

# The Goal-Oriented Writer:

How To Define And Organize Your Writing Goals!

by

The Writer's Relief Staff

**WRITER'S RELIEF** EST.  
AUTHOR'S SUBMISSION SERVICE 1994

## Introduction

It can be hard to keep on top of your writing goals. Even professional, full-time authors can find it difficult to stay focused and on track. Throw in a 40-hour work week, kids, community obligations, etc., and the journey to writing success can feel interminable, disorganized, and inefficient.

Staying organized about your writing goals could actually help you become a better writer. Writer and choreographer Twyla Tharp tells us:

***Creativity is a habit, and the best creativity is a result of good work habits.***

We recommend you print out the worksheet/calendar pages in this booklet so that you can write in your goals, comments, and answers. There are also many wonderful links on these pages as well—so be sure to take advantage of them.

While we might have built this workbook out into a full-length book, our goal is to give you a lot of bang for your buck with as little fluff as possible. If you're reading this book, we know you've got things to do!

We hope this workbook helps you establish the habits that will make you a more creative and efficient writer and that it offers you a strong starting point to help you maximize your writing time and reach your goals!

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Take a close look at your day, and see what you'll be able to accomplish with the time you have. Once you have a clear picture of what you can reasonably do on a day-to-day basis, then it's time to move on to identifying your larger goals.

**PART TWO: Goals For The Long Haul** **page 13**

Now that you know what you can do with your daily hours, it's time to set those big (and sometimes intimidating) goals that you know you can achieve!

## PART ONE

### Identify Your Usable Daily Hours

Use the space below to record (in general) the blocks of available time for writing and creative efforts.

MONDAY:

TUESDAY:

WEDNESDAY:

THURSDAY:

FRIDAY:

SATURDAY:

SUNDAY:

**OTHER NOTES:**

Time of day I do my best writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of day I feel least energized: \_\_\_\_\_

Longest block of time available for creativity: \_\_\_\_\_

Short blocks of time (15 mins or less) I can use for editing, submission research and prep, etc.:


## More Self-Assessment Questions

Explore the relationship between your creativity and your productivity. If you aren't certain of the answers, don't worry! Nobody will be grading this test. And you can always change your answers later. The important thing is becoming more aware of your own creative process.

**Q: In general, how many pages do you write per hour when you're writing a first draft?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: How many pages can you edit per hour (be sure you budget for pages that require massive overhauls and pages that need little to no work whatsoever)?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: How many hours per week do you need to read in your chosen genre in order to stay current and engaged? (Or, how many pages can you read per hour?)**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: How many hours per week do you need to dedicate to researching your subject?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: How many hours do you need to spend in "mental free time," journaling to let yourself explore new ideas and jot down thoughts that you might use now or later on?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: On a scale of one to ten, how important is it to you to keep your work circulating and being considered for publication?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q: Apart from your writing and reading hours, how much time per week do you dedicate toward advancing your craft by attending a writing group, conference, or classes?**

A: \_\_\_\_\_

## Triage: The Habit Of Delegating

If you're short on time, it means you might need to brush up on your delegating skills. Here are some things you can do to make more time in your life for writing:

**Make a list.** What things do YOU do that your friends and family could *help* you do? Chores? Carpooling? Making dinner? Once you have your list...

**Ask family members for help with everyday tasks,** especially if you've been picking up a lot of slack. Be very clear about what you need: Create charts and hang them on the fridge or bedroom doors. Offer rewards (and lots of gratitude) for tasks that get done.

**Write things down.** When you have a clear and organized calendar and to-do list, it's easier to free up brain space for creativity. Some people prefer a written journal. Google and other companies offer free calendars that allow you to set reminders (via emails, pop-ups, or text messages) and make to-do lists.

**Use technology to your advantage.** Are there tasks in your life that you can automate or ask machines to do for you?

Bill paying? Car washing? Vacuuming (hey, Roomba, we're looking at you)? Robots and apps can do some pretty amazing things these days to save you time.

**Look into [Writer's Relief](#).** Our submission assistance program just might be the perfect thing for you. You do the writing; we do the hard, time-consuming work of submitting your writing to the right literary agents (for books) or editors of lit mags (for short prose and poems). We take on the burden of making submissions and keeping your work circulating so you don't have to.

