



Dream of Travel Writing

Annual Review Part 5: Mapping Out Your Step-by-Step Plan for 2018 Success

Hey, guys. So today we're going to be talking about creating your plan for the year ahead. So if you're just joining us, make sure you grab that worksheet.

Today we are gonna get really focused on our activity because we've spent a lot of weeks doing the groundwork for this moment, right? We've talked about why people get stuck specifically in travel writing and freelance travel writing. We've talked about all the different road blocks that can come up. We've talked about how to pull together the numbers and the data points from your past year. And we've talked about how to look through that information and put together a list for your self of what strengths you have going into the year ahead, as well as what you need to look out for. We've talked about how to think consciously and holistically about what you have going on in your life and what needs you really have from your freelance writing to set a course for yourself for the year ahead. And now we're into the actual task bit of it.

So a few of the things that we're gonna do today, like I said, we're gonna be really focused on the exercise. And I want to get through as many folks as we can. So I actually changed the schedule around a bit.

Originally, I had one that I had done a few years ago when I was just straight freelance writing. And I walked through how I put it together and then talked about what didn't work out. And we can totally talk about that as well, but as I mentioned, I want to be able to get through as many of you guys live because I think seeing me go through it with those of you that are in these different circumstances, which in many ways touch on pieces of each of your freelance lives is really the best way to see it.

And I've actually got a blog post that I'm working on about this, but it's really not impossible, but it can be hard to learn just from somebody telling you the right way to do something. By the way, I see we've got some new folks joining us. If you're just joining, make sure to download the file that we're gonna be using today. And if you can, somebody printed it. That's a great thing to do. Otherwise, just recreate it for yourself on paper or you can do it in PowerPoint, as I did.

So as I was saying, it can be really hard to learn the best way to do something just by hearing it. You may have heard in the past this idea of learn it, do it, teach it, which is used in medical school quite a bit. And you might see this, if you watch "Grey's Anatomy" or some shows like this, but we really learn best by doing, of course, but does it really mean that we need to make all of the possible mistakes to find the best path? No, but when somebody just tells you



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the right way to do it, you're not always gonna do it right the first time around. I can tell you until I'm blue in the face that if you want to get more work, you need to send pitches.

It's not just gonna come to you, but that doesn't mean that you guys are all gonna run out on Tuesday, January 2, and send 50 pitches that week. So one of the best ways that I've seen, besides me just telling you and besides you doing it yourself, is to see what other people do and to see how things affect other people. So that's one of the reasons that I've chosen a specific range of folks to workshop their...your plans today. And then we'll do whichever ones after that, that we have time for. So we're gonna walk through the process.

I've got three that I've put together that we're gonna work on. And I specifically am not doing the slides in the slide viewer this week. I'm doing it so I'm screen sharing with you because I'm gonna be typing things in as we go along. And part of the reason that I wanted you guys to have that sheet is so that you can see the January, February, and the setup on the side there because I know that the text is gonna get a little bit small as we go into those slides.

So like I said, I've got three queued up. And we're gonna do more as time allows, but first let's talk about what we're doing.

So first and foremost, because this is really important for what we're doing right now, how do you guys feel... And tell me this in the chat box. This is a chime-in situation. At this moment today on December 21st with, you know, 10 days left in 2017, how are you feeling about the prospect of 2018? How are you feeling about the fact that January is coming? You know, people keep using the "Game of Thrones" quote, "Winter is coming," but right now, I feel like this concept of January coming is freaking a lot of people out. I had one coaching call today where the person was like so gung-ho about working for the next couple weeks to get so ready on January 2nd to hit the ground running, but I have had other calls where folks were just like literally the word used was an aversion to planning her year.

And this is totally not just okay, but important to take note of, how you feel going into the year ahead because what we're doing today and what we're gonna talk about is setting out that plan. And whether you feel an aversion to planning like this person that I had mentioned or you just are feeling really not ready for the year ahead, that tenor of how you approach, obviously, this process that we're gonna do today and this call. And if you didn't feel like talking about it today, you just catch the replay, of course, but the feelings that you have



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going into it are really important to keep in mind because sometimes they're temporary, but sometimes they're larger.

We've got a couple people chiming in, but I'd love to hear from more of you about how you're feeling right now so I can get a sense of the temperature in the room, so to say, but it's really important to keep this in mind because sometimes those feelings... And we talked about this all the way back in the first webinar in this series, sometimes those feelings are belaying a very important thing going on underneath. The very first thing that we're gonna look at as we go through and start to set out your year ahead in a more mapping oriented way is gonna be those things that are already there, those, you know, rocks in the stream that we just can't get around, that we need to know that we can go through them. And we need to make sure that we are working around them consciously. We need to know about those things. And sometimes those things are just that you are burnt out. This is gonna be the case with actually several of the examples that I have. And we all get burnt out for different reasons. And so if you just feel kind of vaguely burnt out right now, let's look at the things.

We've got a lot of positivity. Awesome. Like I said, if you weren't interested in talking about this right now, you'll probably just wait for the replay. I know the elections were a big thing for a lot of folks. And it was interesting because, obviously, the elections took place in November, but, you know, I think the feeling was different in January. And I think the feeling's gonna be different this January, after the tax bill is passed, which even a lot of Republicans I know are not very excited about.

And for those of you who aren't in America, maybe you have your own opinions about a depression about the American system, as I know many folks do, or maybe you just don't care, but I went to a writing conference in January. And I swear to God, every single session, all people could talk about was how the elections had impacted their creativity. And while it's certainly important to acknowledge, like I said, feeling overwhelmed or feeling burnt out, it's also important to pinpoint the cause of that because when I was at this conference, I really felt like a lot of people were using this as a crutch.

They weren't necessarily people that would have a high production. A lot of these were essayists and novelists and things like this. They weren't necessarily people that would be having a high production right now anyway.

And they were almost using this as an excuse whereas it might be more that the issue is that rather than a malaise that was affecting their ability to be creative, they were actually spending more time on social media and more time checking the news or generally doing



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other things that weren't working. And that was what was actually affecting their production, but in terms of being burnt out, as I said, you'll see in several of these examples that we're gonna look at today, you're gonna see a couple different things that can contribute to being burnt out.

And when I say things, I mean, obviously, life experiences, life circumstances, but also things going on in your freelancing and your freelance business. And the thing here is to notice when they are things that you can do something about and when they are things that you can't. For instance, I am so stressed out right now in going into the end of the year that I could throw up, but I know that it's because I'm leaving for India on Saturday. And every time I go to India, I get sick. I throw my back out. We have our own apartment. It's not like I'm staying in a super Third World situation. It just seems like everything always happens. So I know that I am stressed out about this unknown, this thing that I can't put my finger on. Something legitimately might happen every time I go. I could get malaria. You never know. And so there's something that is making me nervous about getting a good start to the year, which it's actually there.

All of these things are a possibility, but sometimes people are just stressed out by the fact that time has passed. And so as we go into this process, make sure that you take a minute to notice, to say, "January 1st is in less than two weeks," to yourself and see how that makes you feel. And make sure that you can separate that or incorporate it into the plan that we're making so that we can make sure that your plan is gonna be one that takes into account those fears or that excitement because don't forget, excitement has the same issue. Excitement, just like fear, is also fleeting and can also be connected to different things.

You might be excited right now because you just love Christmas music. And two and a half months of Christmas music is just not enough for you or you might be excited right now because you finally started getting your pitches out, whether they are letters of introduction to trade magazines, pitches to print magazines, or pitches to companies. You might just be on this huge high right now of getting your first responses to pitches. Whatever those feelings are, make sure that you, you know, take a moment and mentally catalog them as we go into this.

So I'm just gonna take one second to go through this, to go through what you guys said. Yeah, I know it can be really overwhelming, if you're trying to pull a lot of things together. Yeah, and Ingrid's actually one of the ones we're gonna be sharing today. She's got some great notes on that. Great. Great. So for those of you... A quick survey in the chat box. How many of you have either caught with me last week... I recognize some of the names, but



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some names are new. How many of you have caught last week the webinar with me or in the replay? Let me know here in the chat box, because I've got for those of you who didn't catch the webinar last week, I've got a little important bit of last week's webinar that I wanted to make sure those of you who didn't get it, get a chance to engage with.

So again, let me know if you haven't already, if you caught the webinar last week, which was the one on getting clarity on the year ahead. Oops. And these words that I'm putting in the chat box now, if you did not already, if you didn't catch last week's webinar or you didn't already do this exercise, the words that I've put in the chat box, these are meant to help you pick some guiding principles. You can think of them as principles that guide your decision making.

You can think of them as themes for the year. You can think of them as, you know, reactions to things that didn't go well last year that you want to work on, whatever they are, but these words that I've put in the chat box, you want to pick three of these. And these principles are gonna help us in terms of setting our path for the year ahead. So that's what those are.

