

I want to be interviewed on Oprah! (too specific)

I want to be interviewed on national television. (better)

Tell the universe what you want, but don't make what you want **too narrow**.

Also, do not focus on HOW you're going to make it happen. I believe the "how" part will become evident as you focus more and more energy on that goal.

Here are some **basic examples** of some artistic goals:

- Develop a body of work for art shows. (Develop two or three bodies of work for simultaneous shows)
- Organize all of my business information (contact lists, artwork, goals, etc.) into a cohesive spreadsheet.
- Get media exposure for my art.
- Donate a work of art to charity.
- Sell a certain amount of artwork. (\$\$\$)
- Attain my own art studio
- Deliver all commissions on time this year

The list of possible goals is infinite and can vary greatly depending on your particular set of circumstances. The key is to establish a set of goals that are in line with your current business environment and where you want your business to go.

During my first full year as manager of Sinclair Stratton Studios, we set 3 goals for the year, and achieved two of them. 67% percent success! Not bad, if you ask me. (The two goals we achieved were 1) developing 3 separate bodies of work in order to have 3 simultaneous shows, and 2) getting a written media article about Sinclair's art). The next year, we set 9 goals for the year. It doesn't matter how many goals you set.

How to get started with Goal Setting

There are numerous books available to give you specifics about goal setting and different tools and techniques you can use. Any one of them would be a worthy investment if you are having difficulty getting into goal setting, but here are some basics:

- Make sure you dedicate a certain **period of time** (several hours is best) to do your goal setting. It's difficult to do this effectively, while watching TV or while you're trying to juggle several other events in your life. You need to concentrate and you need to focus.
- **Write them down!** I cannot stress this enough. Until they are written down, they're just an idea. When they get written down, they become a goal.
- Start off by **brainstorming**. Write down a long list of things that you wish to accomplish during your year. It doesn't matter whether you can do them all or not. Just make a list.
- **Prioritize** your brainstorming list. There are several different methods to prioritize your list.
 - I utilize the "crystal triangle" method that has worked well for me. Basically, if you have a list of 3 goals, you compare 1 versus 2, and select the most important between the two. Then you compare 1 versus 3, and select the most important between those two. And finally, you compare 2 versus 3, and pick the most important between those two. Give each goal a point for how many times it was more important than another goal. You then add up the points that the goal with the most points should be your highest priority goal. You can actually rank all of your brainstorming goals from highest to lowest, utilizing this method.

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- **Select your goals.** Analyze your list of goals and select which goals are the ones that you're going to achieve this year.
- **Display your goals.** The term "out of sight, out of mind" was coined for a reason. I recommend you display your top goals in a location where you will see them on a regular basis. The front page of your business management spreadsheet is a good location. On the wall in your studio is another. Be creative, but the key is to set goals and make them clearly visible to you.
- Last but not least, **work towards your goals.** Here's where your decision making process can really be impacted. We talked earlier about making decisions every day and determining whether or not they are in line with your long-term goals. Well now, you have a set of goals to use as a guide. If your #1 goal is to save enough money to buy art supplies so you can develop a body of work, then maybe it's not the best idea to blow a bunch of money on a cross-country road trip to Vegas. See what I mean?

If you don't know what your goals are, how can you make the decisions to get you there? It's like getting in the car and driving, but having no idea what your destination is. You just drive along, stopping at places that might interest you, but eventually, you realize that you're just driving around.

Do you have an idea of where you want to be? Do you want to be a full time artist? Start by laying down the direction you will take to get there. Start by goal setting. You don't have to know every turn you're going to take along the way, but goal setting will help point your car in the right direction.

What's the bottom line? Focus! You have to focus your thoughts and energy in order to make things happen. The question is, what you focused on? By creating a set of goals for your art business, you will know exactly what to focus on. Aside from your amazing creative talent, focused thought is the single most powerful asset that you can bring to your art business. Focus on your goals and watch them manifest.