



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Taking Control of How You Track and Reach Your Freelance Travel Writing Goals

What we're gonna be talking about is how to take control of that process of how you track and reach your travel writing goals. But I would love to hear where you guys are at right now. I see the numbers of folks in the call keep changing a little bit, so if you're just joining us, let us know what, if any, big travel writing goal you have right now.

So it's interesting, because as people are posting these. I'm seeing some that we often think of as goals, things that are in fact, projects. This is something that I actually didn't have on the docket to talk about today, but specifically, but as you'll see as we get going, that that's something that you're gonna start to isolate.

So how many of you, also let us know on the chat box, how many of you joined us for the annual review webinar series where we talked a lot about setting goals that you could achieve for the year ahead, and especially making sure that they were the ones that really mattered to you, that would really get you going? So let us know in the chat box if you joined us for the annual review webinar series, and I'll cruise through and see some of these goals that you guys are posting as well.

You've got to get recurring clients, that's a great one. Getting your blog up, that's one of those ones that's a bit more of a project. Someone else says, "A solid portfolio." That's also something that it's kind of a mix of a goal and a project, if you think about it, right? Alina has got one, "Getting my first clip, and first client." Those are two goals.

Someone's got, "I wanna understand whether multiple submissions are best." I feel like that could be either just a research project, or an experiment. Someone else has, "Getting my first feature." She's been writing a lot of front-of-book pieces. Someone else, it seems like she's trying to get answers to her pitches. Someone else wants write for trade magazines, great. Negotiating, that's another great one.

Seems like a couple of you have been on the annual reviews, but not too many of you. That's great. So, we did talk about goals in the annual reviews, and I'm not gonna duplicate what we talked about during that, but that was more about setting your goals specifically for this year, or this coming year, around what is going on for you this year. What we're gonna talk about today is more in line with the process, and taking control, particularly, that's what this whole series is about, the process of tracking and reaching the goals that you've set. But we're also gonna look a little bit about what those goals should be.



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So you may have heard me say last week, or in one of the newsletters, that I'm just back from getting my professional coaching certification. I actually have a certified executive coach certificate now. I'm gonna introduce you guys to a really interesting framework that we came up with when I was at the certification program that I think is particularly useful for why a lot of you are having trouble. There's got to be a reason for that, right? But you probably don't know what it is. The thing is that it can be really hard in a vacuum without a coach, or a mentor, or somebody like that.

Like I said, if you don't have a coach, or mentor, or an accountability group that has a really good foundation in the types of things that keep you from reaching your goals, right? So that's like a big ask, and not everybody has a mentor, or accountability group that does that, right? That specializes in that. So if you don't have that, it can be really hard to tell why your efforts to reach your goals aren't working.

So before we get into the tracking, and what kind of goals you might wanna look at setting, I wanna talk about how to figure out why the goals that you have right now, or in the future, why your goals aren't working out, why what you're doing isn't getting you there. So that's gonna be the first thing I'm gonna talk about.

And then we're gonna look at a specific method of both setting up your goals themselves, and also your path to get there. And because everybody always wants to know the how, I've got some really cool techniques that I wanna show you. One I've mentioned a lot before, and one is something that it's an app, it does cost money. It only costs \$37. I'm not getting any affiliate payment on it, but a friend of mine started it, and it's quite cool, and endorsed by some very big people. So I highly recommend it. It's going to fix a lot of the things that I know many of you personally struggle with in terms of keeping your ideas present.

I asked you earlier if you have some goals, some specific goals that you might have in mind that you're working towards in your freelance travel writing. But now I wanna know, this whole series is about taking control of your freelance business, so now I wanna know how in control you feel of your goals. It can be of your ability to reach them, or of your ability to make them come true, something like that. But how in control do you feel of the goals with your freelance travel writing?

I'm seeing a lot of people say about 50%. I happen to know some of the folks who are saying that, and I think that that's probably a good, solid number for them and where they are. I'd love to hear from more of you, how in control do you feel? Yeah, Jake made a really great point. He says he feels like it's all up to the external forces. Leslie says, "Not at all."



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This is actually something that I find people say a lot, and this was one of the reasons that I wrote “The Six-Figure Travel Writing Road Map” in the first place was when you, especially, if you’re just getting started with travel writing, and learning about it, and all the things there are to do right now, like video is huge, you know, everyone is always saying like, “Why write for magazines? They’re dying.” There’s just so much stuff going on, people telling you which way to go, and so it’s really easy to have too many things that you’re trying to do, and also to feel like the industry changes so fast that even if you try to do something, that it’s not gonna make sense.

Let’s see what some of the people are saying, “Getting a grip on the steering wheel but not fully in control.” That’s great. Someone else said, “Other goals take precedence at the moment.” That’s a really important one to notice, because I definitely have some people that I coach who I’ve seen have a situation like this, where they say that they wanna do something in particular with their travel writing, or maybe it’s even vaguer, right? Like maybe they are freelance, generally, like they work for themselves but they make money here and there doing different things, and they say they wanna do it from travel writing, but they aren’t actually putting in the specific marketing work. They usually say that they don’t have the time, and then they just keep saying that they feel bad because they’re not doing these things. But it comes back to exactly what Lenora said, that they have other goals at the moment that take precedence. That’s a really important thing to single in on if you’re having trouble reaching your goals.