So this week, we are gonna be doing something, like I said, with that handout that I gave you. I can see a few more folks have joined us. So if you're joining us late, make sure you grab that handout that we had, which looks like this. And you can either download it and print it. Some folks have printed it because they have handy printers at their desks. You can recreate it for yourself in PowerPoint the way I did it. It's just 13 columns wide by 4 rows tall or you can just draw yourself a little, you know, graph on your own piece of paper or perhaps you have a planner that you can do this in. I personally like to do it not in my planner because you often kinda like go through and make some changes as you're working on it, as you'll see when we go through.

And I like to put the final thing in my planner, but this is what we're gonna be working with. So if you don't already have this up, keep this up so that as I refer back to it from other slides, you know what we're talking about.

The three sections that we've got on here, the top one I just say what's on. And what I mean by that is what is going on? What is something that we know is going to or is probably going to occur during this month, during this period, that's going to affect the things further down? So you'll see that the trajectory on this sheet here is that as we work through filling it in and we started with what's going on... And then we put in our benchmarks for this period. And I'll explain a little more as we get into the specific examples of folks what that means. And then we're gonna break out how we'll make that happen.



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So what this means is that our rocks in the river are gonna be this section up here. I'm gonna talk in a second about what we're gonna be filling in there. And then once we have those rocks, the immovable rocks, you know, the trips, I'll tell you more about what those things are in a minute, then we start to put some other rocks, although these rocks are the ones we're putting. So they're not quite as ingrained as the ones that were already there. So these rocks are gonna be our benchmarks for ourselves.

And we really want these to be as achievable as possible, which is why first we're gonna talk about what goes in this "What's On" section of your table here, okay, but these benchmarks that we set for ourselves, we want them to be sure, things that are, you know, that are ambitious. I mentioned in the last call this concept of BHAGs. And I'm gonna spell that out in here because it's one of those weird terms that people are gonna want to know how to spell it. So it's BHAG. It means big hairy audacious goals.

So as we put these benchmarks in, they might feel quite audacious for you, especially, for instance, if you're somebody who only just started doing any type of freelance travel writing at all in the past year. I've got a couple of folks like that I coach. I've got somebody who is just totally fresh. And we're doing really, really a lot of really high intensity, high paced learning with her.

And so if you have never done any of this, even saying that you're gonna get one magazine feature might be really ambitious, but if like some other people that we've got that we're gonna workshop on the call, if you've been at this for a while, having the goal of earning \$1,000 a month, which is, you know, on the way to 6 figures, that might be what's really ambitious for you.

So these benchmarks on their own in a vacuum are gonna look ambitious, but then what we're gonna do is we're gonna fill in this "How we'll make it happen" underneath so that you see how to hit those benchmarks. So depending on how much stuff you have going on in your life, you might end up with this "What's On" section is kinda small, the benchmarks are very short and to the point, and then this "How we're gonna make it happen" is very long, but if you're somebody, for instance, who is really in that getting into it point where you have a full-time job doing something else, you have a lot of other things on your plate, then you might find that your table needs to have slightly different dimensions., that instead, the "What's On" is quite a bit bigger and the benchmarks are smaller and we have little steps that we're using to work up to that. So that's how this might look differently for each of you. So let's look at this "What's On" section.



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What kind of goals do we put in here? So for now, for a second, ignore any sort of benchmarks, objectives, specific things that you wanna get done, projects, things like that. And just think now about what is going on for you in 2018. So typically when I do this, my very, very first things that I put in are conferences. And that's because, and I've talked about this before, I use conferences to plan things that... Essentially, like I'll pick lets say TBEX, for instance. TBEX is a conference that takes place in a lot of different locations. And they have trips attached. So they have both pre and post-multi-day overnight trips. And then they also have tours attached.

So I know if I pay whatever it is, \$100, for the ticket to TBEX, and then get myself to that conference, I'll have quite a lot of travel that I can get in just for that one ticket. And then I can either spend some time myself in the destination outside of that or go somewhere else nearby. And I can essentially plan a whole month of travel around that one conference. Another conference like that, that has a lot of trips involved, is Travel & Words. I'll write that down. So TBEX is the first one that I mentioned. And they're gonna be somewhere in Africa. And I feel bad that I don't remember.

So TBEX is gonna be in Africa, the Finger Lakes and somewhere in the Czech Republic. And I think I've just misspelled Czech Republic, but it's hard to type and talk. So that's where TBEX is this year. And then Travel & Words is in Washington State. So these are two different conferences that have trips attached so that you can go to the conference, but have a lot of your travel planned just by way of the conference. And these are two different types of travel writing conferences. TBEX is more writing for a blog outlet. And Travel & Words is more around writing for a print outlet.

So I often like to, personally for me, choose my initial rocks in the stream, my initial "What's On" to be conferences, but for you that might be other types of trips that you have coming up. For instance, somebody that I coach has a real interesting thing that she does in February every year. She goes to the U.S. Virgin Islands and she cooks for a program that someone else runs. So she cooks for I want to say it's like a yoga... It's some sort of retreat. And it goes for several weeks. And she knows that she's gonna be in the U.S. Virgin Islands. And basically, she's working while she's there, but she's already paid for the ticket to get down there. So she can tack on some time before or after. She can go somewhere else nearby with an inexpensive regional ticket.

This might also be another way to do these travel pegs as, for instance, if your spouse travels for work. I think I've mentioned before that my husband works for Google. And he often has to go back to the mother ship, which is, you know, the main Google campus in California.



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And we both have family there. So I typically go when he goes. So these are all different travels that you might peg yourself around.

As you'll see, some of the folks that we're gonna be going through their plans on later in the call, what if you have travel that you want to do, but they're not pegged at any specific time? And I feel like this is probably something that applies to a lot of you. Perhaps you have... I know a lot of folks that have transitioned into travel writing as something that they've done post-retirement from another career. This is their second or third career. You might have a bucket list of places that you want to go to and you know that this is the year that you really want to check Italy and Greece off your list or Antarctica or wherever it is. So what I recommend for you, if you have places that you want to go, but you don't have a necessary time frame to go to that place, as you are filling in your sheet, I recommend that you make the most optimistic, the best plan.

You want to go to Italy? Don't go in the summer. The weather's horrible. Everything is-God awfully expensive from the flights to the hotel room. And you can't see anything because the crowds are just atrocious. Go to Italy in May. Go to Italy in October. So figure out when is the actual best, as in the least expensive and the best on the ground experience for the place that you wanna go and put that in your calendar. Put that in as one of these rocks in the stream that, like I said, isn't as ingrained, but we're gonna roll with it. We're gonna plan around it and see if we can make our plan work for that.

So travel is the very, very first one. And like I said, these initial linchpins that we're using, whether you're gonna be planning around a trip of yours or your family's, I have a friend who has very little vacation time. And so she saves it all. And she bundles it with the holidays. And she goes somewhere big every year, whether that's to Machu Picchu or to South Africa for a wedding or something like that. So whatever your linchpin is or if you're gonna create an artificial linchpin, put that in first. That's the first thing we're gonna put in that top "What's On" section. And then what happens? The next one, and I say this not because I think that any of you are unwell, but because this is the single biggest, even ahead of travel, thing that I see change in people's plans for the year, okay, is health, health issues. These might be your own. They might be members of your family.

So if you are in the sandwich generation, this might mean things that are going on with your kids. It might mean things that are going on with your parents, anybody that is close to you that you would be involved in the caregiving of. No, I'm not talking about doctors' appointments here, **Kerrie [SP]**. I'm talking more about surgeries. I'm talking about hospitalizations. I'm talking about things that involve a lot of home care, if you are the



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caregiver, or of you staying out of the game for a period of time. So, obviously, there's things that you can't foresee like car accidents and things like this, but I'm telling you, this is the single biggest wrench in the works that I see with anyone and everyone that I talk to in terms of setting your plan for the year ahead.

So what if you don't know anything? What if you don't have anything like that coming up? You know, barring, of course, you know, like let's all pray this doesn't happen, car accidents and the like, what are some other times that you might be delayed in your work by health things? Do you know that every time you travel, you get a cold? I just talked to somebody like this. They know that every time they travel anywhere, they get a cold.

That's just how it works. And if you come back without one, thank God, but otherwise, you're always gonna pick up a cold on a flight or something like that. That means that every time you've got a trip on your top "What's On" section, you want to make sure you tack on an extra week to that in the category of this is time I may or may not be able to work at full capacity, but if it's something like I said like a very specific medical incident and you know when it's gonna be, make sure you put that on there. This is the same for your kids.

If you know that your kids always get sick at the beginning of school year when they go back to school or in February during February break, whatever that is, put that in there. Breaks, likewise, I don't have that in here, but this is something that's kind of trips and not trips. So if you have times that are family breaks from school and you have kids and you know that you are just out for that period, that's also something to put on there. So if you have kids that are in a dual break situation or they've got a February and an April break, note that on February and April that those two weeks or those two months, there's gonna be a week that you're more or less off, okay?