## Words from a Writer's Relief client...

*When I made the decision to write full-time, I had no idea how consuming the submission process would be. I struggled for several years trying to find the balance between writing, submitting, and living an already full life.*

*My Writer's Relief team keeps me motivated and on target. The quality of my Writer's Relief team's editing services, coupled with their uncanny ability to locate just the right journal for my stories, never ceases to amaze.*

*Writer's Relief is a gift I give to myself and my writing. A gift that never disappoints. Thank you, Writer's Relief.*  
—Mary Bess Dunn

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## Make Technology Work For You

Have a smartphone?

There are many fantastic free or low-cost apps out there that can turn your smartphone into an efficiency-inducing machine.

If you're the type of person who suspects you may not actually be as focused and efficient with your time as you *think* you are, then check out the productivity apps available for your phone.

### Droid phones:

<https://play.google.com/>

### iPhones:

<http://www.apple.com/iphone/from-the-app-store/>

### Windows phones:

<http://www.windowsphone.com/en-us/store/featured-apps>

Many apps will allow you to:

- Track exactly how much time you spend on various tasks for each day
- Create reports so you can see where your time goes
- Sync your calendars
- Much more

If using your phone isn't an option, there are many "time clock" programs out there for you to use, download, and buy for your home PC, like [RescueTime](#).

Getting organized isn't just about *thinking* you're getting organized; it's about seeing the proof!

**Read on to discover our worksheets and calendars for your writing goals!**

## A Word About Defining Your Daily Goals

Once you have identified your usable writing hours (or minutes), it's time to take steps in order to keep yourself on track.

When setting out to create a day-to-day writing schedule that keeps you on track, remember that it's okay to make some generalizations. The muse can be fickle, and if you lock yourself into a certain project and refuse to entertain thoughts of another project, then you might inadvertently end up with a case of writer's block.

If you know an immediate goal is to work toward finishing a specific short story, then you might want to define a goal as:

*Write three pages of "Short Story Title" today*

If you're not sure what you'd like to work on, but you know you want to be moving forward, then you might want to define a goal as:

*Write five pages between 9–11 p.m. today*

### **AND REMEMBER...**

Be sure to include time in your writing schedule for non-writing related tasks, such as

- Researching markets for a short story
- Writing or mailing query letters
- Blogging
- Updating text on your author website
- Making email submissions (or going to the post office to mail submissions)

These administrative tasks are sometimes what separates well-known writers from writers that no one's ever heard of. So find a balance that works for you.

### **Be Accountable**

Consider asking your friends and family (and social networking pals) to hold you accountable. Maybe your daughter's/husband's/wife's job is to ask you, every day, "Did you write today?" If you know the question is coming, you may be more inclined to stay on track. Post on your favorite social network when you meet your goals for the day (and if you didn't meet your goals, just let it go).

## Daily Success Chart

On the next page, you'll find a daily chart to help you identify your goals and then track when you've met them. We recommend you post this chart in your office or near your writing space. Or if you dare, post it where your family/visitors can see—and motivate others by demonstrating how you stick to your goals. (Ulterior motive alert: If you show you're taking your work seriously, others may be more likely to respect your writing time—if they're not already.)

Here's an example of how to use our chart.

DATE: January 5

GOAL	Success?	Actual
Write for 2 hrs from 6-8 a.m.	YES!	
15 mins per day (between 7-8 p.m.) to research submission guidelines/make submissions		5 mins
Post 3 tweets	YES!	
Post on Facebook		none
Read for 30 mins before bed	YES! I read for 45 mins!	
Write 3 pages in my journal		Wrote 1 page











## PART TWO

### Thinking Big: Long-Term Goals

While they say a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, we think it helps to have an idea of where you're going. Having a few "big" goals can help keep you moving along when your daily motivation loses steam.

Putting your goals on a calendar will help you keep focused on them. Every three months, review your calendar of goals. You'll be surprised at how many of them you meet!

#### Begin to think about your larger goals:

What are some things that you think you could accomplish **in a span of three months?**

- Finish \_\_\_\_\_ pages
- Edit \_\_\_\_\_ pages
- Finish my \_\_\_\_\_ (project)
- Finish my \_\_\_\_\_ (project)
- Finish my \_\_\_\_\_ (project)
- Submit \_\_\_\_\_ (a story, poem, or book) to \_\_\_\_\_ (# of venues/agents/markets).
- Submit \_\_\_\_\_ (a story, poem, or book) to \_\_\_\_\_ (# of venues/agents/markets).
- Submit \_\_\_\_\_ (a story, poem, or book) to \_\_\_\_\_ (# of venues/agents/markets).
- Create my author website with the URL \_\_\_\_\_
- Design and print promotional items, like \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_
- Gain \_\_\_\_\_ friends/followers on \_\_\_\_\_ (social network name)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Get Ready To Pat Yourself On The Back!

