

The Modern Editor Podcast – Episode 17: Goal-Setting Part 1: Reflection

Tara Whitaker: [0:03] Welcome to *The Modern Editor Podcast*, where we talk about all things editing and what it's like to run an editorial business in today's world. I'm your host, Tara Whitaker. Let's get to it.

Tara Whitaker: [0:18] Hello! Welcome to today's episode. We are going to be chatting about reflection, and specifically, reflecting back on the year. At the time of this recording, it is December of 2022, so it's just a natural time of the year to look back and see what actually happened over the course of the year because a year is a long time. And we tend to forget about things that happened, you know, way back at the beginning of the year or throughout the year. And it's the first thing we should do before we even start thinking about goal-setting. And I know December is also one of those natural times to set goals. But first, in my opinion, we must, must, must, must pause and reflect to see what worked and what didn't and how we want to move forward in the new week or month or quarter or year or whatever timeframe you choose.

Tara Whitaker: [1:15] So how we're going to go about this is I'm going to talk a little bit about reflection, and then I'm going to pose a few questions for you to help you get thinking about what happened this year. If you would like, grab a pen, pencil and paper, or your favorite digital tool to take notes because I do think it is helpful to write this out instead of just thinking about it. But you know, do whatever works for you. This is going to be a short and sweet, to-the-point podcast episode, just like normal. So, let's dive right in.

Tara Whitaker: [1:50] Now, first of all, I have to—I have to do a disclaimer. And that is, there is no perfect time to reflect, or to set goals, for that matter. You don't have to wait until December. You don't have to wait until the first of the week or the first of the month or any of these “natural timeframes” or days of the week or whatever. There's no magic time. And to go along with that, there's absolutely nothing magical about January 1st or the end of the year. There's no reason to hustle or push or, you know, just race to the end or feel like you have to have everything done by January 1st. Because if you're like me, this year especially, it's just not possible. We've had illnesses and busy schedules and all sorts of other things where I am simply not going to be ready January 1st, and that's okay. That's just a self-imposed deadline I put on myself, along with society, that this year, I'm just going to say to heck with it. I'm going to take some time off in January, I'm going to set my goals in January, and I'm okay with it. So, if you need to hear that, and you need someone else to sort of validate that, there you go. You don't have to wait until the end of the year, or you don't have to have everything ready to go by January.

Tara Whitaker: [3:18] Now to get into reflection, many of us, including myself, tend to skip this part. There's a variety of reasons. But for me, at least, one of the biggest reasons I skipped it is because it was uncomfortable. And it was uncomfortable because I attached my self-worth to the “success” of hitting or not hitting my goals. I didn't want to look back and see all of the things I didn't accomplish. And because I had this “ick”

mindset about it, I could only see what I didn't accomplish. I completely ignored all the things I did do, or all the growth that I had, or all of the success in nontangible ways that I hit. And so, I just wouldn't do it. And then, a few years ago, I decided that I was going to try something new and do something different because that just—that wasn't working for me.

Tara Whitaker: [4:16] So, what helps me and what I hope might help you is, like I said, to first remove the self-worth from this. You are worthy. Full stop. Period. Does not matter if you hit, didn't hit a goal or feel like you didn't work hard enough or do a certain thing. We're not doing that. We are removing any of that attachment from our goals and from our reflection process. And if that helps even further, you can either picture yourself talking to a friend about these things, because you know we don't talk to our friends the way we talk to ourselves for the most part. Or, if you need to, you can sort of take like a 30,000-foot view. Like look at it from above and remove those attachments that relate to you being good enough or not good enough and look at it from a different perspective or from someone on the outside of you looking in. Because we all can—we all know that when we talk to someone else and they say, "Oh, I didn't do a lot this year. I didn't accomplish anything." And if we know them, we're like, "No, you absolutely did. You did this, and this and this and this." And then they start thinking, "Oh, yeah! I did do that. I forgot about that." Or, you know, "It slipped my mind." That's where that 30,000-foot view is going to really come in handy. So hopefully, one of those will help you along with removing any of those attachments. All right.

Tara Whitaker: [5:46] And the reason why I split reflection and goal-setting is because this part, honestly, I think, is the most important part. And this is where it takes more time, for me, at least. And I actually did a workshop in the Freelance Editors Club where I was going to tackle both reflection and goal-setting. And we all realized while we were in there that we just wanted to focus on reflection. We're all tired. It's the end of the year. Let's pause and reflect and take that time and space for ourselves. And then in January, we're going to take it a step further and actually set those goals; look at our priorities by using what we learned in our reflection. So that's what we're going to do with the podcast as well. So, stay tuned for part two, which will be about goal-setting in a few weeks.