Other things that commonly come up, but aren't planned, if you have a blog and you know that you often get invited to press trips in February because you cover the Caribbean and that's when they come up and you tend to only know three weeks in advance and have to decide in February, right, a potential press trip. Let's say you cover a ski area. Then that might be something that would come up in November or December. So inventory those things that tend to come up in your life that you don't know about in advance that cause you to take days off work.

So like I said, if you have a blog, press trips, or a big one like that, we already went through ones related to, you know, you or your family's health, but think of other things like that, that might require you to take time off work. I had somebody this year who had a very strenuous



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process. I think she's on the call right now, involving thinking that she was going to move back from somewhere. She had been living abroad. And then she wasn't moving back. And then she was moving back again. So if you're living somewhere where your living situation is tenuous in one way shape or form, you're either on a teaching contract, perhaps you teach abroad or you're nomadic and you know that every two months, you change location, but you don't necessarily know where, those are also things that you want to put in that top "What's On" situation.

Now, the last one that needs to go in that "What's On" section is any other work that you have going on that has certain crunch times. So, for instance, I mentioned I think in another webinar that this time of year is actually the biggest season for anybody who works in nonprofit because there's constant campaigns going out to do year-end fundraising because they're trying to get people to give donations so that they can write it off on their taxes. So this week is a huge crunch time for people who work in nonprofits to get those letters out, to be interacting with any return emails from customers with questions, and to be doing the financial cataloging of those things.

If you, for instance, are involved in the farming community in some way, as I know a lot of folks are, or in, you know, the local food scene, the spring, depending on the area, between say March and May, is a really big time for getting the plants in and doing a lot of outdoor work. If you have a teaching type job, I know a lot of folks that follow us or a good portion of folks that follow us are doing some sort of university level teaching of some kind. So this would be the kind of thing where you put in when you need to be grading a lot of exams, not necessarily homework because that's normal, but, you know, you would put in that in December you have exams and in May you have exams or however that works. So those are other things that you would put in the "What's On" column.

So there's not a super awesome way, unless if any of you are doing this kind of on your computer and typing it in, let me know because it's really easy for us to share what your screen looks like. So if people are typing this on your computer, let me know because that way you guys can always come in and share. So as you're adding these things in and going along, you'll find that rather than this, this ends up looking like now you've got a trip A. You've got a trip B. You've got a conference. You teach, so you've got grading. You've got grading. We've got kids' break. We've got kids' break. Perhaps you, in addition to teaching... I'm thinking of somebody specific. In addition to teaching, you have a museum exhibit that you're working on that goes live here.



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This is the museum opening, which is gonna be really big for you and take up a lot of time. So as you go along, these months start to get filled. You start to see these boulders that are in the way, but more importantly, you also see the places that are more open. And you can also think about how many hours that month you realistically have to work because this influences not just our benchmarks, but really this “How we’re gonna make it happen section,” okay? So as I mentioned if you have something like a situation where you have children who are of the age that they have both February and April breaks and you typically work 30 hours a week, rather than having 120 hours in these two months, you’re gonna have that week off and probably the Friday before and the Monday after that are gonna be kind of squishy, right?

So you end up losing 8 days out of your... There’s about 22 or 23, depending on the month. You lose 8 out of 22 or 23 working days. So that’s basically... Not eight, sorry. You’re losing seven, but that’s basically a third of your month that’s gone. So here you’re gonna be at two-third capacity for these two months, okay? And let’s say this other trip that you have going on here, this is going to be a two-week trip. So maybe you end up just having a one-third capacity on this. And in this month, you have zero capacity, this time that you have a conference, maybe this one here also at one-third capacity. This one here, at two-third capacity, okay?

So this is how you help to set the ebb and flow for yourself consciously of the year of how much work it makes sense to give yourself because one of the things that you’re gonna see as we get into examples is that it can be so easy to set these BHAGs, right, these big hairy audacious goals, but we’ve spoken in the past about lining those up with what’s feasible for you based on the year that has passed, as well as based on your analysis of your own strengths and weaknesses and what you’re capable of, but sometimes, given what’s on your plate, even if those other analytical tools have made it look like these BHAGs are possible, when you actually line it up, it’s just not. And I know several people who have the sandwich syndrome where they’ve got kids to take care of and ailing aging parents that just feel like they aren’t getting as much done as they want.

And this is one of the things is that if we don’t set our plan around that, then your plan is gonna start to fall apart, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, but once the steps in your plan start getting missed, it becomes much, much harder to get back on track, obviously. So that’s where our three words come in. So, again, I had posted them in the chat box, if you missed them last week, but those three words help us decide not just how to make the plan now as we get into it, but also what to change as things fall off. So let’s start doing an example, okay?



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So I've got three queued up for you. I've got somebody who's been writing full-time for quite a bit, somebody who has been doing freelance type work, but is transitioning more into the writing bit of it, and somebody who has... You could kinda call it... She does a pastiche of different things, but that are more in the education vein and she's trying to switch over as much as possible into doing full-time freelance and full-time freelance writing. So we've got three very different situations in that way, but also different situations about the other things going on with those people. So let's dive right in. So Jade, who is with us today, is a freelance content marketer. She's got five plus years of experience and an aspiring novelist.

In the last year, she cut back on her paid work to devote significant time to revising her novel and trying to land a literary agent. She hasn't succeeded yet. And she earned about \$5,000 less in 2017. And I have to say as I was reading this, having done something very similar myself about two years back, I was actually really impressed that she had scaled back what she was doing and only earned \$5,000 less.

And it can be really easy when you embark on a new education path like this, if you want to get into content marketing and you've only been doing editorial or vice versa or you want to get into books and you've only been working with magazines, to feel like you are taking just a huge chunk of time away from your earning, but in this case, I really feel like Jade's probably earned more, significant... She says, for going forward, she's burnt out on content marketing. "It feels like being on a hamster wheel. In 2018, she wants to find better paying writing work and increase her passive income flows so she can continue to focus on getting her book published while earning more money, not less." So this is really important to note also, that we talk a lot or actually I should talk more

So I was talking about Jade. I was just reading Jade's thing out for you here. So she was talking about how it's like being on a hamster wheel. And I was talking about how with novels, you have to write the whole book before you can shop it around, which is the opposite of what happens with nonfiction books. So what that means is that for her to work on getting a novel published really means a lot of upfront time without pay that can potentially come very quickly down the line. So Jade, if possible, while I'm talking about your next bit of information looking towards the year ahead, if you can chime in for us what's in your "What's On" section of your sheet, those things that are coming up for you in the year ahead, that would be great. And I'll go through the next bit of your information with others.

So let me tell you the next bit of Jade's equation. So for this coming year, she wants flexibility, stability, and wealth to be informing her year. So in terms of flexibility, right, she



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said that she wants to have better paying work that allows her to focus more on her book. So that's what the flexibility plays into. Obviously, the wealth points to that, as well. And stability means having other things going on so that she can confidently focus her time on working on things for her book.

So what she wants to look at going into the year ahead, this is her kind of long list of benchmarks, is to get regular income coming from travel trades, to get published front of book, and feature articles on places she's traveling to in 2018, getting a literary agent, and then there's some more that we could call them squishy or soft goals, right, conquering self-doubt, honing her pitching process, transitioning from lower paying to higher paying clients, and having more free time to focus on the type of writing that she wants to do. So I feel like we could almost split them in half. Like I said these are more of the soft and these are more of the column goals, but like I said, we'll go with benchmarks.

So let's look at breaking these out. And okay, Nancy can hear us now. Great. So in terms of the things that go on Jade's sheet, she said she's got a writers' conference in January, as well as family obligations in January and June, a summer camping trip she's not sure when it's gonna be, and something else in August. So I'm going to start filling this in for her. Oops. Let's not go too far. Okay, great. So in January, she's got a conference, oops, conference and family. I'm gonna try to get both of these going up side by side so I can see the chat box. Okay, great. Okay. She's got conference and family. She's got let's say maybe this is her camping. She's got a trip here. She's got family obligations. And then she's got another conference in March and then holidays.

Looking at this, we know that she's got a good chunk of time here, but let's look back at her benchmarks, right? This is the thing that we want to fill in first. So she wants to have regular income in travel trades. She wants to be publishing front of book and feature articles on places she travels in 2018. And she wants to get a literary agent. There's always going to be one of these that is the one around which all other ones need to be planned. So the thing about her list is that getting a literary agent obviously jumps out to me as the one that that's gonna be, but importantly, like I mentioned, her novel needs to be finished before she gets an agent. So Jade, let us know in the chat box how far you are from your novel being finished because that's gonna inform getting a literary agent, which is gonna be the linchpin of these others.