So there’s three factors that we’re gonna look at, but this is a really good way to think of it. If you don’t have control over your goals, believe that you’re going about reaching them the right way, or think that you’re getting enough feedback about whether you’re doing it right or not, you’re gonna burn out on the process of goal setting on even thinking about your goals, which is gonna make you burn out actually doing the work. Because if you can’t give yourself a why, a reason, a really tantalizing, like ice cream sundae at the end of this path that you’re on, why on Earth would you continue down it, right?

So here’s the way I want you guys to think of this, okay? There is a block of ice that is between you and what we’re gonna talk about later, which is the path to reach your goals. But right now, there’s a block of ice between you and that path. Every so often, there’s gonna be another block of ice, like maybe it’s a ship and you’re an iceberg, and there’s just icebergs along the way. Every time there is an iceberg, you have to melt it to keep going, okay? We can start thinking about global warming or whatever, but just think about it, that there’s these blocks of ice in your way, and you...would take you forever to cut through them. You just wanna melt them. You can’t go around them.



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So what are those blocks of ice composed of? Three things. These are like kind of big, you know, jargony words, so I'm gonna spell out what they are for you. But the one side is "Inefficiency," oh, sorry, "Inefficacy." This spell-corrected for me.

Inefficacy is when you don't believe that you know how to do something, okay? When you don't believe that you're doing something well. So this is for all of you who feel like you're pitching and not getting anywhere. You feel like your pitching is pointless, because clearly, like it's not happening, so you lack in efficacy, okay? That's the big part of your iceberg.

Another one is Cynicism. So cynicism is related, right? It seems like it's the belief that you're not doing right, but it's actually more about being skeptical, okay? It's more about getting this feeling like there's something going on that you don't understand. Can you guys feel that difference? It's kind of like that thing where maybe you're pitching, and you think that what you're pitching is fine, but people aren't responding. And rather than just thinking, "Okay, well I don't think I'm doing this right," instead, you think, "Well, somebody told me to do it this way, and this isn't working." So then you're cynical about the method that you've been taught, okay? So you're lacking feedback that you're doing it right, okay?

Exhaustion, this is one that I'm sure a number of us can empathize with. But exhaustion isn't just physical, it's also exhaustion at having work that's too much, that feels like you're not going anywhere, or generally comes from a lack of control. So let's look at a couple of other things that play into this, okay?

So stupid spell-correct. So inefficacy could come from a lack of purpose. So if you're in that point where you feel overwhelmed with all sorts of different things that you could do, or almost exhaustion, what I mean by lack of purpose is that you don't really know why you're doing it. You don't feel like there's a reason. You don't really feel like there's a point to you in this great big world of travel writing. You feel like if you just stop doing it, then nobody will notice. I'm sure a lot of us feel like that about our writing.

Another one is a lack of sufficient challenge. I see this a lot for people who are doing low paid work, with maybe \$20 a pop blog post for somewhere, that they could just bang out without even thinking. So you have a lack of efficacy because you're not working to your full potential, and that starts to grind away at you at a while. And they're all related, like it grinds away at your confidence. It grinds away at, you know, it makes you exhausted. They're all kind of related, okay?



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Lack of impact is similar. Lack of impact is when you feel like you're doing something, and maybe you're getting paid for it, like maybe it's a blog post, or you could be doing something like sending pitches, but you feel like that act, that thing that you're doing, just has no bearing on reaching your actual goal.

Lack of acknowledgement is one that I see a lot of you guys who have freelance clients struggle with. I had a whole call with a coaching client the other day that was about this, about how she's gotten some travel content marketing gigs on her own, and her clients, you know, maybe they respond that they got the post and they just sort of say, "Thanks." You know, maybe it has appeared at the end, maybe not. Maybe it's capitalized, maybe not. She has no idea if her posts are good or not, right?

That's also lack of effective feedback, but there are two sides of the same coin, right? If people aren't even acknowledging that you're doing something, then you really start to wonder whether you need to be doing it, if you're doing it okay. It creates all these questions.

Now, the cynicism piece is one that I think is often overlooked but is another one of these causes of work burnout/goal burnout, that I want you to be more cognizant of. Especially in here, we've got insufficient reward. So this is sort of similar when I was saying to, you know, folks that are doing \$20 blog posts. You might feel like you've got a lack of challenge on that, or lack of impact, but insufficient reward is a huge one there, right? Because you might be spending, you know, two hours, or four hours on a blog post that you get paid \$20 for, or if you have your own blog that you're trying to use to an end, like you think it'll get you in front of editors, or you wanna turn it into a money making enterprise, then you definitely have insufficient reward there because you're not getting paid anything, right? You don't exactly know how it's gonna pan out. So that's one that people in the cynicism category tend to think about.

