

Transforming Goals into Plans

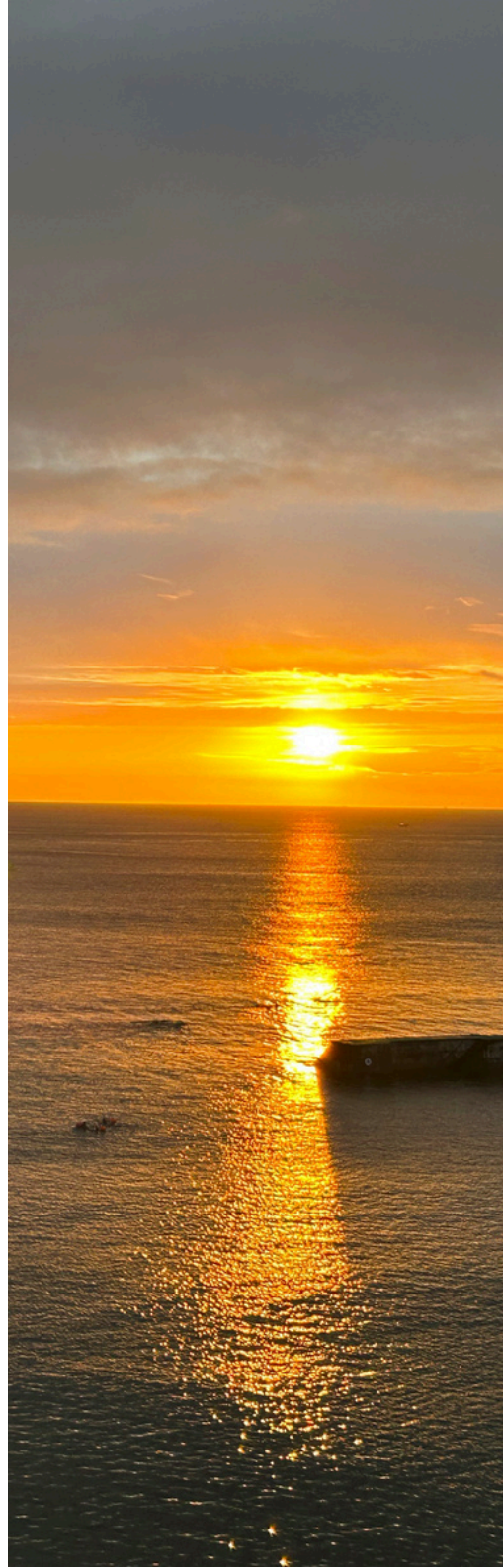


Plan Your
Year Ahead
Workbook

Part 3: Artist Planning Tools

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 Introduction
- 04 Your 2026 Goals
- 05 Creating an Actionable Plan
- 07 Avoid Pitfalls
- 09 Tools and Templates



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations you are in the final stages of designing your ideal 2026! Now that you have completed an honest assessment of the past 12 months and used this to create goals/intentions for 2026 you now need to make them happen and to help you do that this workbook is about developing a plan.

Format wise this workbook is a bit different to the previous two. The reason for this is your plan will be bespoke. Everyone will have different goals and intentions so as a result our plans will all look very different. In this book I have provided a selection of tools and templates to help you develop your personal plan. Not all of these will be helpful so select the ones that best suit your goals.

Alongside the templates designed to help you in your planning there are a number of templates to help you monitor and measure your progress. The reason for this is that monitoring is the secret weapon to success.

*"Monitoring has an almost uncanny power. It doesn't require change, but it often leads to change, because people who keep close track of just about anything tend to do a better job of managing it....It's a **Secret of Adulthood for habits**: "We manage what we monitor." Self-measurement brings self-awareness, and self-awareness strengthens our self-control. And on the flip side, anything that makes us lose self-awareness weakens our self-mastery."*

American author, Gretchen Rubin

You can either print out the pages that are relevant to you or you could adapt some of these templates and scribble them in your journal. I prefer to capture these in my journal so they are readily on hand and I can check in each week and month.

2026 Goals

Jot down your 2026 goals in the template below. How many goals you have depends on your energy, the time you have available and the mix. Some goals may be smaller and easier to achieve than others.

There is no right number but generally the fewer you have the more likely you are to achieve these. What matters is that you are realistic and don't feel overwhelmed by you list. Also look at the balance you have - do you have a goal in each quadrant? If you want to sell your art only having goals in the 'Creativity' quadrant may not best suit your practice. I generally look to have 1-3 in each area, with a mix of small (easier to achieve) and longer term.

home



mind and body




work


creativity

CREATING AN ACTIONABLE PLAN

For each of your goals you now need to create a plan.

Taking time to create a plan, no matter how basic, is the first step in testing how important this is to you and how committed you are to succeed. Below are some suggested key stages for you to use in developing your plans.