So as she is letting us know about that, I'm gonna pop in some of these other ones. So we want to transition from lower paying to high paying clients, right? And part of that I think is gonna go here, it's just getting a regular income from travel trades, as well as the features



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from the things which she's gonna be traveling to in 2018. So let's look at this. So if she wants to get regular income from trades, there are certain ebbs and flows in the market that inform when are the best times to get into certain things, how long it takes you to ramp up with editors, and all of this. So at this time where we are right now... Oh, great. Jade's book is totally done. So that's great. So Jade's book is all ready for her to work on pitching agents.

Let's say that we want her to have her literary agent by April, May, June. Let's put it in May. And I'm gonna say this for a reason because as I said, in different segments of the writing market, there's different ebbs and flows. And literary agents, like a lot of editors, love to go on summer vacation. So they are essentially out from June to August. They don't want to hear from you. And they're not gonna look at your queries. They want nothing to do with you. And the same things can also go for editors. So we might even want to put this in April that she wants to have this done so that her literary agent can be in touch with editors.

So what does that mean? That means that in this period, she wants to be working quite heavily on getting her literary agent, but let's backtrack, right? Her words were, "Flexibility, stability, and wealth."

She wants to have more time to focus on the type of writing and she also wants to increase her income. So there's a trade-off here, right? The earlier that we get her a literary agent, the earlier she has some income coming from her book and that is off her plate, but at the same time, it's time that's going to come away from working on the magazines. So we need to balance those two things, but as she said, she's working on another novel and continuing to query. So what I would say for this is that, as I mentioned, this is a dead zone for agents, as well as editors.

So really, it makes the most sense for her to make herself the benchmark that she wants to get her agent by April or May. So that means that she needs to... I assume the conference that she's going to in January is probably going to be helping with some education component about her querying process, but it means that in January, she wants to really bone up from the education perspective on... I'm gonna make the type a little smaller here, which I know is gonna make it hard for folks to see, but I'll tell you guys what I'm writing just so we can fit things in here. So in January, she wants to bone up on the education component around what's holding back her query. And query is the word that's used just like pitch for getting her book placed with an agent, okay. And the reason that I want her to start in January here with what's holding back is that she says she's been querying for a bit and not getting anywhere.



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So the “How we’ll make it happen” for her for the book front in January is figuring out what’s not working now so that she can hit the ground running because unlike the editors for magazines where we can pitch them a new idea and a new idea and a new idea, when you strike out with a book agent, you’re out. You can’t pitch them again. You’re just out. So you want to make sure that you’re sending your absolute best pitch the first time around to each agent. And then in February, she’s gonna be working on getting those queries out. And so what that means is now she’s gonna have a new version of her query letter. Unlike when you’re pitching magazines, you tend to have just one for your book. So this is gonna be query palooza for her and query palooza here.

And so what do I mean when I say, “Query palooza for her?” How many do I mean? In this case for books, like I said, you send pretty much the same one. And if you’re interested in books, the resource in terms of where to find editors is called “Publisher’s Marketplace” or rather agents and editors, “Publisher’s Marketplace.” And this is something that “Micro Magazine” database, you can get a monthly subscription to. And you can see every single agent and every single editor that exists and exactly what type of books they work on.

So in this case, what I would do for Jade is that this query palooza, part one, she’s gonna really focus on identifying, okay? She’s got her letter ready. And now she’s gonna focus on identifying the folks obviously that she hasn’t reached out to yet because she can’t pitch them twice, but she’s gonna really mine who are the closest hits for her in terms of her book being a match for what they cover. And she’s gonna get those out in these next two months with the goal of having somebody in line by April, at the latest May. And if I were to give a number benchmark for this, I would say she wants to be hitting somewhere between 50 and 75 of these queries out each month. So what does that mean then looking back, right? In January, she’s got a lot of stuff going on.

We’ve tempered that by focusing on the education. February’s a month where she doesn’t have too much stuff going on. So she’s gonna really work on killing it with those queries and continue that into March, but how does that play off for her freelance writing, right? This is where the money comes from. Right now her book isn’t making any money until somebody buys it. So two of her things are conquering her self-doubt and honing her pitching process. And I think that those are actually quite entwined because for folks that have heard me talk about pitching a lot, one of the things that I have mentioned and that I see really frequently with people who aren’t sending a lot of pitches is that it just takes them a long time. It might take up to two and a half hours to write each pitch letter.



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So let's go back, right? So she wants to build up her confidence. And I feel like, like I said, that's gonna come once it's easier for her to do, but also once she starts getting responses. So we're gonna address this conquering self-doubt through those two things, through getting more out and making sure that we're getting responses. So in this January period, she already has some content marketing work going. She's got some other stuff on her plate. She's gonna be working hard on improving her query. And we're also gonna give her from the freelance writing aspect work on this pitch process. And so what do I mean here is that she wants to go through for herself and take a time tracker and work on a couple pitches and see how long she spends on each phase of that pitch process.

That means how long does it take her to come up with the idea, to match it to a magazine, to write the first paragraph of that pitch, the second paragraph of that pitch, and the third paragraph of that pitch. And then once she's tracked each of those things, she's gonna look at which part's taking her the longest. And then she's gonna go read up on that. What is she supposed to write in the second part? How can she better match her ideas to magazines? And just like how we're tweaking her pitch letter, she's gonna work on tweaking her pitch process here.

So the same way where we said February is a great month for her to get a lot of work done, and I also think February's a great month if you live somewhere cold because you don't want to go outside, this is where she's going to start building that confidence bit. There it is, the conquering self-doubt bit, by getting those pitches out. And so which pitches is she gonna do? She hasn't taken her trips yet. So these are gonna be ones from her trips from the last year. So in this month, she's gonna make a master list of everywhere that she has traveled in the previous year, so that would be in 2017, and what she did while she was there.

And she's gonna start matching those up to magazines and getting those out. So the same way where she has the query blitz for her book, she's gonna start doing a pitching blitz with her new pitch process. And the reason that I'm gonna have her learn about it and then blitz is that this allows her to practice those things that she's just learned to really solidify those pitching muscles, that new pitching process, in a focused way, but this shouldn't be hard to do two at once because, like I said, the query that she's sending out for her book she's not gonna be tweaking that query every time she sends. It's quite similar as opposed to pitching for editors, which is gonna be different for each one.

Well, what about LOIs? We haven't gotten into that yet. And there is a reason for that, okay? So at this point, she's working on her pitch process and her confidence. And then this is gonna help her transition from lower paying to higher paying clients. She's gonna make sure



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specifically that as she's working on her blitz, she's not pitching those people who are at the same place that she already is. She's specifically pitching to bigger markets than what she's working with right now. So that's gonna be part of this process. Now, I mentioned that we were saving working on the LOIs, the letters of introductions, for trade magazines. And again, that goes back to these ebbs and flows in the markets.

The same way that editors are totally out in June to August, a lot of writers are, as well, which means that in these months, trade magazines editors are trying to fill in who's gonna do the work during that time because a lot of writers aren't gonna be around. So in April is where she's gonna take this same great blitz energy that she's got going and carry it over and start getting those LOIs out to trade magazines. And again, this is great to do en masse because it's much easier to get that machinery going for yourself, to get that letter of introduction going, and send it off to 10 similar magazines while it's fresh in your mind than to be sending 1, 1 week and 1 the next week because it's all the same kind of stuff, okay?

So I'm not giving her a second bit of things to do here on March because she's got this conference, as well. And so she's hopefully got her agent lined up. And then she's gonna move over into trade magazines. Pitches don't always come to fruition right away, guys. They tend to take a little bit of time for either maybe that first idea doesn't work and you come back with a second idea, a third idea, and maybe even a fourth idea, before you get an assignment with an editor or maybe your pitch was in maybe purgatory and now the editor's finally gotten back to you. So we're hoping that by this April, May time, these pitches are starting to come to fruition, but she's also sending out these LOIs. So what's gonna happen is that as the fallout... This is really important to remember.

Any time you've got something really new that's shaking things up, whether it's another job that you're taking on, a part-time job, if you're doing yoga teaching training, somebody told me about this, if you've got a book that you're signing an agent for, there's gonna be other stuff that comes along with that. So we want to give this period space because she's gonna be doing reworking of her book with her agent. She's gonna be working with her agent to prepare materials that are gonna go out to the editor. And, like I said, these pitches are gonna be starting to come to fruition. She's sending out these LOIs. So we're gonna let this period kinda chill out.

And then in June, she's got some family obligations, but this is where she's gonna start hitting those pitches again because like I mentioned, this is the period when a lot of other writers aren't necessarily gonna be working or aren't necessarily gonna be sending pitches. So this is a great time for her to circle back. So she's obviously gonna be following up with



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the editors that she reached out to her because you pitch, follow up, pitch a new pitch, follow up.