Tara Whitaker: [6:38] Okay, so now let's dig into these questions. There's just a few. But again, like I said, if it's easier for you, or if it works for you, I would write the answers down to these so that you can reflect even further if you choose. So, first two questions: what went well, and what didn't? Now, this can include anything. You can focus on your business. You can focus on personal or both. But anything counts. Don't think something is too big or too small or too inconsequential or not important enough. Everything counts—everything. So, spend a few minutes. Think about everything that went well and then what didn't go well. And if you really want to dig deeper, you can ask yourself the all-important question: "Why?" Why did it go well? And why did something not go well?

Tara Whitaker: [7:33] All right, next question. What are you grateful for? This is something that I think we need to ask ourselves on the regular. Because if you're like

me, you can tend to focus on what's not going right because sometimes it seems like nothing is going right. And it's so beneficial to take a step back for just a brief moment and say, okay, let me list all the things I'm grateful for. Again, no matter how big or small. I am grateful for the fuzzy slippers on my feet that are keeping me warm. I'm grateful for looking out my window and seeing snow falling. Whatever the case may be. Lis it all. Everything.

Tara Whitaker: [8:20] Next question: What do you want to do more of in the new year? And you can take that question and adjust it to what do you want more of in the next week and the next month, and the next quarter. For now, we're just doing the new year. And again, this can be anything. Do you want more of an emotion or a feeling? Do you want more joy? Do you want to feel more present? Do you want more money? Do you want more connection with friends and family? Anything goes. What do you want more of? And remember abundance mindset, not scarcity. You can have more of anything—does not matter.

Tara Whitaker: [9:01] Next question: What do you want to let go of? And now, this can be physical, mental, or emotional. It can be clutter; it can be clothing; it can be negative thinking. It can be imposter syndrome. It can be a toxic relationship or friendship of some sort. It can be software you don't use, you know. It can go as deep or as not deep as you want. But let's take a minute and figure out what we don't want to bring into the new year with us. What are we getting rid of? What are we not letting us— What are we not taking with us or letting drag us down next year?

Tara Whitaker: [9:45] And here's one of my favorite questions: How have you changed your mind? Now, when we did this inside the Freelance Editors Club workshop, this stumped a lot of people, including myself. And it's not necessarily— You can take it literally, or you can think of it in a different way. So, some people were like, you know, they changed their mind about, like, a limiting belief they realized wasn't true. Or they had a realization about something. So, it doesn't have to be like, I hated pineapple on pizza, and now I love it. If that's true—great. But it's more along the lines of what did you have a thought about or feeling or a judgment or an opinion about, and how did that change? That one might take a few minutes or longer. But the gold is really in that question. Really dig deep on that one.

Tara Whitaker: [10:44] And last but not least: What was the most important thing you learned? Last year? Last month? Again, it varies. And this also can be something deep; it could be something “superficial.” It can be anything. It can be about yourself; it could be about your processes; it could be about your business; it could be about your relationships. Anything goes.

Tara Whitaker: [11:14] So, I think that's enough questions. I don't want to dig too, too deep and get you in the weeds. But those are a great start on helping you reflect on the past year. And I'll say them again real quick, in case you missed any. What went well and what didn't? What are you grateful for? What do you want to do more of in the new year? What do you want to let go of? How have you changed your mind? And what was the most important thing you learned? I hated doing this, like I said before. I found it

tough. But I encourage you to give it a chance. Give it a go. Be honest with yourself, detach your self-worth from the answers, set aside some dedicated time, and you and your business will be better for it. I promise you.

Tara Whitaker: [12:04] So that's reflection. That's part one of the goal-setting process. And in January, in a few weeks, we're going to tackle goal-setting, both here on the podcast and inside the Freelance Editors Club. And like I said at the time of this recording, it is December 20, 2023 [sic]. Right now, to join the Club, it is \$47 a month or \$470 a year. That rate is going up on January 1st, 2023. So, it will then be \$57 a month or \$570 for the year. So, if you want to lock in your rate now, which will never change as long as you're inside the club, you can head to tarawhitaker.com/club, and we can get you going inside ASAP. And you can start the new year within an amazing, supportive, fantastic group of editors. If you have any questions, you can always reach out at hello@tarawhitaker.com. So, until next time, keep learning, keep growing, and know that you've got this!

Tara Whitaker: [14:11] Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you enjoy *The Modern Editor Podcast*, I would be so grateful if you left us a review over on iTunes. And as always, you can head to tarawhitaker.com to connect with me and stay in touch. We'll chat again soon.