

FINDING THE TARGET

Some of the end goals you have for your writing, today, might be true and reasonable and motivating for you.

But consider that some of them are rooted in other people's expectations; people who are not writers and have a very sketchy picture of how the words 'writer' and 'success' can fit together.

There are so many different ways to 'be a writer' – and to be successful as a writer – that it's vital for each of us to define what 'being a writer' looks like for us, for now, and to be willing to revise that at each stage.

Set a timer for 3 minutes and move to the next question after each. Keep going even when you think you can't answer the next question.



What is your current biggest, most outlandish wish for your writing life and what does your life look like when you achieve it?

e.g. Create a fictional world that has a series of best-selling novels, a movie franchise and a line of tie-in action figures. I go to movie premieres in borrowed diamonds. My family compound is nestled by the woods at the bottom of a mountain, on a river that leads to the sea, but is also conveniently located for big city cultural events. I write in the mornings and spend afternoons walking the hills with my favorite humans, then do some more writing in the evenings before sleeping soundly and breakfasting on eggs from my free-range chickens (that someone else looks after). Fans write to me and tell me I changed their lives for the better

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



What is a smaller success than this, that might lead to your Best of All Possible Worlds goal? And what does your life look like?

e.g. Write the first book in my story world, putting all my current craft skills into play, and learning a few more along the way. Have trusted first-readers who give me excellent feedback, and are clamoring to be on my 'street team' and help promote it when the book comes out. My life is pretty hectic, doing everything I had to do before, and deal with publishing and promoting a book, but I'm learning a ton and I have a team of great people around me. It's exhilarating, and a little exhausting.

A large grid of dotted lines for writing.



What is a smaller success than this? And what does your life look like?

e.g. write some and complete some short stories set in my fictional world, to help me build the craft skills I need to build compelling characters and hold the reader enthralled all the way through. I'm spending a significant amount of my free time on my writing, mostly writing, but also taking classes from writers/teachers I admire and leveling up my skills. I don't spend as much time on Twitter, doomscrolling or watching dumb TV anymore. My other creative hobbies are being neglected, but I had to pick a lane. I chose writing and I can feel myself making progress. It's quietly satisfying.

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



What does a smaller success than that look like? And how is your day?

e.g. I brainstormed an idea for at least part of a new story, and I put it somewhere I will be sure to find it again. It's a step in the right direction and something I can work on tomorrow, or next time I need a story idea. I didn't write 2000 words of deathless prose, but I showed up for my writing and played in a serious way. The rest of my day goes great. Somehow decisions seem easier, my day job is less annoying, and I'm able to give some energy to other people when they need me...without resenting it!

A large grid of dotted lines for writing.



What does a smaller success than that look like? And how is your day?

e.g. I captured three story sparks. It didn't seem like 'writing', but it unleashed my creativity and made the mundane stuff I had to do today a little more fun. Running errands and folding laundry is a lot more fun when I keep imagining backstories for everything from the supermarket cashier to the towels! Someone told me I made them smile because I looked like I was having a good day.

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



My final question

Do you need to reach that Best of All Possible World goals before you can feel successful?
Can you build a writing practice that improves your life and the lives of people around you,
with a few tiny, starter goals?

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Phew!

You can stop your timer now.

**What was the tiniest step you came up with? How would it feel if you could have a little
of the feeling that evoked, every day? Would it lead to bigger and better things?**