She's gonna be following that cycle, but this is where she's gonna be looking and saying, "Okay. How did this go? What was my hit rate with these editors?" And then she's gonna start looking at what worked for her and what didn't work for her and be pitching to new outlets, okay? So this is where she's gonna look at what worked before and change her horizons, okay? So as we're going along here, she's working on the trades.

Now, what about the front of the book and features for the places she's traveled to in 2018? Now, she's starting to go on these new trips, right? So this is where she's gonna be pitching to new outlets. And she's also gonna be pre-pitching, okay? She's gonna be pre-pitching for the trips she's got going up. So this is gonna be a great way in June for her to focus her pitches around the other trips that she has coming up this summer. So then as she's on her trips, we're gonna give her some space for all this other work that she's drummed up early on. And then she's gonna hit it hard with pitching the trips now that she's back, okay?

So as this is working out, you'll see I haven't touched on the content marketing work, which she already has. She already has freelance work that's lined up that she's gonna be working on at this time. And now we're into this great period in October and November where, like I said, she doesn't have other boulders in the stream lined up. So what's going on? So she's hopefully gotten a literary agent by then. She's got her pitching process down. She's been working on pitching out before her trips and after her trips. She's gotten her LOIs out.

So what's happening now? I'm not putting anything in here because this work should have panned out for this point. So what happens now then is that this is when she starts to look at dropping clients that are not worth her time, okay? So this means that by now, she should have panned out her pitches into a point where she can look at her content marketing clients, if she hasn't already, or her editorial clients that pay less and say, "Hey, you. You pay \$.25 a word, but now I've got this person who is paying me \$.50 a word regularly. I don't think it's time for us to work together any more, unless you can pay me more money."

This is when that transition really happens. So this is what Jade's year is gonna look like. And again, like I mentioned, everybody's got slightly different stuff going on. And Jade was really heavy with her book work. So let's look at somebody different.



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“So in May, 2017,” this is the words of the person, “I decided to move my food and lifestyle writing, to incorporate travel and do less food writing. I spent a few days thinking about the cross-over potential of existing relationships and began to investigate the world of travel writing, which is how I found Dream of Travel Writing. While there are some similarities to what I do, there are some definite differences. My pet died in early August. And after a few challenging weeks of back and forth to the hospital, all in the midst of my first press trip. I took a little time to grieve, but also kept my trip, the people I met, the things I saw, tasted, and experienced all fresh and alive in my mind. I formulated pitches, began small, and started to send them out. Prior to sending them out, I had spent time building a spreadsheet of publications, the focus of the publications, how much it would pay, writer’s guidelines, etc. I lost two monthly content clients in the past year. One business closed and the other went to a large PR firm. And I have been trying to recoup that income, with the caveat that it is an industry I enjoy and is line with my current and future career path.” So this is important. So she did lose some clients, but she doesn’t want to just replace them with anybody. And she has earlier, like she said, been working on those editorial pitches. “I’m still actively pitching one-offs and know I can do a lot more with that one single trip, but discipline is my forever challenge.”

So the one thing that I want to note on this is that you typically can do a lot more with a single trip. I’ve spoken several times about this gentleman that I had met in the UK who typically will try to do at least 10 stories out of each trip, even if it’s just a weekend trip. So there is typically 125 odd, if not more, stories that you can get off of each trip. However, it’s important to also note when you are beating a dead horse with your pitches, when your pitches become one note, when you’re just pitching one thing over and over again.

And so often, if you’re pitching the same sort of idea to a lot of places and you’re not getting traction, it might be because you aren’t really focusing enough on what an idea is. And so this is a great time. Somebody had just mentioned, “What’s the difference between LOIs, pitches, and queries?”

So query and pitch are sort of the same thing. For Jade, we were using that to talk about a pitch that you send to an agent to get your book published, but pitch and query pretty much mean the same thing. An LOI, which is a letter of introduction, you can also think of it as a cover letter. It’s something that goes to trade magazines, but in terms of a pitch that you send to an editor for a single article, I’ve seen various pitches come across my desk lately.



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And I've been talking to people about ideas. And it's really important to remember that you need to be pitching an editor something that fits into the size of the space that they have. And so in some instances, people are pitching the kitchen sink. They're pitching everything. And in some instances, people are pitching things that an editor looks at and says, "Okay. That's two sentences. Where is the rest of the piece?"

So if you feel like you're pitching a lot of the same thing, whether it's the same trip or the same topic or whatnot, it's a really good moment to go back and see if what you are pitching bears a resemblance to the type of articles that go in there or not, not that I necessarily... I haven't seen Stephanie's pitches. So I don't know if that's the case here. So let's look at the goals that she has. And we'll start getting into her sheet. And Stephanie, I think you're on the call. If you're here, can you let us know any of those big rocks you have in your calendar so I can fill in that top "What's On" line of the sheet here or if you have yours... I think you said you printed it. If you have yours and wouldn't mind turning on the video and showing us, that would also be great.

Here's what she's saying about her goals. So she said she realizes, "The correlation of the time spent networking and pitching and how that equates to paid work. That's exactly how I've secured new business and how clients have come to me with ideas they were paying for in the past six months. I'm not spending enough time on revenue generating work though." And this is something really important to note. I just had a call with somebody about this earlier today where we talked about how, if you're not used to pitching, once you get into pitching, it can be really satisfying to make pitching your job. Like every day you have some pitches that you're working on. And you're thinking about them. And you're really working on these pitches. And you're exploring new publications. And that can get really actually fun and easy.

And when you're not yet in the phase where you're getting anxious that people aren't getting back to you, but as Stephanie very accurately says here, it's really important to know when you're not spending enough time on revenue generating work. So she says that she's such a creative and adventurous personality that meeting deadlines... Oh, sorry. Okay. So she says she's a creative, adventurous personality and not Type A, but meeting deadlines isn't an issue. So she likes the idea of using targets, even though that's not necessarily always her style. So here's her benchmarks for the year ahead that we're gonna start putting in.

So her words are adventure, like she said adventurous personality, adventure, growth, and mindfulness. So this is really important, right, because adventure is out there. Growth is going big, but mindfulness means being careful about how she does it. So these are the things



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that we want to incorporate as we set out her plan. So she just let me know in the chat box her rocks in the stream. So I'm gonna drop those in. So she's got a conference in March, an overseas trip in April, and I assume overseas means it's a bit long. So we'll put long trip here. Overseas trip, October, also July. And then possible move. Oh, this is a big one, right? So I mentioned that somebody I coached had a big disruption because of that.

We were just talking about how that actually affects about half of her year, guys. So anytime you have a possible move, this is something worth backing up. So this I'm gonna actually put in November, as well. Prep for move? Okay. So let's go back and look at her benchmarks that we're gonna start slotting in. So she mentioned that she had one trip before that she went on that she's been trying to get a lot of mileage out of. So traveling on these kinds of trips and pitching them is big for her. So we really need to make sure that as we're looking at her trips that we really put in adequate time to pre- as well as post-pitch those trips. So it's resulted in eight stories, which is fantastic, by the way. And congratulations on that. You guys should also congratulate her because that's really excellent that her first press trip had eight stories. She has gotten a 100% response rate from her pitches. This is brilliant.

And, in fact, this is really super useful for all of us who are looking at making this kind of sheet, this kind of plan is to know your pitch response rate. I was just chatting with somebody on a call about this recently, that even if you're pretty new to pitching, even if you've sent 5 or 10 or 15, having that pitch response rate helps us. And we're gonna do this with Stephanie's now, helps us dial back and know okay, how many pitches do we need to send to what numeric end to make sure that we can hit our income goals? So she said, "Some of these were yes/no or maybe, but they all responded." So in my view, if somebody responds, then you respond back.

And then they respond back and you respond back. And they respond. And it keeps going until you get an assignment. And then you keep responding with that assignment until you get the next assignment. So once you've got that foot in the door, it means you keep going until you get another assignment. So whether or not she has already gotten an assignment from each of these pitches that she sent, those are all avenues that she's gonna pursue. So this is something that I'm not gonna necessarily plan that she's gonna get 100% response rate all the time, but we can plan on going forward as she's sending pitches that those are avenues that will eventually be leading to assignments at a very regular rate.

So she wants to develop relationships with editors and tourism boards that result in recurring work and openness to pitches. And remember, this is... The way that it's written is, "Looking back at your last year." So that's why it's in past tense. So this is her pretending it's



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December 2018, as we did in last week's call. So her biggest accomplishment in 2018 that she wants to see is realizing that she can do the same amount of work for better paying outlets than for free or no paying outlets, right?