Another one is culture misfit and the related value conflict. So what if you are working for a company, you're doing some travel writing, you're doing some blog posts, and the way that they run their company, or the stuff that they are doing, you know, out in the field, or how they work with their clients, is just not the way that you'd wanna do it. You don't love that you work for a company that does things like that. Or perhaps it's just the fact that they don't give feedback, and you're a person who used to teach and you understand the value of feedback. There's all these different ways that the values and the culture of the places that you might be writing for, or bloggers are collaborating with, or, you know, people that you're trying to pitch and having these issues with, there's all these ways that that, in of itself, can create burnout for you.



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I know people tend to think about, especially when you're freelancing, when you're new to freelancing, if you are trying to work with somebody and you're running into issues like this, there's a sense of either feeling like it's your fault, or it's their fault. So you can either say, "It's external forces that are keeping me from reaching my goal. You know, this person is like this. This person is like this. They're crazy, I just can't work with them. Like how could I possibly do any more in this setting?" Or you could feel like, you know, I'm trying my best to work with this person, but it just seems like they don't like anything I do, or respect me, because they're always telling me this, and that's the exact opposite of how I work. I don't understand why they can't see how I work, and why can't they work on my same level, because if they respected me, they would do that.

But these things are actually, cultural misfits. You'll notice the people who have been freelancing for a long time tend to say "No" a lot more. Part of that is the act of practicing saying "No" but part of it is also having a really good sense of what fits them. This is something that you develop over time, of course, from trying to work with people. But you can also look at the work cultures that you've had before, and know what work cultures work for you, and which ones don't, and what fits, and what makes you uncomfortable, and be proactively looking for those things in your engagement.

Now, as I mentioned, exhaustion is a little more than just, you know, physical exhaustion but there's some very specific things that can lead into that, that can kind of shore up the ice in our inner ice cube. So overwhelm is one we talk about a lot. Overwhelm can be overwhelming options, but overwhelm can also just be like too many things on your plate that have to get done that often don't have anything to do with travel writing.

But another one that I want you to pay particular attention to is unrealistic work expectations that you might be putting on yourself about your travel writing. So saying you have a blog that you have to maintain for some reason, like you've an audience of a certain size, or you have contracts that you have to fulfill. There's a lot that can go into running a blog, but what do you actually have to be doing? What are the marketing activities that actually, specifically, create tangible impact for your blog? How many posts, or what type of posts, or what length of posts, are actually driving that impact, are actually due to the people that you have created partnerships with, or that you owe a post to? And what past that are you doing because you've just created an expectation for yourself that you have to do all the things?

So another thing in there, that also is under the unrealistic category, is unrealistic change of pace. This is for all of the people in the world who on January 1st say, "I'm gonna start going to the gym this year." Or "I'm gonna start eating better this year," or "I'm gonna start



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whatever it is this year,” and they think that they’re gonna go from zero to perfect. Maybe they do for about a week, but that change of pace, that change of status quo, is not sustainable. It causes exhaustion, it causes burnout, and you go back to what’s comfortable.

In the blog post and the newsletter preceding today’s webinar, I talked about this idea of running the marathon. In brief, what I mean here is that a marathon is a huge, huge thing. It’s a huge commitment, not just in the training process, but in the day that you’re actually gonna do it. You put a lot of physical strain on your body. It’s a huge accomplishment when you do it, but there tends to be a very long training period running up to it. I think it’s one of those things where we’re all quite conscious of people who wanna do a marathon have to do all these steps first. You don’t just show up and run whatever it is, 26.2 miles, or something like that. Nobody does that. Nobody just shows up and runs 26.2 miles.

Perhaps some people do, and perhaps they do it just fine, but they are a very, very small percentage of people who have already trained in other ways. They have already established a sense of, well, it’s misspelled, but they’ve already gotten rid of the sense of inefficacy. They know, they have a very deep belief that they are able to do this thing if they just show up and run the thing.

However, I feel like so many people come to travel writing and just show up, and expect that they’re gonna do the thing without having a type of marathon training. So I’m gonna look in a second at a “Marathon Training” plan. We’re gonna look at how that can work for you. But first, I want us to think about what’s our marathon? Some people have said some in the chat box, but I want us to think about what, for now, just for the purposes of the remaining say half hour that we have today, what is a goal that you’re gonna use for right now, because we’re gonna do an exercise, to plan as your marathon? What is something that you can see on the horizon that you know you wanna meet it in a certain amount of time, and it’s big, and it requires you to be a bit of a different person than you are now to get there? What is your marathon? Let us know in the chat box.

Some ideas here, I talk in “The Six-Figure Travel Writing Road Map” about how there’s three main drivers, three main motivations, for travel writers. Obviously, we all wanna travel, we wanna see the world. We wanna teach other people about how exposure to other cultures can change them. But they tend to fall under these three categories: freedom, bylines, and trips.

A lot of you, earlier, voiced goals that related to bylines. You have a certain publishing marker that you wanna hit. That might be that you wanna be in a certain publication, or you



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wanna get your first clip, or something like that. Or maybe you wanna get your first thing where an editor has assigned you an article, you wanna have a relationship with a certain type of magazine like a trade magazine.

