

## Goal Setting For Artists

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A few years ago, I felt stuck, and I had a collection so extensive of **unfulfilled resolutions** that just the memory of them makes me blush to this day. They would haunt me from the pages of old journals, calendars and alarms set with the best intention to prompt me into action, but destined forever to be snoozed.

One New Years Day while writing my resolutions on my journal, I realised looking back at me from the page were **the same goals as did for many years before**. It felt like my life was playing out like a grand scale Groundhog day, every year just a slightly different version than the one before, and it dawned on me, if I didn't **do something about it**, I would risk living my life the same way I had lived thus far.

From that time forward, I decided if I were to live my life to the fullest, I would need to **implement a strategy** that allowed me to keep my new year resolutions and **stand up against procrastination**. And since then, my life has drastically **changed for the better**. Changing how I approached my goals brought new possibilities I had never imagined for myself and I have been lucky enough to travel the world, gain new skills I've always wanted and even work my dream job.

#### **We can break down this strategy into a few key steps:**

- **Defining Your Vision** - With a clear vision, we can create goals which align with the future we want.
- **Creating Good Goals** - Build healthy habits and reach your vision by creating progress-based goals which allow you to develop the skills and positive attitudes you need to obtain them.
- **The Perfect Time Frame** - Break down your goals into manageable smaller goals that allow you to make progress sooner.
- **Define Your Resources** - Collect the resources you need now, so there will be less resistance to work on your goals when you need them.
- **Hold Yourself Accountable** - Make sure you stay on task by engaging others to hold you accountable.
- **Reward Your efforts** - Keep motivated and empower yourself by rewarding your efforts for dedicating time to your goals.

Use this strategy, adapt it to help you achieve your goals, and create a way forward to the future you want. Find a way to bring peace to the dreamer inside you so that each year, when you sit down to write your New Years Resolutions, you know that you have the tools readily available to assist you in **bringing those dreams to realisation**.

#### Define your vision

Before we start setting goals, we first need to define **where we want to be and what we will be doing in our future**, creating an idea for the picture of the life we want. It helps to have this image in mind so we can break it down into smaller goals to help focus us towards achieving it.

When you dream of your future, visualise it as a tapestry, and each of the threads used to create it as a goal we set for ourselves. And even though the chaos of living may influence the final image, if our threads are strong and we focus on how we go about weaving them, we can always produce a **beautiful and lasting future of which to be proud**.

Ask yourself the question of **what do I truly want, and why?** Create a list of your wants, defining your vision for yourself and your future. Do you want to be able to draw great anatomy? Then write that down.

Take your time to write down each of these but also importantly the reason you want to. After all, the 'why' is what will keep you going and will provide you with the necessary energy you need daily.

When you think about the reasons for each of the accomplishments you want in your vision, make sure they are **true to you** and not someone else. It's all too easy to compare ourselves to others and base what we want on what someone already has. Use others as inspiration, but look **inside yourself and be honest to who you are.**

### Creating Good Goals

As I have briefly mentioned in my [last blog post](#), you want to **make sure most of your goals are process-based and not outcome-based.**

#### **Some process-based goal for artists could be:**

- Do my best to draw at least 20 minutes every day.
- Study for one hour to improve my skills every weekend.
- Keep on me a small sketchbook to jot down ideas.
- Keep a blog or social media account consistently.

#### **What Are Process-Based Goals?**

Process-based goals may not seem glamorous, but they **focus you on the journey** and not necessarily what you're trying to achieve in the end. Having goals like this allows you to **prioritise the effort you make** and allows yourself some flexibility while continuously helping you move forward. They also **help you build self-confidence** because they are much easier to stay consistent with, and they don't require you to obtain things outside of your control to achieve them. By having more of these goals, you will **build healthy and positive habits**, helping you develop the necessary skills and practice needed for your vision.

#### **What an outcome-based goal might look like:**

- Get featured by a specific company.
- Land a licensing contract with one particular company.
- Draw one hundred new art pieces this year.
- Get 100k followers on social media.

#### **Outcome-Based Goals**

Outcome-based goals **can be exciting**, and these are by far the **most common goals** you will see people make during an outburst of inspiration. But instead of having the flexibility and control of process-based goals, these can be quite rigid. With specific outcome-based goals, you will also find that there can be a level of **luck involved** to achieve them, further making it **based on chance, rather than your effort.**

Imagine working hard for a year on your art portfolio and regularly posting on social media, yet you missed that little bit of luck needed to be seen by the right person at the right time. How do you think that would make you feel? You would probably begin to feel like all of that work was for nothing, and maybe what you're creating is not good enough, but it's not true, and you were just unlucky. The danger with outcome-based goals is that you can put yourself down, and when your willpower depletes you could give up.

Even though we want to avoid goals outside our control, it can be great to have a couple of healthy outcome-based goals because they can keep you excited, motivated and add direction. But beware that they are there to help your vision and if they do start to demotivate you, you need to remind yourself that you are doing your part and the rest is sometimes not up to you.