### Step One

Now that you've got a clear picture of your big goals, let's think about how you can keep moving toward them.

Write your big goals for the next three months on the calendar below and post it on your wall. Your quarterly calendar will help you pace yourself from day to day.

You may want your goals to repeat each quarter—in which case, you can fill out a year's worth of goals right now. Or you may want your goals to change every quarter (in which case, only fill out one-quarter of the charts below at a time).

### Step Two

Plan your victory celebrations in advance, and you may be more likely to actually enjoy them!

Positive reinforcement is powerful! Here are some examples of rewards to help get you going. You can create a series of "smaller" rewards for each individual goal. Or you can create one BIG reward for meeting a series of goals.

NOTE: We don't recommend negative reinforcements. If you miss a deadline, don't beat yourself up over it. It happens to the best of us, to ALL of us. Just shake it off and move on.

QUARTERLY GOAL	REWARD
<i>Query 25 literary agents</i>	<i>A long soak in the tub</i>
<i>Write 150 pages of first draft</i>	<i>I can go out to a dinner with my _____</i>

QUARTERLY GOAL	REWARD
<i>Make 50 submissions*</i>	<i>See below</i>
<i>Jot down notes for the planning stages of my <a href="#">author website</a></i>	<i>See below</i>
<i>Write a new short story</i>	<i>See below</i>
<i>Go to a writing conference</i>	<i>When I achieve all these goals, I will buy myself tickets to that Broadway show I've been wanting to see</i>

\*NOTE: Clients of [Writer's Relief](#) benefit from 25 submissions made on their behalf every two months...and they don't have to lift a finger. We take on as much or as little of the submission process as they like.











**QUARTER 4** (October, November, December):

GOAL	Success/Date	Actual/Date

**More Tips:**

**Did you know you can integrate your goals/rewards in your computer’s calendar program?** If you’re using Outlook or Google calendar, you can move your goals from these pages to your calendar. Set reminders, mini-goals, and more!

**Are you a visual person?** Consider creating images that represent your goals. Cut out images from magazines, hunt royalty-free art sites on the Web, or get out your colored pencils. Once you have amassed your images, hang them in a collage on your wall in a vision board or dream board. Not only will you have beautiful representations of your hopes and aspirations, but you’ll also have great, unique art! Plus, once you’ve achieved your goals, you’ll have a “trophy” that just goes to show you can do anything if you put your mind to it.

## Stay Motivated!

Choose your favorite inspirational quotes to post where they can remind you to stay focused!  
Frame them, embellish them, make them your own.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.”

—Aristotle

“It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, ‘Always do what you are afraid to do.’”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

“We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery, guided each by a private chart, of which there is no duplicate. The world is all gates, all opportunities.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The best way out is always through.”

—Robert Frost

“To gain your own voice, you have to forget about having it heard.”

—Allen Ginsberg

“Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.”

—Samuel Johnson

“Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.”

—George S. Patton

“Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking.”

—William B. Sprague

“Seek the lofty by reading, hearing and seeing great work at some moment every day.”

—Thornton Wilder

## Free Resources from the Writer's Relief Website

Please visit the free [Publishing Tool Kits](#) on our site for more great leads, tips, and information!

### Words of Encouragement For Writers

[Instant Encouragement: Affirmations For Creative Writers—And How To Use Them](#)

[Make This Powerful Promise To Yourself—And Learn To Stay Motivated](#)

[Three Ways To Make The Power Of Gratitude Work For Writers](#)

### Motivation For Writers: Positive Thinking

[Stay Inspired: How To Maintain A Positive Outlook For Your Submission Process](#)

[Writer's Block Emergency Kit: Prepare To Survive And Succeed](#)

[Writers: How A Little Patience Goes A Long Way Toward Success](#)

[Inspiration Alert! Raising Your Expectations For Success In Publishing](#)

[5 Ways To Send Guilt A Big Fat Rejection Letter](#)

[5 Biggest Obstacles To Publishing Success \(And Encouragement To Overcome Them\)](#)

### Motivation: Going The Distance

[Never Too Old To Write](#)

[A Few Short Minutes Of Motivation: Writing Every Day](#)