But some of you have goals that are related to freedom. Now, if you have a goal that seems like it's just about money, it's probably related to freedom. So, say you wanna have a recurring gig. Say that's your goal. That's related to freedom, because you wanna be free from having to think about where your money comes from every month, right? You wanna have that recurring gig set up so that you know what it is that's gonna be in your bank account every month, right? You wanna be free from the fear and from the wondering.

Some folks have trip goals. I have somebody that I coach who I think this is one of her goals for the year, is to get on her first press trip. You guys have probably heard my opinions about press trips. Obviously, individual press trips can be great, but getting on a group press trip can also be great for networking. So if you're new, that can be a really great thing just to get in front of some editors in a really casual setting. So if you have a goal to get on a group press trip, that's one. You could have a goal that this is the year you're actually gonna go to blah, blah, blah place. Related to that, to make that work, is that, you know, you wanna place a certain number of articles about that place before you get there.

Keep dropping your goal into the chat box, and try to make it something that we can work with today. I'm gonna workshop a couple of these ones that are here. Stephanie says her goal is freedom. She needs her income to be stable, so when she moves overseas is not impacted by where she lives. So in this case, for Stephanie, I would recommend that for the purposes of the exercise that we're gonna do today, that she picks a specific income goal. She probably has one already, that she needs to earn a certain number in a month, or she needs to have a certain amount in her savings. So Stephanie, I recommend you to pick a certain number, either per month or that you wanna have in your savings that we can work with for now.

Leslie also says she wants to make money, but she has a need to express herself, and communicate with others. So Leslie, I wonder if your goal is more around getting a specific clip, or a specific type of clips, or a specific number of clips, or if it's just to make a certain amount of money. Let us know.

Yeah, and Marilyn has got one: a decent income leading to freedom. I know she's got a job in the science field that I find quite fascinating, but she wants to be a travel writer. So Marilyn, I think you're still in your full time job. Let us know what number, or think about it for





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yourself, guys, if don't wanna share in the chat box, what is the number that you need to be free to leave your full time job, and freelance?

We've got another one in here, bylines. Catherine's looking to build relationships with a dozen editors, especially local pubs, and airline magazines. This is a great one, guys. A dozen pubs, build relationships with a dozen editors. That's great for what we wanna do today.

Jade's got one, "To have 25% to 33% of her income from travel writing." That's great. So, Jade, what I would say for that is to take whatever number you have for your income goal, and just take that 25% to 33% and turn that into a specific number.

Sally's got one for bylines in well-respected magazines, and hopefully, the good amount of money that comes with that. So Sally, I'd love for you to pick either...well, first pick a number of bylines that you wanna have, and then, what's the bar for those magazines? When you say well-respected magazines, does that just mean national, does it mean national news stand? What are we looking for there?

Stephanie's got three per month now, that's great. Beth says she wants portable income. I'd love to know what income that needs to be. Because portable, like that's a big kind of qualifier there, that could go a lot of different ways. So us to have a marathon-oriented goal, it's got to be a marathon as an event. It takes, you know, 4 to 12 hours, whatever, depending on how long you do it, and it's gonna happen on a certain day.

Christine's got...she wants to have two repeat gigs, and five additional writings assignments by June, great. That's two. So Christine, pick one of the two of those that you can work through today as we set out your marathon plan.

Mackenzie has got bylines are her primary goal for now, and freedom is the long term goal. Mackenzie was just at our bootcamp so I know a little bit about these goals. So McKenzie, for today, why don't you pick something in the byline area? Or you could pick the freedom number goal if you want. But why don't you pick something in the byline area, in terms you want one byline from a specific type of publication, or you wanna get 10 clips in your portfolio, or something like that.

Jake's got a great one. He's got \$2,000 per month from travel writing he wants, preferably through recurring gigs. Great, that's a good one. Hold on to that.



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We've got Alina has \$5,000 monthly income, 3 content marketing clients, and 2 trade magazine clients. Great. So Alina, for this exercise, why don't you pick one of those two? You wanna either just focus in on the trade magazine clients, or the content marketing clients.

And then Elisa has got 4K a month in recurring income. Great. Great.

So I know that a couple of you, I kind of mentioned like some ways to fix it, I've gone through a bunch of them. I feel like I've gone through at least 20, but maybe less. So hopefully, everybody now has a marathon goal. So again, for the marathon aspect of it, it's got to be something specific, right? A marathon is an event that you sign up for. You put the date in your calendar. You know what day it's coming up.

So for all of us, for all of you, that have chosen a goal for right now that doesn't already have a specific date on it, let's pick a date. What's the date that we can put on there, right? How can we turn this into a marathon that's in our calendar that we know we have to prepare for?

So when I was at the coaching program the other day, the individual who was running the program was coaching me as an exercise, in front of some other people. He was asking me about something specific, and I kind of resisted putting a date on it. So if you feel like you don't know what date this needs to happen, say you're in a job right now and you wanna leave sometime, but you don't know when. Look at this way, would you still wanna be in your job in five years? Would you still wanna be in your job in two years? Would you still wanna be in your job in one year?