Clarify Your Creative Goal

- Make sure you have a clear description of what you want to achieve.
- A motivational reminder - why this is important to you.
- A specific deadline - when do you want to achieve this?

Break Your Goal into Milestones

We can all get overwhelmed when the thing we are trying to achieve feels too big. So take some time to break your goal into smaller, time-bound milestones. For example,

- Gather inspiration or research
- Sketching and experimentation
- Purchase of tools or mediums
- Completion composition studies, etc

Create Step-by-Step Plans

This will come out of the above but breaking your goal down into bite sized tasks is crucial. An ancient Chinese proverb says that the journey of 1000 miles starts with one step. Even if your goal isn't to walk 1000 miles, thinking about the first step on the way will really help to get you started. This will also give you a better sense of time required for each task.



CREATING AN ACTIONABLE PLAN

Schedule Your Tasks

- Put some thought into how much time each task will take and how you might fit it into your schedule. If you use a daily or weekly or monthly planner start plotting these into your planner.
- Make some notes on any support or resources that you might need.

Build Accountability

- Share your goals: Tell a friend or mentor so you feel more committed to each goal and they can help by asking you for an update on how you are doing..
- Track progress: Use a checklist to mark completed steps.
- Review weekly: Reflect on what's working and adjust as needed.

Stay Inspired and Motivated

- Celebrate small wins: Treat yourself when you finish a milestone. Sometimes planning these in advance can be an incentive.
- Stay connected: Join artist communities for encouragement.
- Reflect on your "why": Revisit your purpose to stay grounded.

By breaking down your creative goal into actionable steps, scheduling your tasks, and staying accountable, you'll turn inspiration into tangible achievements.

In the tools and templates section you will find some templates that may prove useful to help you plan and track your progress.



AVOID PITFALLS

Before we jump into tools here's a few tips for creating an actionable plan....

1 Be Realistic

Don't start your year with too many goals. Take your list and prioritise them. *Which ones are really important to you personally? Which will help you move forward? Which are you excited about? Are there any that are important but fill you with dread? How do you stop yourself avoiding these?*

It's better to start the year with a handful of goals that you really feel you can commit to. And you can always add extra goals throughout the year as you achieve the ones you have set.

2 Make Your Goals or Intentions Tangible

If any of the goals you have set feel too big or too vague can you break these down or reposition them so you have something concrete? Ask yourself *'Will I know if I have succeeded?'* If you can't answer this spend some time reworking your goal into something more measurable.

If your goals are long term, can you break them down into monthly or weekly goals? This helps you stay committed as you start to see small progress steps.

3 Identify What Support You Need

Support comes in all shapes and sizes. It may be an other person, it may be training, it may be tools or it may be time. Basically think about 'support' as the conditions you need to make your goal happen.

For example, one of my goals last year was to establish a regular sketchbook habit. This came from a desire to improve my art but as that intention was too vague so I broke it down into smaller goals and a sketchbook practice was one of these. Because I wanted to add something to my routine, I created a plan to work it into my schedule. That plan included....

- 1. Finding time, five days a week. As a morning person, I decided to get up 20mins earlier each day.*
- 2. Resources needed - purchase of 3 new sketchbooks of different sizes*
- 3. Setting time limits - 20mins each day, seemed manageable*
- 4. Giving myself permission to leave pages even if I didn't like how they looked*
- 5. Make myself accountable - I decided to set a goal to share sketchbook pages on social media each week.*

4 Set Time Aside

Probably the main excuse we all have for not achieving a goal is lack of time. But is that really the reason we fail? We all have busy lives but when we set our mind to something and really commit it is possible to find time to do the things we love. We just need to give ourselves the permission to prioritise. And importantly we need to work out how much time is needed and plan this into our schedules.

5 Find Motivation

This will be personal to you but for me there are three factors that help me sustain my energy throughout the year.

Be Kind to Yourself. Goals are supposed to be challenging and mistakes and setbacks can happen. If you have a day, week or month where you don't achieve your goal or stick to new intentions, don't let the frustration or disappointment make you give up. Take some time for a reset and re-commit. *Remember look for progress not perfection!*

Make a social commitment. I mentioned earlier that I posted a sketchbook page each week. Setting myself that little goal gave me a structure that I wanted to stick to and it also helped grow my social following

But a social commitment doesn't have to involve social media it could be having a person or a group of people who know what you are trying to achieve and who are there to support you. Verbalising a goal and sharing it with others often helps us sustain the energy to keep going - it provides us with our very own cheerleaders.

Celebrate Successes

Often an area we neglect, especially with smaller goals or those that feel very personal but giving yourself little rewards can really help you sustain your commitment. After a sale of a painting I reward myself by having dinner with my husband in a new restaurant. It's a small thing but as we love trying new foods, this little treat encourages me to put more effort into the process of selling which isn't a job I relish.