[Five Signs You May Be Sabotaging Your Writing Career](#)

[Wasting Time: Procrastination Problems For Writers](#)

[Jealousy And Writers: Tips To Beat The Green-Eyed Monster](#)

[Procrastination: Don't Put Off Dealing With](#)

[It](#)

### Inspiration For Writers: Great Idea!

[Do You Dream In Paragraphs?](#)

[Writers: What To Do When You Get Stuck](#)

[Journaling For Inspiration](#)

[Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone And Become A Better Writer!](#)

### Further Reading

*Bang the Keys: Four Steps to a Lifelong Writing Practice* by Jill Dearman

*The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life* by Twyla Tharp

*Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity* by Josh Linkner

*Ignore Everybody: and 39 Other Keys to Creativity* by Hugh MacLeod

*Time Management Tips: 101 Best Ways to Manage Your Time* by Lucas McCain

## About Writer's Relief

[Writer's Relief](#) was started in 1994 to help creative writers make well-targeted, professional submissions to literary agents and editors. We are not a literary agency, publisher, publicist, self-publisher, or marketing company.

We help creative writers get published by targeting their poems, essays, short stories, and books to the best-suited literary agents or editors of literary journals.

We can help you get published. We will:

- Identify the best literary agents for your book manuscript. Literary agents are key to publishing your novel, memoir, or nonfiction book.
- Identify the best literary journals for your poetry, short story, or personal essay.
- Create your cover or query letters.
- Proofread and format your submissions.
- Develop strategies that get literary agents and editors excited about your writing.
- Make more time for you to write without sacrificing the quality and efficiency of your submissions.
- Help you get published more often in reputable markets.

**WATCH THIS  
VIDEO TO LEARN  
WHAT WE DO.**



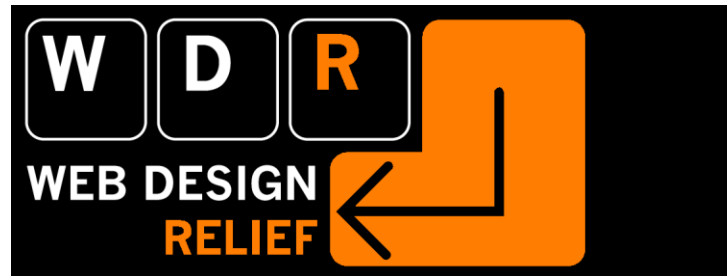
If you barely have enough time to write—let alone get published—check us out!

Publishing a novel, short story, essay, or group of poems can be difficult. We're here to save you TIME and FRUSTRATION. We want to help you get published!

Keep writing!

Ronnie Smith  
and the [Writer's Relief](#) staff

P.S. Our site offers many pages of totally free resources for creative writers—with tips, strategies, and publishing leads that you can use! [Subscribe to Submit Write Now!](#) if you want free publishing leads delivered to your inbox once a week! Get published using our submission strategies!



### Ten Reasons We're The BEST Author Website Service For Writers

**10. POV.** [Web Design Relief](#) is a subsidiary of Writer's Relief, which is an author's submission service. We've been helping authors navigate the choppy waters of the publishing industry since 1994. In other words, we've got perspective that other companies don't. And we're at your service.

**9. Strategy.** We know what energizes agents, editors, readers, and fans.

**8. Pride.** We don't outsource. Made in the USA!

**7. Size.** We're the "Goldilocks" of Web design—not too big or too small.

**6. Value.** We offer the best value for author Web design. We've done our research, and we **know** you won't find a better author website service for a better price. Of course, you can (and should) do some research on our competitors. And once you've ruled out the bargain-basement website factories and the expensive "name brand" designers, we'll still be here. Doing our thing.

**5. Independence.** We won't hold your website hostage. We give you tools to make changes to your site.

**4. Maintenance.** We don't just offer hosting: We offer a [Hosting Care Package](#).

**3. Speed.** We have a quick turnaround time.

**2. Crossover.** Web Design Relief clients who are also Writer's Relief clients enjoy crossover benefits.

**1. Our people.** In high school, we were the grammar nerds, the computer geeks, the drama club thespians, the story-loving tale-blazers who were jotting poems in our algebra notebooks, the optimists who organized rallies for equal rights and endangered frogs, the book lovers who were still in the library when they shut off the lights. We are still those people. We love writers because we are writers. You'll find kindred spirits here—and great customer service at a great price.

**[Learn more about Web Design Relief!](#)**