I know for some folks on here, you have a specific cycle that you're looking at. Like maybe you have a bonus cycle, that you wanna leave after you get your next bonus. If you don't have something so specific like that, think about your life, and think about two years from now, how would you feel like if you were still in that job? Say you already freelance. There are several people in here that are already freelance, and maybe you freelance in a different type of writing, and you wanna have more...be doing travel writing. Maybe you're just starting with freelance, or you've been freelancing for a while, but your income isn't what you'd like it to be.

So if you feel like you don't have a very clear idea of when you want this numeric goal to come into play, so we've gotten a couple of people that have said \$2,000 per month, \$4,000 per month, \$5,000 per month, \$3,000 per month, a third of the income per month. If you don't know when you want that to come into play, do the same exercise. If you did not have



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\$4,000 a month in recurring income in March of next year, would you feel okay? What about September of next year? What about September of this year? What about July of this year? When do you start to feel uncomfortable if you haven't achieved that goal?

So if your goal doesn't automatically have a date on it, doesn't automatically have that date that marathon is schedule for, backtrack it. Think about when, to you, feels too far out to not have achieved that by, okay? I know for myself, I quit my job once and I went back, not to the same job, actually, but a different job, which was in travel so it made me feel better. It was in travel and writing. But I still started to feel uncomfortable even in that job, because I really knew that I wanted to work for myself. But it took something specific that was forcing me out of that job, which was that I was gonna get married, and the person I was gonna get married to live on the other side of the country, so I needed to move there anyway and quit my job, to force me into that.

But then once I found, once I set that date on it, once I said, "Okay, June, I'm out of here. I'm gonna start working on my blog. I'm gonna start working on clips. I'm gonna start working on partnerships. I'm gonna build up my savings." I had all that in mind for June, but once I set that goal of okay, I'm gonna get out of dodge by June, and I started doing all these things to work towards it, I actually left in March. Because I put a date on it, and I started working toward it, and I was actually able to get there faster.

So for now, we want you to just put a date on it. You can put it as far out as you want, or as close as you want, but we want it to be like the sell-by date. Like if you haven't done whatever this goal is, and again, pick one. If you had two things in there, like travel content marketing clients and trade magazines, pick one for now. Or just pick the money. Because we can't accomplish all of these things when one plan dies. So pick one of the things. So if you said you wanna have two print articles per month for \$2,000, pick one of those two things for now.

Okay, so hopefully, everybody's got a one thing, a single thing, and they've got a date. If you don't have both of those things, let me know in the chat box and I can workshop a couple more of these. But we wanna have a single thing, and we wanna have a date. So you can almost think that this is the thing that you put on your calendar, and you email your spouse, and your friends. I recommend that you do this, guys, by the way. I recommend that you do this. You're gonna put it on your calendar, and you are going to email your spouse and your friends, and you're gonna say, "Hey guys, you know, sometimes people run marathons. I'm gonna do blah, and this is the day I'm gonna do it on. This is my marathon." So if you have friends that are good with that, if you have a significant other or a spouse, I really



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recommend doing this, because accountability in community is a really important part of reaching your goals.

Now, what I don't want you to do is to go post this in a Facebook group where there's like 4,000 people. You wanna tell this, you can, but the more important thing when I say community and accountability is to tell people who care about you, who interact with you regularly, who will ask you, "Hey, you told me you're gonna run this travel writing marathon, how's that going? You're gonna do it by September, right? Are you on track to do that?" You want that level of uncomfortable accountability, people who you might have to explain yourself to if you're not actually getting there. This is why it's important to pick something that's one thing, and it's simple, and that you can put a date on it, okay?

So if you don't feel comfortable doing it, that's fine, but it will give you a huge boost knowing that you have the potential negative outcome of having to explain to people why you're not doing something is a big driver, psychologically. We are wired to seek pleasure, and avoid pain so by setting yourself up to potentially have pain in close personal relationship by telling somebody that you're failing is gonna be a big motivator for a lot of people, okay?

Patti's got great one. Two pitches accepted by March 31st, except that's 2 weeks from now. I would recommend sending like 120 pitches if you wanna make sure to make that happen.

Make sure that your dates are reasonable for your level of experience right now. This is a really big one, okay? I talked about this in the blog post and the newsletter leading up to today, that you wanna make sure that your plan for getting somewhere is achievable. I'm just gonna go forward for a second to show you the slide, and then we'll go back.

This is the marathon training schedule for like an actual half marathon training, okay? So you'll see in here that it's 10 weeks, and the half marathon is 13 miles. So if you're somebody, for instance, who feels comfortable running for 6 miles, because this starts with running 3 or 4 miles, so let's say you're somebody who is comfortable with running 3 or 4 miles, it's gonna take you 10 weeks to train for this half marathon. But what if you're somebody who's not comfortable running at all, and you're not even super comfortable walking a mile all at once, then your half marathon training plan is not gonna be 10 weeks. Your half marathon training plan is gonna be more like six months, okay?



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So when you choose your date, make sure that you've got your own physical stamina as relates to your goal in mind. So that means if you're not super comfortable pitching, or if you're not in a great place with your pitches, like they take you a long time to write, you haven't gotten any acceptances, you don't know why, then this might be something that you're more in that not yet walking for a whole mile segment. So you've got to think about it that way.

