



The Deliberate Creative Podcast with Amy Climer Transcript for Episode #084: Using Goal Setting to Increase Creativity

January 2, 2018

Amy Climer: Welcome to The Deliberate Creative Podcast Episode 84. Happy New Year! It is January 2nd, 2018 and I am so excited for 2018. I love the New Year. It is the perfect time to be setting goals for the year. In today's episode, we are going to be talking about goal setting, specifically, goal setting for creativity. But before we dive into that, I want to first share with you a new review that came in from The Dirty Easel. This is a five star review titled: 360 Degree View on Creativity. The Dirty Easel says:

"I've listened to many episode of The Deliberate Creative. This is one of the best podcasts to illuminate creativity from a large variety of angles. Amy is a natural interviewer and her calm and engaged tone makes listening very enjoyable. Her message is concise and applicable. I wish we had more advocates for creativity like Amy to lower the threshold and make creativity very accessible and enticing. Thanks for a great podcast."

Thank you so much for the review. I love it! And I love the name, The Dirty Easel. I am just imagining this easel covered in paint and just chalk and all messy, which is the sign of like cool things are happening. Thank you for the review on [iTunes](#).

If you would like to leave a review on [iTunes](#), please head on over there. It just takes a few minutes. It means so much to me and it is a great way to let other people know about the podcast. If you need directions, you can go to www.climerconsulting.com and search for Podcast Review and you will find detailed directions with screenshots on how to leave a review on [iTunes](#).

Let's talk about goal setting. My favorite time of year is the time between Christmas on December 25th and New Year's Day on January 1st. That week is one of my favorite weeks of

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the year, especially, if I get to just be home and relax and not have any commitments. It is a week that I always take off and I do not work that week. It is just a time to reset. I think it is really cool because, at least in the U.S., pretty much everybody is off. Well, I should not say everybody is off. Unfortunately, stores are still open, restaurants are still open, but most people who are working kind of more professional type jobs, a lot of places are closed. School is out, a lot of professional businesses are closed and so it is also a time where there are not a lot of expectations around getting things done, which is really nice.

This year, I took several days off during that week and one of the things that I like to do during that week is set some goals. I think, going into the next year is a great time to have a fresh start, to reset, to set new goals for the year and also to look back at the previous year to find out what did I accomplish, what did I not accomplish, what did I essentially fail at. And then to reset and decide if I did not reach a certain goal, is it still something important to me and do I want to continue to try to reach that goal, or have my priorities shifted and do I now have different things that I want to focus on?

I want to share with you a story about an experience that I had a few months ago. This is related to goal setting for creativity. I was at an event sometime in early fall and I was one of several speakers for this lecture series. It was an evening event. I got there early and set up and made sure everything was okay as far as my part went and had sometimes as people were filling into the room and so I walked to the back of the room and there was a small bar and I was going to get some water -- I was really just going to get some water -- and these two other women walked up to the bar at the same time I did and we started talking. They asked me if I had ever been there before and I told them I was a speaker. They asked me what I was speaking about and I said, "Well, I'm speaking about creativity, particularly, a creative project that I implemented and what happened."

We started talking about creativity and one of the women who was probably in her late 60s or early 70s, she said to me, "You know, I have always wanted to learn how to paint." And I said, "Oh, that's really cool. Painting is a ton of fun." I said, "Have you ever taken a class in it or anything?" Her reaction really surprised me. And she said, "Oh no, I haven't done that. I am incredibly busy. I haven't had time to do that." She really got quite defensive and upset and I am thinking to myself, "Wow! I'm just making conversation and chatting with her about painting and creativity and had no idea that I was going to push a button or trigger something for her."



I was able to kind of smooth it out and we moved on in the conversation. But later, I was thinking a lot about her reaction. I have actually had many similar conversations, although not with such a strong reaction, but conversations where someone has come up to me and said, “You know, I’ve always wanted to (blank).” Learn to play the guitar or learn how to draw better or travel to Italy. And often during this conversation I will ask them, “Oh, have you ever taken any classes or do you have a guitar?” Just chatting about what have they done towards that goal and very often, people will say, “Well, no, I haven’t really done anything yet.”

I think, there are a couple of reasons for that. I think sometimes, every once in a while, it is not really a goal that they have, it is just something that they are like, “Oh yeah, that would be really cool to know how to play a guitar,” but it is not important enough that they are actually going to go forward and learn how to do it. And I get that. Yeah, sure, I would love to be able to play the guitar well. It is not important enough to me to go buy a guitar and sit down and take lessons or figure it out online or whatever, and that is okay. I think having those kinds of thoughts and dreams is totally fine.