### Break Down Your Goals

**Break down your goals into weekly and daily tasks.** When setting big and challenging goals for myself, I always make sure to **break them down** into their smallest possible parts, so small that I can **take action on them within a day**, an hour or sometimes minutes. By taking small actions each day, you help **create a routine** for yourself and soon build good habits. Using cues like "after I make the bed, I will stretch", you will begin to crave the desire to stretch every time you make the bed, and it will start to feel more natural and effortless to do so. Another great thing you can do with cues is to stack habits together to progress towards your goals. Maybe after you stretch, you might study anatomy, and after you study anatomy, you go for a walk. Your body and mind will crave to do these tasks by having these routines, but you need to keep consistent to make the most out of them.

Another habit that has helped me immensely is to **write down daily to do's** first thing in the morning or the night before. However, when I do this, I always write down what is **achievable in one day** by being realistic, making room for **rest and self-care**. Going back to the idea of stacking your habits together, if you struggle to keep a to-do list you can stack this onto something you really want to do to help you stick to it, for example, "After I have a tea break, I will tick off my to-do list and write a note about what I studied".

### Define your resources

Once we have written down our goals and broken them down into more manageable parts, we want to make them as easy as possible for us to do, and one of the best ways to do that is by defining your resources like **preparing yourself and your workplace in advance**. The less resistance there is in doing a task, the more likely you are to do it, and the less likely you are to do something which is 'easier' to do, like opening your phone and browsing endlessly through social media. So make sure your workspace is clean and set up for when you want to work.

### Write Down Any Materials Or Items Needed For Your Goal

If you want to study anatomy but don't have access to sketchpads, pencils or courses, then you need to purchase these. Please don't hold it off, but have the items in front of you and **ready to be used**. However, there is a danger for some people always to need something before they get started, and if you are one of these people, you need to write a **good-enough list** which is realistic for your budget. On the other hand, if you are someone to put off purchasing new items out of guilt, you need to realise that you must **invest in yourself to progress and grow**.

### Collect Important Research and Resource Material

When improving new skills, you want to have time dedicated to collecting and researching the information you need. Having it already prepared means that when you sit down to do your tasks each day, everything is already in front of you and ready to be used, so **there won't be any doubts** on what to do that could slow you down.

### Hold yourself accountable

When it comes to keeping ourselves accountable, we're used to having it come from parents, teachers and others who tell us what we should be doing and giving us in trouble for not doing it. However, when it comes to maintaining accountability **for our own goals**, there is **no one to give us deadlines** or make sure we do the work.

If you want to find a way to steadily act on your goals, you will want to **find some way of making it unpleasant** if you don't, not a punishment but something that could be painful to you. There are many ways we can come about doing this, and here are some examples:

- **Family and Friends** - By telling our family and friends what we are doing and having them on board, we can get them to keep us accountable for our goals. Whether that is reminding us or bugging us, they're sure to keep you at it!
- **Charity Donation** - Put aside money, an amount which is not easy for you to let go but not a financial burden, and if you don't keep working at your goal, you have to donate it to a charity.
- **Social Promise** - If you have a YouTube channel, Instagram or another social community, make a promise to them and have them keep you accountable to hold it.
- **Accountability Buddy** - Having someone who also shares your goal is a remarkable thing because you can keep each other accountable for continuing to make progress, and help each other during difficult times.

Reward your effort and have fun

Keeping ourselves accountable isn't the only thing we can do to keep us working on our goals, but we can also **reward the actions we take**. When working on long term goals, we can lose ourselves in the small tasks because the big reward of completing it is far off into the future.

A way to get around this is by rewarding our efforts each day and **building something to look forward to**. After you do all of your study for a day, why not take a relaxing bath you've been wanting. Maybe, after each time you post a new art piece, you can transfer money over to your savings account for **something you can't wait to have**.

Remember that everything worth doing requires effort and dedication. Still, it **should also feel rewarding and empowering**, and by keeping it fun and giving back to yourself, you can enjoy the journey while staying true to your goals.

In Conclusion

By first defining your ideal future, you can create **meaningful goals** that will help bring you happiness and keep you motivated. And by breaking these down into **manageable parts**, you can take actionable steps more easily and build **good habits** to keep at them. Next, you want to collect all the resources you need early on, so there will be **less resistance** to sit down and work on your goals daily. And by finding ways to **keep yourself accountable** through people and promises you have to keep, you can pressure yourself to accomplish them. Lastly, empower yourself and **have more fun** by finding ways to **reward your dedication**.

Hopefully, after reading this blog, you feel more ready to define goals that will help you progress with your artwork through this year and beyond. In next month's blog post, we will dive into how we can create great habits for artists, perfect for those of us who are recently getting back to drawing or struggling to keep consistent.