So it sounds like, I haven't had many ask, so it sounds like everybody's got their one thing, and their date. So this is what we're aiming to do. If you guys have a piece of paper, or you wanna open up Excel, you can just look at this now to kind of know for yourselves this is what we're going towards: a number of weeks, what we do to get there.

Now, I'm gonna go back and talk about how we build that. We need benchmarks for our goals. When we talk in a business setting about benchmarks, people typically think of benchmarks as kind of a comparing to the status quo, comparing to the people that are going well, as a point that means that you are on track, okay? I like to think of benchmarks as more the actual, specific words in there. So a bench on your run that marks that you've reached a certain point. The fact that it's a bench also means that you get to sit there and take a rest.

So let's think of benchmarks that way. Let's think of benchmarks as a place along your training, or in your marathon, or whatever analogy that you wanna use, where you've reached something and you say, "Oh, I've gotten here. I feel so happy. I know that I've reached three miles in one run," or whatever that it is, "And now I get to sit and take a second on this bench and celebrate it, and mark the occasion." So it's a place where you stop and rest, and mark the occasion.

Now, we get to do these on so many different levels. I'll explain how they work. So if you are somebody who is a full time freelancer, you should absolutely have daily benchmarks for yourself. Absolutely, without question, especially if you're not currently hitting your income goals. If you are currently hitting your income goals, and your goal is something different, maybe you don't need a daily benchmark, but if your goal is in any way related to income, I want you to have a daily goal.

If you're not currently full time freelance, it might not make sense in your mind to have a daily goal, because you aren't working on your freelancing every day. But here's the thing, I really encourage you, even if you aren't full time freelance, to be honest with yourself about the number of days that you work, and that you need to work, to reach your goals, and at least have a daily goal for those days.



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So it might be you only work on your freelancing on weekends. It might be that you work on your freelancing on evenings, but not weekends, because that's your time with your kids. It maybe that you work on your freelancing not on the weekends, because that's your time with your kids, and not every weeknight because you have some things that you have to do on certain weeknights, like go to your kid's basketball games, something like that. So three days a week, in the evenings or mornings, you're working on your freelancing, okay? Or, perhaps, you're in some sort of job where you can work like 9 out of 10 days, or 4 out of 5 days, something like that, and you do have like a full day that you work on your freelancing. So for the days that you are working, you should have a daily goal.

Now, that daily goal should be purely numeric so that it is trackable. What are some options here? You can do it by time. You can do it by deliverable. Or you can do it by income.

Here's what I mean by that, okay, by time. Say you, either because you have a whole other job, or because your blog is your job, or something like that, say this part of your freelance travel writing life can only take up a very, very small amount of each day, like maybe an hour, maybe less. Then you set yourself a 15-minute mark every day, or a half hour mark. You set yourself a timer. You say, "My goal is that I need to spend this amount of time every day."

What if we're doing it on the deliverable level? What I mean by that is to say, "I'm a full time freelancer. I can make time for this. I can make sure I'm using my time effectively. I'm gonna send one pitch every day." There was somebody who I coached, who wanted to really, really up her game in terms of the magazines that she was working with, and so she set herself a goal to send out 100 pitches in January, or December. I think it was December. A hundred pitches in December. She only ended up sending 30. A lot of them were similar to other pitches that she tweaked for a new publication. She sent a lot of them to really big, scary outlets, and she was like, "I only sent 30, and my goal was 100."

The thing is that she is a person who tends to do things at the end of the month. She tends to them, like, right before whenever they're due. So with her, to have split those into three pitches every day that she had to do would have made that 100 goal much more doable. Because what ended up happening was towards the end of the month, she was sending like 10 pitches a day.

So the reason that we break out a deliverable into daily benchmarks is to avoid that. To avoid it all happening at the end. So if you have a goal that's around breaking into a certain number of magazines, doing it by pitches is great. If you have a goal that's to earn a certain number



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of dollars, but you already have a place you can write as much as you want, you can also make it to deliverables. You can say, “I need to write three blog posts for, you know, blah, blah, blah company every single day in order to earn this much to meet this thing.”

Now, if you wanna do money, if your goal is straight money, then the daily level for that, somebody’s got \$3k a month, there’s about 22 working days a month, well, we can just call it 20. So \$3,000 over the course of the month is about \$136 a working day, okay? So that’s Monday through Friday. That would be your benchmark, your daily benchmark. But that would be your benchmark for the end of the line, right? That would be your benchmark for when you have reached.

So this is the really important thing to remember, right? That this half marathon training schedule that we have, at the end, your goal is to run these 13.1 miles. But in the beginning, you don’t do that every single day. So your daily level, your daily goal, if your goal is to earn \$3k, your daily goal isn’t gonna start out at \$136. Your daily goal might start out at \$20, and then it will become \$40, and then it will become \$60, and then \$80, and then \$100, and then \$120, and then you’ll realize you’ve gotten so good at increasing this that you’ll just push right past \$136 and you’ll make it \$140, and then you’ll make it \$200, and it’ll be \$250, and then it will be \$350, and it’ll keep going like that.

