

Writing Goals: 2022 [Part 1] — Looking Back

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Over the next two weeks, a 10-part series for writers to consider what we did in 2021 and will do in 2022.



I thought I would reprise something I've done in December the last few years with the hope it would benefit as many of you as possible in taking concrete steps forward next year with your writing aspirations.

It's a very simple thing, really — setting goals — but for many, if not most people, it is an invaluable part of their creative process. You can go [here](#) to read some background on why setting goals is important and how to be S.M.A.R.T.

about it.

You may be someone who likes to set goals. Or someone who hates it. Maybe you've never really tried to formalize the process.

Whatever your inclinations or prior experience has been, I encourage you to try it for 2022. Three big reasons why:

- With all its distractions, life has a way of dissipating positive energy. We may have some general sense of what we'd *like* to accomplish, but the mere fact we live with the gigantic time-suck that is the Internet, that alone has a way of squandering countless hours of time when we could be writing. One of the best ways I know to deal with this natural tendency toward dissolution of focus is to take a definitive stand: ***Declare your intentions and stay fixed on those goals every day.***
- If you're familiar with [Script Girl](#), her tagline offers one of the most fundamental truths about the screenwriting business there is: ***"You can't sell it, if you don't write it."*** You have to finish that script. In fact, to maximize your chances at success, let me amend that last statement: You have to finish *those* scripts. As in plural. The more scripts you write, the more you understand the craft, the better you get as a writer, and the more you prepare yourself for a possible career as a screenwriter. Plus, you have more content to show to managers and agents. And each of those

scripts represents a story you can sell potentially. But if you don't write them... cue Script Girl.

- There's an anecdote I believe in William Goldman's memoir "Adventures in the Screen Trade," still perhaps the best book about screenwriting even thirty plus years after its publication. As I recall the story, Goldman was friends with a top NBA basketball player, a man renowned for the amount of time he spent practicing. Even after he had become a successful professional athlete, he was the kind of guy who would be shooting jump shots in a lonely gym after midnight. Goldman asked him, "Why do you practice so much." The player's answer: "Because when I'm not practicing, someone else is." The screenwriting version: ***If you're not writing, someone else is.*** Screenwriting is an incredibly competitive field. To give yourself an edge over the competition, you simply have to spend time — a lot of it! — writing.

Three reasons for you to be serious about setting writing goals for 2020. I'm sure you could provide even more.

Thus each day this week (Monday-Friday) and next week as well, I will be posting something about setting goals as well as tips and inspirational observations to achieve them, and inviting any of you to join in.

Today: Looking Back

An important first step in setting writing goals is to look

back at what you accomplished in the last twelve months. If you've achieved a lot, great. By reviewing your accomplishments, you can use that as a springboard to propel you into the New Year. You can also assess what you've done to provide a logical transition from these projects this year to the ones you choose to write in the upcoming year.

On the other hand, if you look back at this year and realize you did not get nearly enough done on the writing front, that should serve as motivation as well. You don't want to let *another* year slip by without making significant progress, correct? All the more reason to try establishing some simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely goals for 2022.



Why not take the time to look back at your year in writing? I invite you to head to Comments and share with us what you accomplished in 2021. How many scripts did you write? How many story concepts did you generate? How many short stories or poems did you write? Maybe you signed with an agent or manager. Maybe you sold a script. Maybe you started your very first script. Anything you accomplished is worth celebrating, so I encourage you to share that with us so we can celebrate together.

The next step in this process of setting writing goals for

2022: *Assessing where you are as a writer*. Sit down with yourself and take a critical, honest look at where you are, what you've done, and where you want to be. Zero in on finding those areas about which you feel really passionate. That's where we'll start when we pick up the process tomorrow.

Bottom line: Set some specific, achievable goals for 2022.

Tomorrow: Part 2 — Assessing Where You Are.

My main creative accomplishment in 2021 was to finish writing [*The Protagonist's Journey: An Introduction to Character-Driven Screenwriting and Storytelling*](#) for the London-based publishing firm Palgrave Macmillan. It proved to be an enormous challenge taking twenty-one months from inception to manuscript delivery, not only because of its 100,000 word count, but also because of the type of writing involved. With 300+ movie and television references and chapters filled with story theory and analysis, it required some heavy mental lifting. The good news: It is due to be published on February 6, 2021. Pre-sales have kept it at or near Amazon's #1 new release in the category of Film and Television. You may pre-order it [here](#).

In 2022, I have two projects in the works. The first is to continue exploring and developing characters for a novel I plan to begin writing by the 4th quarter of next year. I pushed back that start date because I am going to use the first half of the year writing a spec feature script. It's a

comedy, something I very much look forward to taking on after writing my book. And my God, couldn't we all use some laughter in our lives in this day and age?! Plus, I will be working with a very talented co-writer on the project. It's based on an original idea I hit on a few months ago. In my humble opinion, it is a **great** story concept. I simply decided I cannot let this one wait to be written.

Thus, my writing goals for 2022:

- Develop, write, rewrite, and finish the spec script by June 30th.
- Begin the page-writing process of my novel by October 1st.

How about you? What are YOUR S.M.A.R.T. goals for 2022?