But then, there are other situations where someone really does care about something. They are like, “Yeah, I really do want to be able to draw well, or I really do want to be better at generating ideas,” yet they often have not moved forward with that. If you listen to this podcast regularly, you know that one of the things I say a lot is if you want to be creative, you have to be deliberate. And so if you want to meet that goal of being more creative, you have to be intentional and deliberate about it. And that is where goal setting comes in.

I have also learned over time that a lot of people do not actually set goals at the beginning of the year or really at any time of the year. I do not know that goal setting has to happen at the beginning of the year. For me, this works really well for me and I think it does for a lot of people to have goals for the whole year, but it can happen at any point. If you are listening to this episode and it happens to be June, now is a good time to start. It does not matter.

But I found that a lot of people do not actually set goals or they are not very intentional about them. They have things they want to accomplish, they have dreams and they have goals in their head, but they have not intentionally said, “This is what I am going to do this year or this quarter or even this week towards that specific dream or that goal. If you want to meet that goal, you



have to spend a bit of time intentionally setting that goal. I think, for me, when I say setting a goal, for me, that means writing it down.

Barriers Amy Faced in Previous Years and How She Overcame Them [08:31]

I have made a number of mistakes over the last couple of years around goal setting and so I am going to share them with you, as well as, what I have done to help me be more successful in reaching my goals. At least since 2015, I have been writing down my goals for the year. And I think further back than that, but I have found the list from 2015. So I can verify that at least in that year, three years ago, I had set some goals. I went back and I looked at my list from 2015 and I had about eight goals. I did not meet all of the goals. When I looked at the goals, I was thinking, "There is no way I would have met all of these goals." They were all huge goals. And each of them if I had worked full time only on that goal would have taken two to three months minimum. There just physically probably was not enough time in the year for me to meet all eight of those goals.

I did the same thing in 2016 and 2017. I had about eight to ten big goals that I wanted to meet and every year I did not meet all of those goals. And when I look back, it makes sense because they were just enormous. I met some of them and what I noticed is that about three to five of the goals is how many I am able to meet. And so I have decided of 2018, I am only setting three, maybe four big goals.

The other thing that I learned is that even though I wrote them down, I wrote them down on my computer. The program that I use is called Evernote. It is a note taking software that I use all the time, probably, every day. Every day that I open my computer where I am actually doing work, at some point, I open up Evernote. And so I thought this will be a really great space to keep my goals because I am in this program every single day. Well, that actually did not work out so well because there were points during the year where I was not even thinking about my goals because they were not visual enough for me.

A Process for Making Your Goals More Visual so You Can Remember and Achieve Them [10:40]

Towards the end of 2017, probably, I do not know, sometime in the last quarter or maybe September/October, I realized that this was getting in the way. That I was not able to physically

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see my goals in front of me every day. And so I made a change. I created these small posters that I put on my office wall and at the top of the poster one of them says: Quarterly goals personal, and then there are three spaces, it just says 1, 2, 3. It is just a blank sheet of paper and I laminated that. And that is hanging on my wall. And then for each quarter, I will go in and put up three post-it notes related to those quarterly goals.

Two things happened; (1), I decided my goals needed to be visual, but, (2), I needed to break them down. If I had a yearly goal, I also needed to have quarterly goals, weekly goals and daily goals. My daily, weekly and quarterly goals are limited to three. That is it. Three goals per day, per week, per quarter. I have on my wall a poster that says quarterly goals personal, quarterly goals professional and then weekly goals. And then I have a little notebook where I write down my daily goals. And actually for daily, sometimes I only have one goal for the day.

And I actually think that is more helpful than having three goals for the day. Especially, because there are other maintenance things that need to happen most days of the week like I need to check my email and respond to those emails that came in, or I need to call a client. There are smaller things that are happening every day and so having only one goal per day is really helpful. I made these small posters and each of them have spaces for three post-it notes and then I can change them every day, week, quarter, whatnot.

I have a gift for you all and that I have created these posters for you to download. You can download them free for the month of January, after that, they will just cost a few dollars. But you can just download them, you can print them out, you can laminate them like I did if you want. They are a great way to keep your goals visual. My goal sheets are in my office, on my wall. They happen to be right behind my computer monitor. So every day that I am at my computer, I see those goals.