What about weekly goals? I think these are ones that some folks might already have. A lot of people tell me that they, and I’m certainly guilty of this, that your life with travel and other things in your life, and whatnot makes it impossible to set goals on anything less than a monthly level. Let me know, just show of hands in the chat box, if you feel like you’ve got so much variance in your life, it’s hard to set anything but on a monthly level.

This is one of the reasons that the marathon training plan, to go back to the site for second, has different things all the time. Is that you’re not, every week, going to be able to do the same things that you did the week before, just like you’re not gonna do the same things every day, and just that you’re not gonna do the same things every month. At the end of month one here, they’re running 3 miles and 5 miles, and 3 miles and 8 miles. But at the end of month two, they’re running 4 miles and 5 miles, and 4 miles and 9 miles. It keeps going up slightly.

The most important thing about having weekly level goals is that you are generous with yourself. Daily level goals are about setting consistency. Weekly level goals are about being generous with yourself. So your daily goals should be very, very small, but your weekly goals should be something that gives you a really nice bench. What I mean by that is well, having a daily goal, like spending 15 minutes, or writing one pitch, or earning \$20 a blog



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post, these are all your kind of like starter goals, right? Having a daily goal as a bench, at the end of the day, we sit on the bench, and we look back at our day and we say, “Yeah, I did something. I’m working on this,” right?

The weekly level goal needs to produce that same feeling without us overestimating what we can realistically do in a week. So I really recommend that you don’t just have your weekly goal be a multiplier of all of your daily goals put together.

It’s really important to make sure that your weekly goal is not just a multiplier of your daily goal. You want that bench to be different. That bench we sit on at the end of the day and look back at the day is gonna be different than the week, right? The week is a bigger thing. We have a different thing to look forward to. We have to have a different bench.

When I was training for this half marathon that I ran with my husband, I was living in Boston at the time. Boston has got this really great thing, where they’ve got this river. It is between Boston and Cambridge. They have bridges at these different intervals, which for runners makes it’s so easy to say, “Okay, if I do this circle, which consists of these two bridges and these two parts of the river bank, that’s this many miles. If I go one more bridge, then that’s this many miles.”

So you want, at the end of the week, you wanna be looking literally, like you wanna be from a different bridge, you wanna have a different viewpoint. What that might mean is that if you are starting really small, and you have 15 minutes a day as your benchmark, then at the end of the week, you wanna say you sent one pitch, or you completed one article, or you got one blog post up.

If your daily goal is money, if your daily goal is \$20 a day, \$40 a day, whatever it is, then at the end of the week, you wanna say that you got one new assignment, or that you contacted an editor you’d never contacted before, or that you finished an article that you had been assigned.

If your daily goal is deliverable, so like sending a pitch every day, then at the end of the week, then your goal can be a dollar amount, okay? So make your weekly goal different.

Now, monthly goals are something that, as I alluded to before, it’s really easy to have and then realize very close to the end of the month that you’re not hitting them. So I really like





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tying either your daily or your weekly goal into what your monthly goal is, so that you know along the way that you are on track to hit that, and maybe you even hit it early.

So if your daily goal is time, your monthly goal can be time, and so on. That way you know, if you are currently in another job, especially that job is really demanding and you work 60-hour weeks, your monthly goal can be something as simple and forgiving as putting in 8 hours in the course of the month, or 10 hours in the course of the month into your travel writing, and your daily goal goes into that so that over the course of the month, you're sitting on these benches and you know that you've done a little bit, and you get to take a rest. And then by the end, you can look back and say, "Wow, I've moved somewhere."

But what happens is each week, I'm gonna go back over the marathon now. Each, we have at the end of the month because we've got the adrenaline because now the end of the month is coming, you can pump out a little bit more at the end of the month. Because you've got this feeling of being almost there, right?

As you work through this for yourself, whether you wanna do it on paper, or in a spreadsheet, have your daily goal be one of those three things, right? It can be deliverable, it can be time, it can be money. Have your weekly goal be a different one of those things. Have your monthly goal tie into either your weekly goal type, or your daily goal type. And you can do this exact same thing where you have at the end total so you see what you're going to hit at the end of the month.

Then for the next month, and I really recommend doing these for now at least a quarter at a time, okay? So make three months for yourself so that you can see how things will increase every month, okay? Each new month, you're gonna start a little higher. So in the first one here, they did 3, 3, 3, and then 4. At the beginning the next month, they're doing 3, 5, 3, 10. Ten is way bigger.

After this call, when you go back through and do this, like I say, you wanna make sure that you have a quarterly level where you'll have gotten somewhere different at the end of the quarter, okay? That's done by proactively planning out your goals in this marathon-type way so that at the end of March, or at the end of April, when you're looking at what you're gonna do for the next month, you're not just starting over, and you're not just saying, "Oh, well, I didn't get it done last month, so this is the month I'll finally do it." You're gonna work incrementally with your daily, weekly, and monthly goals to get there, okay?



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So let's talk about how. The tactics, the tips and tricks. I have lo-fi and hi-fi here, okay? So the Fundraising Thermometer Approach. I bet some of you guys have heard me talk about this before. It is super, super low tech. It involves a little head space for you to write your own things in there. What this little graphic is is it doesn't have to have money. You'll see the one here has money.