This is super important. And I'm so glad that she mentioned here. "Pitch and strike out in the majors, but keep playing in the major league." I'm totally gonna steal this and tweet it. That's a brilliant, brilliant line. Thank you so much. Kerrie's asking me, "Can you ask for assignments in pitches or LOIs?" I'm not sure if I understand that question. So if you want to elaborate more, then I can try to answer that. So back to what we were working through here with the benchmarks. So she has a numeric goal of \$5,500 per month with 70% income coming from her current clients. So this is a bit specific, right? And this is something that we can work on. And I'm gonna outline how to work on it, but you're gonna see here when we get too many goals, and especially when we have more than just one number that we're working towards, that things can start to get a little bit hairy when we map it out. So let's get into mapping it.

So she's got three trips. So I imagine that this is pretty much taken care of. She's got three international trips. And any other trips that are domestic trips I'm assuming that she can do on weekends. And she hasn't told me. So those are either the trips you've already got on here or they're just kind of coming along on weekends. So we'll plan around the three trips that we have, okay? So this is stuff from last year that is useful for us to know. So I'm gonna X that out for now.

This is what we are looking for, for the year ahead. So let's look at this goal, \$5,500 per month minimum income. She's got a pretty much 100% response rate. So what does that mean? Something that I like to do, and I'm just actually gonna write this is the slide that we're on, because calculations are such a pain to discuss out loud. So here is the calculation. If you want to earn \$5,500 a month, and your pitch response rate is 50%, then you need to be pitching... Oh, this isn't Excel. Okay. So you take the number of your goal and you take your pitch response rate. And then you're gonna end up with the amount that you need to be pitching towards. So that means to hit this, if her response rate was 50%, which it isn't, she would need to be pitching towards \$11,000 a month. Now that seems totally scary, you guys. I know, but this goes back to what Stephanie said, which is so important, to pitch the big folks, the big paying outlets, to hit that. So then what does that mean?

Let's say she's gonna be pitching only outlets that pay \$1 a word and only for things that are least \$1,000 a word. I know it sounds dreamy, but let's just say that. So that means that she needs to pitch 11 stories for \$1,000 each for \$1 a word, okay? So this is if she had a 50%



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response rate, okay, but, like she said, she has a really high response rate. So that means she would be needing to pitch 5.5 stories for \$1,000 a word or for \$1 a word or \$1,000, or she'd be pitching 11 stories for \$500, 500 words per \$1 a word, or she could be pitching 11 stories for 1,000 words for \$.50 a word. So I'm spelling this out because I know the math can always get hard. So let me know in the chat box, if that is sounding difficult to you.

And I'm gonna answer Kerrie's question in the background, but let me know if all that math I just did made sense. So Kerrie's question was, "When pitching and asking for assignments in the future or letting them know I'm available?" I'm still not super sure if I understand the question, but pitches you're pitching a specific story idea and a letter of introduction, we have several webinars on that. So I recommend checking those out, if you're not quite sure how those work.

Stephanie's saying that some of that amount can be content marketing, but it must be in the travel or lifestyle industry. So this is a great addendum, but I wanted to make sure that we all understand that as we're setting pitching goals, these are how the variables work out, okay? You can pitch fewer or more stories, fewer or more words, and fewer or more dollars a word, but the goal of what we need to pitch to is determined by your goal amount divided by your response rate, okay? That's gonna go away now. I'm just gonna put it in the chat box so everybody can see it later because I know it's kind of confusing.

So let's go back to what Stephanie's got here. So she wants to have 70% of her income coming from recurring clients. And that can be a mix of editorial, as well as content marketing. Content marketing clients are really great because you know that that money is coming in every month. So I personally think that's fantastic, especially if all of your money is coming from your writing to know that that money is coming in every month.

So she wants to have \$3,000, sorry \$850 coming from her recurring work, which leaves... Of course, now I just closed my calculator, which leaves a certain amount that I'm gonna give you in a second that comes from one-off work every month. And this is a great vision to have because if you don't have one-off work coming, it that means that you don't have new editorial clients or new potential content marketing clients that you are working on.

So let's break this out. These ones are gonna be new publications, okay? And then let's break out her recurring income between content marketing. We're gonna put TCM for content marketing and editorial, okay? So let's say that because we've got this much which is coming from new publications, we'll call this editorial, let's give her another let's say \$1,500 that's gonna come. And that could be higher, but it's gonna come from recurring publications work



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with editors that she already knows, okay? And then that leaves... Math on the fly. It's so much fun. That leaves \$2,350 that's gonna come from recurring content marketing work, okay? So you can definitely get gigs that for \$1,000, \$1,300 from one single client.

Because Stephanie is new to these clients and new to this whole area, I'm gonna break this up. And we're gonna say that for her, this means four clients, okay? She's gonna have four clients that she's doing some kind of content marketing work. You can also definitely get this much from a single editor you're working with usually after a while. So we're gonna say that this means she needs two editors she is working with on a recurring basis, okay?

And then, according to that schematic that we looked at before, given that she's got a really high success rate, she's not necessarily gonna be needing to pitch a ton of places for this, but let's just say she needs about three assignments each month that are around \$500. And then this is how she is going to meet her goal. So we're gonna back this up, according to her trips, okay? So she wants to turn up four content marketing clients that are each for around I think it's about, you know, \$680 or something, okay? Around \$680 each is what she is looking at for this. So with content marketing, especially travel content marketing, food content marketing is a little bit more forgiving, you really want to be getting those things out in January before the year picks up.

That's why we have our travel content marketing event going very, very much at the beginning of January. It's the 12th to the 14th. So for her, I want to look at having these four... You can totally line up four clients in a month. I've seen people do it, but we're gonna give her a little more space for that because she's gonna ramp up and learn how to do it, right? So we want to have her hit this number of having her four travel content marketing clients that run this much recurring. We want to have them signed by April. We're gonna give her some time on this, okay? So that means that in January, she's gonna be busting her butt doing... I'm gonna make this small again so we can fit everything in here.

In January, she's gonna be busting her butt learning... She's got that pitching down, right? She's doing really well with the pitching, but now she's gonna bust her butt on learning her travel content marketing ropes, okay? So that in January, and also in February, she's continuing to hit really hard pitching her content marketing gigs, which means that she's gonna start having some phone calls even in January. She's gonna have more phone calls in February. She's gonna be getting those contracts signed, you know, getting people returning them to her, negotiating, doing those phone calls.



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We've got a whole webinar on the phone calls. One of my coaching clients just listened to it yesterday. And she was like, "Oh, my God. I didn't realize there's such a gold mine about how to communicate with clients in here." And I really recommend checking out the proposals and client phone calls webinar, if you haven't, because it will save you so many hurdles about things that come up with clients down the line if you don't address them up front, okay? So a little bit in January, but especially in February and March, she is sending out those pitches. She's got the phone calls. And she's getting the contracts done so that in April, she starts with these new clients, but what does that mean? This is important, right? She's got this long trip in April. And April is when she's starting with these new clients or maybe in March, right?

So what that means is that she needs to know that she needs to be able to, during this long trip, be able to do this work, be able to do her new content marketing work. So she needs to be pre-working on stuff in March as much as possible. So she's gonna be pre-working here on her content marketing. So what that means is if she's pitching her April trip now and getting these contracts finalized and starting with some content marketing people, she's gonna lose her mind, right? She's also got a conference going on in March. So what does that mean about her April trip? It means that she wants to start pitching her April trip in February.

So what about getting those recurring editors that we've talked about, right? Like I said, with travel content marketing, she's kind of stuck in that time thing, but she needs to really get going on it before the season kicks in. So working with those recurring editors is something that she's gonna peg to go after that. So what means is that she's gonna be pitching her April trip starting in February, but in March and April she's gonna focus on getting that content marketing stuff up and running. And then when she's back from her April trip, this is where she's going to be continuing to pitch that April trip, but also... Sorry. I can't type and talk. This is where she's also going to be focusing her pitching on the editors that she wants to build recurring relationships with, okay?

So what that means is that rather than pitching things specifically related to her trip, she's going to be pitching editors whose publications are things she feels like she can write for regularly, okay? So this is editors she wants to work with recurring, okay? So she's gonna work on pitching the April trip, writing those stories. She's gonna continue working into her content marketing work. And she's going to be pitching those editors. So then she's got another trip going on in July.

So what does that mean? It means in June, she's going to be continuing to pitch those editors she wants to work with regularly while pre-pitching her July trip, okay? So what have we got



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going on for her, okay? So we are working on those one-off pitches. Like we said, she's got a great response rate. So as long as she's getting those pitches out, that's gonna be fine. Yes, she needs the time to write the articles, right. And so in April, that's the only thing she's got going on. She's not doing anything else. May and June she's also got time to do that, as well.

So this is going fine. We've started working on this. And then she's gonna have that wrapped up by April. So that means that July, she's got her trip. In August, she comes back. And by now, these pitches should be panning out. So she's following up, which I abbreviated as FU'ing which sounds like, you know, FU in a different way, but that's how I write following up. So she's FU'ing continuously with, following up continuously, with the editors she wants to work with as she is continuing to pitch her July trip. So what this means is that she is going to hit, but Nancy pointed out, that she's just got too much work going on, which is brilliant, because it means that she can be continuously, as we talked about with Jade, dropping those people who pay less and focusing on the people who pay more.

