



JANICE THOMPSON, AUTHOR

# In the Beginning, the Writer Set Goals

 0 Comments



*You must have long-range goals to keep you from being frustrated by short- range*

*failures.*

Charles C. Noble

When you think about the word goals, what comes to mind? Daily word count? Number of chapters completed in a month? A completion date? As I pondered this word, I found myself thinking about the goals for my career as a novelist. I came up with an acronym (G.O.A.L.S.), which I hope you will find helpful. Goal setting for novelists doesn't have to be hard. In fact, it can be fun!

## G: Grab Hold of the Dream

Novelists are usually dreamers. We have all sorts of grandiose plans. There's nothing wrong with being a dreamer. Dreamers are achievers. And trust me when I say that most novelists are hard-working people, some of the hardest working folks I've ever met, in fact. Author success mindset will take you far!

So, what about you? Do you have dreams that keep you up at night? Do you long to see your novel on bookstore shelves? Are you hoping to garner the acclaim of national reviewers? Are you aspiring to earn "the big bucks" with your writing, speaking or teaching skills? Are you hoping to get your story out on the page, even if you're not sure what's coming next?

You are not alone. Thousands—if not millions—have walked this road before you. If you could poll them all, the resounding message would likely be this: "Acknowledge the dream. Go for it!"

I would suggest you make it real by writing it down. Journal about it. Latch onto it and don't let go. Don't give room to the dream-snatchers. You have nothing to

apologize for. Most successful entrepreneurs started out as starry-eyed dreamers.

## **O: Own the Responsibilities**

Writing is a business and you have to think like a businessperson if you're going to succeed. As with all new businesses, there will be risks. However, there's also money to be made, and the desire/need to earn that extra income often outweighs any risks.

If you're thinking about diving in, recognize that you've got to be strategic, and you've got to work with your personality, your body clock and your financial needs. Don't lock yourself into a deadline or pace that doesn't suit you. Move forward with [direction and purpose](#). Don't let anything catch you off-guard.

## **A: Accept the Challenges**

Some writers have a skewed idea of what their life will be like as a writer. They anticipate glorious days of pouring out imaginative and life-changing stories, and fantastically large paychecks arriving in the mail. There really will be amazing moments, but you're likely to face some challenging days, as well. Maybe you've blocked out four hours to write, and your daughter gets sick and has to go to the doctor. Or maybe you've spent the morning working on a particular chapter, only to find out your characters want to move in a completely different direction.

Things don't always go as planned, my friend. So many of life's complicated situations are beyond our control. One thing we can control is how we react to the challenges we face. We can curl up under the covers or we can lift our heads and plow forward. Choose to lift your head and your heart.

## **L: Listen Up!**

As a novelist, you're going to come to many forks in the road. How will you know which way to turn? Perhaps you're offered a book deal that seems out of this world. .but something about it doesn't feel right. Do you follow the trail toward possible fortune and fame, or follow that nudging from within?

Maybe you want to "[brand](#)" yourself, but can't figure out which way to go. How do you decide? If you label yourself now, can you change it up later? Will your readers forgive you? When you reach those inevitable forks in the road, quiet the voices around you and tune in to that still, small voice inside.

## **S: Stay the Course**

Writers tend to be a little schizophrenic. They're always changing their minds. One day they want to write a historical, the next they're off on a tangent, writing a cozy mystery. One day they're determined to earn a living with their writing, the next they're in a funk, ready to toss the laptop out the window.

**A few "don'ts" to consider as you set out to "do" what you've been called to do.**

Don't give up! Don't toss that novel idea just yet. Don't get distressed when things don't go your way. Don't eat yourself up with worry when you can't figure out what's around the bend. Just stay the course. Keep on keepin' on. Set those G.O.A.L.S., writers. Strategize. Oh, what a ride this is going to be!

**By JThompson**  
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