But we talked about three different types of daily benchmarks you could use, right? It could be deliverables, it could be money, or it could be time. Within your thermometer, you have a progression, so that the days that you don't hit and absolute your goal, you're still seeing that you got partway there. You're still seeing that you did a little bit on this.

Now, this is really important because of this all or nothing mentality that so many people have about goals, which is that you think, "Either I sent the pitch today, or I didn't." But maybe you wrote the lead for a pitch, maybe you matched the idea to a magazine. Maybe you got almost there, but you just couldn't get the right email address, or you just couldn't figure out the title that you wanted to put on there.

You want to have something that tracks how far you got each day, even if you didn't get there all the way, to help reinforce your feeling that you're actually doing things. That you're able to do this, even if today, it just didn't happen, okay? When you're training for the marathon, even if you run a mile instead of three, you still ran, right? So we want something that tracks that.

This fundraising thermometer is a really great, really lo-fi way to do that that I love. This is the one that I put in the chat box with the link, this one is blank. It doesn't have to be just money, right? This is where you can write time, you can write deliverables, whatever it is that you personally are using.

But what about the high tech version? I got something cool for you guys. This is especially great for everyone who's got too much on their plate and feels like time goes by, and then they remember that they had this goal, and that they haven't been doing anything towards it. The reason that I recommend this is that that's like all of us these days, right? There's so much on our plate. Like, somebody emails you something, and then the next thing you know, you did something else after that, you did something else after that, you did something else after that, it's the next day and you're working all day on something. And then it's the next Monday and you're like, "Oh, my God, but I really meant to launch blah. I really meant to send this pitch, it was almost done. I really meant to get some pitch ideas from this trip, and I haven't done that yet." This will keep that from happening.



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Like I said, it costs \$37, but you can try it for free for 7 days. So I really, really, really recommend, just to get started, just to get a boost on whatever goal you selected for today, that you download this app, even if you only use it for free for seven days. You don't have to put in a credit card to download it, so it just gives you the option of the end to continue or not. You totally don't have to, if you don't wanna pay for it. But it does this really cool thing where every time your screen goes to sleep, or you open your computer, or whatever, it shows you your goal. You can put several on there. It's great to have like just one to three. But it pops up and shows it to you.

Here's how it works. I can't show you on my screen, because of what I mentioned. Like it pops up over everything else, so there's no good way for me to show it to you. So if you can see here, it's got like a white out. It whites over the rest of your screen. And then in the middle there's this box, and it says "What you're doing today," and it says your three goals, like I said, you have more. But that shows up every single time you open the computer, or every time it falls asleep. You can also toggle to it whenever you want.

Now, it does some other neat things that I know a lot of you guys have a need for stuff like this, is that it allows you to have a work session where you're working on...yeah, Steph had a great name for it, "Your own personal butt kicker." Exactly, it's like an accountability partner that you know you can depend on, right? Like you don't have to hope that they're also gonna be working hard that day.

It's got these two cool tools, which is one is focused work sessions where you write down like, "Right now, I'm doing this, and I'm gonna spend this much time on it." It allows you to kind of like block out whatever else is not that thing, and it reminds you that that's what you're working on. It's got this little focus session on it, and the timer is ticking.

Now, an even cooler thing that I really like is how many of us are working on one thing, and then we're like, "Oh, no. I have to do this thing." Or "Oh, I've got a great idea for a blog post," or "Oh, my God, I just figured out what I want my blog to be about that I haven't started to write. I finally know what I'm gonna send that editor who asked me for pitches and I didn't know what to send her. I finally figured it out." Don't go to it right now. Don't drop what you're doing, and go do that thing instead. Write yourself a future note, that's what they call it.

So you can click from the screen where you are on, and you can write yourself a future note and just say, "Oh, my God, I realized that I need to do this thing later." And then when you're done with your work session, you look through those notes to yourself, it saves them all for



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you, and it gives it to you when you're done with your task. And then you go, "Okay, great. Now I'm gonna go do this, or this, I need to email myself, I need to email this person," or "I really need to pay that bill right now," or whatever it is.

But I've talked to a lot of folks who are working on something important like responding to an editor who has asked them for more pitches, and then they get an email from another editor who wants them to invoice them for something, or an email asking them to join some initiative, or a question about their blog, or something like that, and they go answer that thing instead. No, you're putting it on your future notes.

So, again, this tool, which again, is designed by somebody I know, so if you have any complaints, you can tell me and I'll tell him. It's called ActionAlly. It's available for free for seven days, and then after that, there's a one time, lifetime license of \$37. But as Steph mentioned, it's like having your own personal trainer for getting your work done, so I highly, highly recommend it. I think it's definitely worth it.

So that's all I've got for you for today. Hopefully, you've had a lot of thoughts about how to set your goals, and how to track them, and how to figure out if you're not reaching them, why that is, and how to make sure that you're working towards them in attainable ways, and that they're attainable in the first place.

So, it was a pleasure chatting with you guys today. I hope that it is a lovely weekend for you wherever you are, and I'll see you guys soon.