Now, part of the reason I front-loaded a lot of her stuff is that she has this potential move later. And she's also got this other trip going on in October. So this is the path that I would suggest for Stephanie. And we've got one more who is also with us on the call today that I want to make sure we get to. So I call her the transitioner in here. So I say this because I mentioned way up top that some of you will be in the position where you're trying to come full-time out of doing something else, but you're also doing that alongside of moving into your freelance writing. So Stephanie and Jade both have other type of freelancing that they're already doing that they're partnering this with, but this person still has a lot of other work that she's got going on.

So she says, "In January 2017, I began working part-time as a freelance copywriter when I was hired by a B2B car wash supplier to rewrite their website, an e-newsletter, a monthly blog and establish their presence on social media. I plan to supplement my career by pitching magazines and getting some travel content marketing clients, but then I officially became a member of the sandwich generation taking care of my elderly parents on top of my young children. With each hospital stay that my parents made, I became more distracted from my travel writing goals. And I have trouble recovering mentally and emotionally. Pitching was the last thing on my mind or my priority list. I started pitching travel content marketing companies now. And I'm doing better with time management, but I only made about \$12,500 for my income from writing in 2017, which is less than half of what I had originally intended to earn." So I just want to say though that, as I mentioned, she's got a bunch of other work that she's doing. She's teaching. She now has like a part-time in-house thing that she's doing with a museum.



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So to have that much money come from one's writing when you've still got a bunch of other stuff going on is absolutely fantastic. And I'm so proud of her for doing that. So her words for the year going ahead are... And by the way, if you're still with us, I know we've had some people dropping off because this is a long webinar, but the call-in ones always are. And I'm gonna be here as long as you guys are. So if you're still with us, go ahead and drop in any linchpins that you have. I know you do a lot of camping and things like that in the summer. So drop that in the chat box so I can start popping all of that in as we go along.

So her words for the year ahead are simplicity, which totally makes sense. She's got a lot of different stuff on her plate. Growth and security. You'll notice growth is a really commonly recurring one, but you'll often see growth coupled with other things. So here we see growth with security. Before we saw growth with mindfulness. So these are important things for us to look at going forward. So for her, having recurring work is really important, but also not having too many clients. And so you'll see that on her specific goals, as well. So she wants a minimum of five to six recurring travel content marketing jobs. She wants to establish herself as a regular contributor to some travel trade publications. She wants to attend at least one conference and network and make connections, but remember, this is gonna have to fall in line with what she's got going on. So for her, it's definitely gonna be better if it's domestic and something somewhat nearby, okay?

And she'd like to get a regular pitching schedule to get some bigger name glossies so that editors start to recognize her name and accept her pitches. So one thing that you'll notice about what we've got going on here on this list is that there's a lot of different areas going on. And so on the one hand, that seems like a bit of not necessarily a disconnect, but perhaps obstacle or something that we need to look at to this important goal of simplicity. So I'm gonna keep that in mind as I map this out.

So on Jade's, right, like if we go back up here, with Jade's we had things going on side by side, right? She had her own content marketing ones that she was already doing. She's working on her book on getting her book queries out. She's working on pitching new and different, better paying magazines. Likewise, over here with Stephanie's. So on Stephanie's, we were working on travel content travel marketing while we were also pitching editorials. She's got some trips going on. So what we want to look at now as we get into Ingrid who, thank you for dropping those things in here, and I'm gonna put these in as well, what we want to look at here is that she's got a lot of different things that she wants to do, but she's also got a lot on her plate.



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And we want to make that as light, not necessarily in work load, but in terms of context switching, which means going back and forth between different, you know, types of work, as well as between different things, whether it's travel and lots of computer work or working and pitching or whatnot. So I almost had it right with your museum opening before, didn't I? So the museum exhibit opens in August. So am I right in saying that... What time in August is the museum exhibit? Will you be able to travel in August as well or not so much?

Okay. And she's got trip, trip. She intends to do some camping. Okay. And in May, her parents are moving to a new home. So that goes back into this moving thing, right? So this is something that's definitely going to take a big chunk of that. Okay. So in March, she's got kids' break. And then April, she's got a conference. Great. So the conference is already settled, unless that's a conference that's relating to teaching or the museum. If so, let me know in the chat box.

Okay. So let's start filling in these benchmarks, right? So we've got the kids' breaks on here. We know we need to be mindful. Parents moving home. So this is a big one that she needs to really have some space for. And thankfully, it's not too close to her museum opening, but it is quite close to these months that are all of her trips. So if we look at this, it basically means... I'm even gonna change to a different color, if I can. It basically means that this whole period here is gonna be hairy for her and that this is really important for us to look at as we go towards it. I guess that's the best I can do. All right. So how are we gonna break out these multi-faceted benchmarks that she's got and put that into the time that we have? So she wants to do five to six recurring travel content marketing gigs. So this is, ah, Travel & Words. In fact, that's the one I was gonna tell you to go to.

So this means five to six travel content marketing gigs. We talked before... And so I'm just gonna in some way wholesale copy this over. We talked before about how there's sort of a certain duration on this just because of the way that the industry works. Now, she's a little bit ahead because she's already got her pitching going on. She's done a ton of work about learning how this works. So she is now already in the pitching phase. So she's going to be pitching. And for her, hopefully February is gonna be the end of when all of those things are lined up. So what does this mean?

She doesn't have too much else going on in January, except for the other work that she's already doing. So January should essentially be for her, because she has that other income that's not necessarily freelance income that she needs to be pitching for right now, that's gonna be time where she's focusing entirely on getting those pitches out, getting as many pitches out as possible.



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And with travel content marketing work like letters of introduction, which are similar in terms of that you have one body of text that you send with small changes out to each person, just like with Jade's book query that we talked about before, when I say, "Send out tons of these," you can literally be sending out 100. A hundred seems like a really scary number, but you can send 25 a week, which is 5 a day. And if you've already got that text typed up and you just have one sentence that needs changed on each of those, that's just one hour a day, right?

So I know for Ingrid, her schedule is a little bit different because she's not necessarily doing her travel things every single day. So we're gonna say that two days a week, she spends about two and a half hours getting her travel content marketing pitches out. So that is her goal for January. She's already got her pitches. She doesn't need to write them, but she needs to be very specific about, "I have X'd out on my calendar that at least two days a week, I need to spend this much time on sending these pitches out," okay? So this means that she can hit the goal of getting 100 pitches out the door.

So the reason for her that we have 100 pitches is that she's just starting to pitch. She doesn't know what her acceptance rate is, right? So if you don't know what your acceptance rate is for anything, whether it's travel content marketing or pitching magazines or what have you, 5%... I know, it's so much lower than the 100% we were talking about for Stephanie, but 5% is a best case scenario pitch success rate ratio to consider, if you have absolutely no data for yourself.

Like I said, 5% can seem really low, but if you feel like your pitches don't go anywhere, it's higher than 0%, but it's a good number for us to use for these travel content marketing pitches because, like I said, travel content marketing pitches are not the same as editorial pitches. You're sending basically the same letter everywhere you're sending it. The same number holds for other similar letters like pitching to jobs on job boards or sending letters of introductions out to trade magazines.

These are things where you need to basically get by obviously on the merits of your pitch and how good your pitch is, but really on the chance that the person needs something when you hit them. There's all sorts of variations that you don't know. If you're pitching a company to do travel writing for their blog in January, it might be that they just hired somebody in December and those posts haven't gone up. There's a lot of reasons that have nothing to do with you and the strength of your pitch. So 5%, even though it sounds low.

These are really cold pitches that we're sending, as opposed to magazine editors who are



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accustomed to receiving pitches from writers and to assigning pitches from writers, travel content marketing pitches just have a lower success rate out of the gate for that reason. Now, I have found quite regularly for myself and for others that a 50% success rate is much more common for just starting out with travel content marketing pitches, but we're gonna give her the goal of 100 to hit her 6 to 8 that she needs.

And when she starts getting too many responses, she can just stop, but we're gonna give her a goal of 100 and a 5% pitch rate. Remember, we did that math before for Stephanie, as well, about how many she wants to place. So we're gonna set that goal. And once she starts getting too many, she's got too many contracts signed, then she gets to stop. And then February is when she starts working towards that.

So don't forget, we've got this chunk of time here starting in May when she's gonna be more or less off limits to do new work. So that leaves us February, she's gonna be starting to get those new travel content marketing clients set up. And then March and April, she's got a little bit of travel going on. So what else can we fit in there? We have attacked this, right? This is the big one. We're keeping it simple by keeping her focused for January and February around setting that up. She wants to establish herself as a regular contributor to some travel trade magazines. She's already got her conference set up, as well.

