

It's Later than You Think

BY ROMNEY NESBITT

“Time is a created thing,” Lao Tzu said centuries ago. Couldn’t time also be a “creative” thing? Is time you ally or adversary? Changing the way you see time—literally—could make a difference in your ability to achieve your long term goals. A birds-eye view of time will give you a realistic picture of what’s ahead.

Writers create over time—minutes, hours, days, months and years. Time is also invisible, elusive and it does funny things—it can get away from you, you can lose track of it, it flies when you’re having fun and it can creep up on you.

Managing time in minutes, hours and days is pretty easy. Many of my coaching clients meet their daily and weekly commitments; it’s the commitment months out into the future that are problematic. Even when a deadline has been set months or even years in advance, the weeks, days and hours leading up to deadline twist into a barbed wire of sleepless nights and frayed nerves. A custom-designed career calendar can lower your stress levels and help you meet your deadlines with confidence (and sanity).

10 EASY STEPS TO CREATE A CAREER CALENDAR

1. Find a “flip the page” month-at-a-glance calendar. The best choice is one with big squares providing space for write-in information.
2. Go to an office supply store and use the self-service machine to make a copy of each month’s page starting with the current month through the month in which you have your big deadline. If the deadline runs into next year, find an internet sight that offers free printable calendar pages. Enlarge the standard size sheet for more visual impact.
3. Lay the individual calendar pages out on a table with the months in order from left to right and tape them together. Take a moment to “see” the expanse of time before you.
4. Reference your personal calendar and record important dates on your career calendar such as holidays, days when you’ll be out of town, finals week or family events. Draw an “X” on the days that are already booked.
5. Count the remaining days. These are your “work” days—days when you can log in time on your creative project.
6. Write your “work” days total on your career calendar and circle it. For example, if you start your calendar on Labor Day, September 7 and you have a project due date on Saturday, December 5, 2009 you have approximately sixty days to get your work completed (minus your “off” days).
7. Make this information more real by recording the numbers on each date working your way from the total number forward in time to D-Day which will be zero. (Think of this in the same way retailers calculate the number of shopping days until Christmas or students count the number of days until school’s out.)
8. At this point check your pulse. You’re either feeling encouraged by the number of days you have left to work or you’re in shock. It all depends on how close or far away you are to your deadline. Either way, at least you know the facts.
9. Make a commitment to work at least twenty minutes a day on each of your “work” days. Some days you’ll have a couple of hours. On busy days use twenty minutes to work on your contacts or





It's Later... Cont'd

write a query. Working every day keeps you connected to your goal. Each day that you do some creative work, draw a star on that day as a tiny reward.

10. Look at your calendar daily to stay connected to your goal.

The career calendar works because it reminds you of the value of each and every day and it's visual proof that you've chosen to take charge of your writing time and career goals. People really do make time for what's important.

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**Happy
Birthday
wishes to
Nancy Colistro**



Blog A Little, Blog A Lot

**BY LEE MCKENZIE AND
RACHEL GOLDSWORTHY**



Whether you're a pantser or a plotter, you make a few decisions before you set down a word of your next opus: Novel or short story? Pen and paper or computer? A bit of advance planning also goes a long way toward ensuring that your blog gets you're the results you want.

The many possible uses for a blog include promotion, self-expression and keeping readers engaged between books, so we've set out some exercises to help you decide whether to blog, how to blog, when to blog and what to blog about.

We hope you find them useful.
- Lee and Rachel

1 What do you want to achieve with a blog? To help you really define your goal (or goals – you can have more than one), be SMART. Each goal should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, and Timed.

2 Once you've determined your goal, you need to decide what to put on your blog to reach that target.

This article first appeared in the July/August 2009 edition of Tide Lines, newsletter of the Vancouver Island Chapter.

What do you read on other people's blogs? Recipes? Writing craft information? Personal stories? Animal anecdotes? Tales of the writing life?

Will these things appeal to the readers you hope to attract?

Jot down three possible topics for your blog. Keep your brand in mind: think about the voice and engaging style of your books.

3 There are several ways to attract readers to your site. Design helps. Contacting friends and colleagues and encouraging them to visit your blog and comment. Using clickable links to make it easy for people to find you.

What are you willing to do? Be honest. Will you email all your friends and ask them to email all their friends? Will you provide them with a customized message to send? Will you contact organizations or other writers who might put out the word about you? How often are you able or willing to blog?

4 Where are you willing to blog? Some authors have their own sites; others participate in a group blog; some people do guest blogs on other sites.

List as many places as you can think of: online newspapers that have a citizen-journalist spot, friends' websites, other writers'

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