The Importance of Writing Down Your Goals [13:05]

I also have a notebook. I actually just towards the end of 2017 started using a process called [Bullet Journaling](#). I will put a link in the show notes for you if you are curious about that. The bullet journal is where I keep my daily goals. I have found that this process is much more helpful for me.



I have also found that in addition to them being visual, there is something about physically writing them down with a pen, in my own handwriting, that I really enjoy and that is also very helpful for me. If you do not write down your goals and you do not set them, there is a very, very slim chance you will actually meet them. If you want to meet your goals, if you want to be more creative, start out by writing them down.

The Weekly Challenge [13:51]

That is your weekly challenge; to set and write down three to five yearly goals and then take those goals and come up with three quarterly goals. From those quarterly goals, write down three goals for this week and then from those weekly goals, write down one thing that you want to do today, or if you are listening to this at night, then maybe tomorrow. But what is your one daily goal that will help you meet the weekly, quarterly and yearly goal. Breaking those goals down I have found is very important for me to meet those yearly goals. When I look back at the yearly goals that failed, most of the time that is because I did not break them down enough and I was not focusing on them on a daily, weekly or quarterly basis.

How Creative Problem Solving Process Can Hinder You From Meeting Your Goals [14:46]

The other thing I want to share with you that has been a barrier for me and a big learning for me is related to [Episode 8](#). From two and a half years ago, [Episode 8](#) of this podcast, I interviewed Blair Miller, who is one of the founders and creators of the FourSight Thinking Profile, which is a tool to help us understand our own preferences in the Creative Problem Solving Process. Let me explain. If you have not heard of the Creative Problem Solving Process, I am just going to give you a high level overview and talk about how our preferences might impact our success at meeting our goals.

When you are trying to solve a problem, particularly, if you are trying to use some creativity, then the first thing you need to do is clarify what that problem is. This is where you are asking a bunch of questions, you are looking at the why, what is the purpose, you might be exploring a little bit at the history, what have other people done, what have you already done to meet this goal. You really try to dig in and look at what is going on. You are trying to clarify the problem.



Some people love clarifying. The people that ask gazillion questions about a project, those are the people that love clarifying. I am not one of those people. Sometimes what happens for me, if I am not intentional, then I skip over the clarify stage and I jump right into the ideate stage. That is stage number two. I love the ideate stage where I get to just come up with ideas. That is really fun for me. It is one of my preferences.

After you clarified your issue, you are going to start generating ideas on how to solve that problem. You are going to take the best ideas and you are going to take them into the third stage, which is the develop stage. The develop stage is where you develop those ideas further because, initially, the idea is just a sentence or two and you want to round it out and make it more robust. You also are looking at would this really work? What do I need to do in order to bring this idea to fruition?

Then you move into the fourth stage which is implement. Implement is where it is like, "All right, we are doing this. We're moving forward." As part of the develop and implement stage, you need to develop a timeline and a list of all the things that need to be done and that is where you are going to get your daily, weekly, quarterly goals in order to meet that bigger yearly goal. I also love to implement, but I am not great at develop. And so what I found is that by visually having these daily, weekly and quarterly goals, that is my methodology to develop the process further so that I can meet these yearly goals. You can also do this on a spreadsheet, you could just do this on a scrap piece of paper, you could do it in a program like Evernote. There are a zillion different ways to do it. It is a matter of figuring out what works best for you.

If you want these posters that I have created to see if this process works for you, you can go to the show notes and download those. They are free for the month of January. The show notes are at www.climerconsulting.com/084. Head on over there and you can download the free poster for the month of January 2018 and after that, it will just cost you a few dollars. They are done in this handwritten typography that I have created. It is just fun. It is something that I have been exploring and playing with. Part of one of my goals for 2018 is to play more with creating some fun visuals for you all. And so here is your first one. So work on the weekly challenge, set and write down a few yearly goals and then three quarterly, three weekly goals and one daily goal to help you get started.

You all, have a wonderful 2018. I am so excited to share with you more amazing episodes on helping you and your team be more creative and lead innovation in your organization. If you



have any questions, if there is something you want me to cover on the podcast, feel free to reach out to me. You could find me and all the other episodes at www.climerconsulting.com. When you get a chance, please head over to [iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#) and leave a review for the podcast. I would love to get your feedback and it helps other people find the podcast.

I will talk to you all soon. Have a wonderful year. Happy New Year! Bye.