So let's look at this one next. So setting up a regular pitching schedule is something that's gonna come as part and parcel of setting up these travel content marketing pitches, and then these letters of introduction that we're talking about because she's gonna get used to pitching, but she does say that she wants to get into some bigger name glossies. So this is something that we're gonna save for a bit later in the year because for her, the security is a big thing. So the travel content marketing gigs are things that she's gonna have on contract. And the travel trade publications are places that are gonna give her work every month. So that's why I'm focusing on these two before we get into this, which we're gonna do more at the end of the year, okay?

So let's go back now and let's look at letters of introduction for her and I'm sorry, now this is hers. Remember, we're keeping this really simple. So we've got two months where we're focusing on getting that travel content marketing set up. Now, knowing that she's got her kids' break in March and that she's got some new contracts that she's starting, we're gonna ramp her up slowly.

So what that means is that this month is where she's gonna be learning about trades and which are good for her and working on her letter or letters... Sometimes she's gonna have



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multiple ones, if she's got different ones, different types of trade magazines that she's focusing on. She's gonna be working on her letters of introduction. And then April is the time that she's gonna be getting those out. And like I mentioned earlier, and both with this slide and with other slides... Oops, let's see. There we go.

Getting those out, again, we want to look at the 5% success rate, but she doesn't need to have 5 trade magazines lined up, right? She said for her, a couple is fine. So if she wants to get 2 and she's totally new to working with travel trades, that means she would be looking at sending out letters to 50 magazines, right? Now, that sounds like a lot, but again, that letter is gonna be basically the same letter for every single magazine. It's just a function of making that list.

So the first thing that she's gonna do is work on that list, the list of magazines, okay? That's her next how she's gonna make it happen. And then those letters just go out. And that's gonna be something where once she's got that list, she only needs to be, you know, sitting down maybe even two two-hour chunks. She can get all those letters out. So to compile that list of magazines, we want to get to 50 magazines on her list, right? So it's very important when you're making lists like this, whether it's for travel content marketing which is something she's already done, or for these trade magazines.

And I want you all to hear this, that you don't spend too much time making lists of who to send letters to. If it's a pitch, that's different. You need to focus really highly on the magazine and exactly what type of section they have, the voice, everything, but if you are sending these kind of very cold letters that are standard letters, don't get super obsessed in that list-building stage.

Get obsessed learning about the ones that get back to you and they want you to send some actual specific pitches or they want you to work on a piece or they want you to work on an idea that would develop into a piece, but don't get obsessed. So what that means is that Ingrid has a background with history and with a lot of things in the West. She might go looking into art. There's a lot of different areas that she might look into, but she's gonna look up trade publication and a word. She's gonna go through Google. She's gonna pull out all of the related ones that come up.

She's gonna find the name and the email address for the editor. And that's it. That's what goes on her list. She doesn't need to be looking at how often they come out every year. She doesn't need to be looking at how many different sections... She doesn't need to be looking at any of that stuff right now. All she needs for that 50 because, like I said, we're working on



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a 5% hit rate because this is a very cold type of pitching. All she needs is that very basic information. So it's actually not gonna take her as much time to get that list of 50 together as we talked about, but it still might be... Let's say, you know, she's able to pull up... The last time I did this with somebody, like I put together a list of like 25 in like 20 minutes just using Google, but she was in a slightly more fruitful field around food.

So let's say it's gonna take her 5 to 10 hours to make that list. And then like I said, to then put those letters together. That's probably gonna take her let's say another four to five hours. So this is only gonna be 15 hours over the whole month that she's working on getting this out, right? And then she's also working on that content marketing stuff she's already got. And then she's going to her conference. So that should be just enough for her, okay?

So then like we said, this whole bit of time, she's gonna stick with the work that she already has. And we're not gonna put anything else on her plate. So these months, September and October, these are the golden months where we're gonna start hitting that next goal of hers, which is getting some bigger name glossies going. Now, here's the rub. So because she's got this other trip in April, which as I mentioned, is a conference that has some trips attached to it, she's gonna have some material from these trips, as well as her summer trips, that she can start pitching. So in this time when she's on this trip, she can be making lists of... Whoops, that doesn't need to be in all caps.

She can spend a couple of hours here and there making lists of magazine sections, look for ideas, while she's on the road, okay, but she doesn't need to be working on those pitches. She doesn't have time right now. She's got her other travel content marketing work and hopefully some work from trade magazines that's coming up in those times, as well. So this is the stuff that she's gonna be doing in the background while she's on the trip, but what that means is that when September and October come around, she can hit the ground running because she has already got the magazine sections. And while she's been traveling, she's been thinking about ideas for each of those magazine sections.

So at this point, this is when she wants to be sending I would say about 20, maybe 25, pitches over the course of the month, okay for both of these months while she gets a chance before we get into the holidays. And this is also a really great time to be getting in front of editors because they're looking at planning out their calendar for the next year. So by pitching folks in the September, October time, this is where rather than hearing from an editor, "Oh, we've already filled that section for the next year," you get to be one of those people that fill that section. So again, 20 to 25 pitches here. And what that breaks down to is about five pitches a week. So even if you're taking two hours to write each pitch, you can still do one pitch every day in your writing time apart from your other work, but I know that she's gonna be faster than that. And she's worked faster than that.



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So she's gonna be working on sending out at least five pitches a week during this time in addition to her other stuff so that she is marking off all of these goals. So, you know, I've already gone through this. So seeing that these... Oh, and I didn't put the benchmarks in for her and not for Stephanie either. I'm sorry, guys, but as you've seen as we go through these, it doesn't actually look like she's got a ton of tasks here on the bottom. And in Ingrid's because she's got other full-time commitments, I broke these out into how many hours and how many work sections there are so you guys can see how they're achievable in that time, but as you look, this "How we'll make it happen," it's not obscene. We don't have a ton of things here. And I've written them out as specific tasks.

And this is really why I like to approach planning out your year this way rather than with goals that need to happen by a certain time. And you just look at that and you're like, "How is that ever gonna happen?" Because when we don't think so much about the goals or the benchmarks or the targets or what have you and instead we just say, "Okay. Two days a week, I need to spend two and a half hours getting those pitches out," or, "I need to spend..." Where is the other one? "I need to spend 5 to 10 hours sometime this month putting together a list of 50 magazines," those are small projects. Those are tasks. Those are things that you can actually schedule out in your calendar. Okay, I need two hours here, two hours there, two hours that you put in your calendar. It's locked. Nobody else can have that time.

And that's how you can inch along and meet all these benchmarks, these BHAGs that we're looking at, without it feeling like this onerous, vague thing on the horizon that you just keep seeing it, but it's like that oasis mirage where it never seems to get any closer. So I know we've gone super, super long, but I hope that's gonna make up for the fact that I won't be talking to you guys for several weeks now, as I'm gonna be going away and in a bad time zone for doing webinars.

So what that means is there's no calls coming up for the next two weeks. And then we're gonna come back in January on January 11th with a new series that's gonna go for a couple months on how to put together different types of articles. And we're gonna start small. And we're gonna get bigger. And so we're gonna start with looking at how to put together a news brief. And then we're gonna look at how to put together a front of book roundup. And part of the reason why I'm starting small, why I'm starting with these small articles, is that writing tight, writing succinctly, concisely, and getting a lot of detail in a few words is something that I see a lot, not necessarily you struggling with. It's not that I see a lot of you struggling with it. I see it not happening. And it's a big gap between folks that are writing for high-paying outlets versus people who can't break into those outlets or who are writing for lower-paying outlets.



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And especially if you've been writing for your own blog or for lower-paying outlets for a while, it's a really important habit to cement, to be able to write short and packed and concisely. So that's why, aside from the obvious short to long trajectory idea, that's why I'm starting with these short ones because people often overlook them, but these front of book sections are the way to break into big magazines, they're the way to practice writing great writing. So I really want you guys to be doing more of those. So that's why we're gonna start there.

Thanks for bearing with me for so long. And I'm glad we didn't have too many technical hiccups today and we were able to get through workshopping everybody that I had lined up for you. I hope that you pulled a lot out of that. I tried to pick some really different people to workshop in a lot of different ways, whether it was what they had going on in their life or their goals. You know, we had somebody that had a book, which I know is something that we don't always talk about here, but a lot of you guys have going on, you know, in the background somewhere. So hopefully, those all sparked some things for you. You were writing along in your own sheets at home. And it's gonna be a little while, guys.

So I'll see you in a few weeks or talk to you in a few weeks. And have a really great holiday. I know we're all probably... Those of us who are traveling for the holiday are leaving tomorrow. So I wish you a happy holidays and safe travels, to anybody who's traveling. And thanks so much for sticking around. And have a great rest of your evening, guys.