TOOLS & TEMPLATES

The following pages include a number of tools and templates designed to help you create your personal plan for the year and help you retain focus and energy.

- Goal Plan Template
- Goal/Milestone Tracker
- Scheduling Tools - year at a glance and weekly planner
- Inspiration Prompts
- Energy Management
- Celebrations



Goal Plan: Making Your Goals Real

Description

What exactly do you want to achieve?

Commitment



This is important to me because.....

Key Milestones and Dates



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Next Steps

What actions do I need to take to achieve this?



Empty text boxes for listing next steps.

Goal Plan: Making Your Goals Real



Making Time

When will I do this?



Support

What do I need to make this happen? (Skills, people, tools, equipment, etc)



Deadline

Set yourself a deadline but make it realistic

How Will I Keep Myself Accountable



How Will I Celebrate



My Year at a Glance

We all have commitments in our lives which require time and energy. Rather than ignoring these, we need to embrace them. In the calendar below jot down any major life or art events that you already have planned.

This will help you see where you gaps and where your time may be limited.

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

My Weekly Planner

This level of organisation isn't for everyone but if you are someone who likes to plan their week in advance this template is the one I use to capture key actions and tasks that I want to complete.

Monday

Focus Goals for this Week

1

2

Tuesday

To Do List

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Notes

The Weekend



INSPIRATION

Keeping your inspiration well topped up is crucial for great art making. A bit of time planning how you can keep yourself inspired throughout the year will act as a timely reminder when you feel a bit demotivated.

Some ideas to get you started....

- go to a gallery
- take a walk along the beach
- read some poetry
- research an artist that you love
- go somewhere new
- revisit your sketchbooks

Things that Inspire Me

1

2

3

4

5

SELF ASSESSMENT

We are all wonderfully unique. What makes you, you is different from what makes me, me. Improving self awareness is critical to your success. Understanding your natural ebb and flow helps you tap into your authentic self and importantly helps you optimise how you work and how you deal with the challenges that life throws at you. Take some time to reflect on YOU. You never know you might just learn something new!

Me At My Best

What do I look like, sound like, feel like, what do others say about me?

Times I'm at my best:

When I'm Not At My Best

What do I feel like, sound like, feel like, what do others say about me?

Times I am NOT at my best:

Energy Audit

“Everything is energy and that’s all there is to it. Match the frequency of the reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality. It can be no other way. This is not philosophy. This is physics.”

Albert Einstein

Our energy levels have a huge impact on our art making practice

- Learn what truly motivates you, the talents/strengths that provide you with the most energy and fulfilment.
- Identify the energy drainers - the areas that de-motivate you and take your energy and endless amount of time
- Make changes to focus more on your strengths/motivators. Look for ways to mitigate the impact of your energy drainers/de-motivators.

We all have different trigger points when it comes to energy. Some people find admin and paperwork a satisfying exercise, providing them with a sense of satisfaction as they get to tick off completed tasks. For others it’s a drain.



As our trigger points can change throughout our lives a useful exercise to check in on your energy motivators and drainers is to complete an energy checklist.

Write a list of all the things you do in a typical week.

Put a tick against those activities that give you energy and a cross against those that drain you. Leave any where you feel neutral unmarked.

When complete ask yourself....

- Do you do too much that drains you on the same day?
- Is there enough time for renewal/recovery
- How can you improve the balance between energisers and things that drain?



Energy Audit Log

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday

sunday

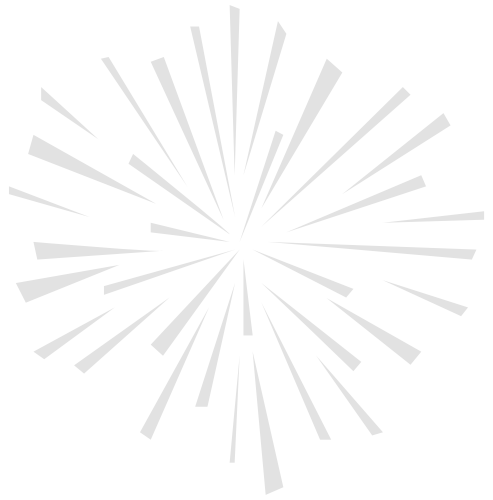


CELEBRATIONS

We all need to be recognised for achievements. When you work for a company this may come in the form of praise or thanks from your manager or teammates. But being an artist can be a very solitary job so planning how you will celebrate your achievements can help boost your energy..

Some ideas to get you started....

- Buy flowers for yourself
- Cook a new recipe/or go out for a meal
- Treat yourself to a coffee and a cake
- Buy new art supplies
- Give yourself a day off
- Write a list of small things you would like to buy and work through it as you achieve each milestone
- Share with your family or friends/community



How I will Celebrate...

1

2

3

4

5



Artist Planner



ART STUDIO