



LET'S DIVE INTO

Your Writing Year 2024

Plan your writing dreams so they
come true this year

BY CAROLINE DONAHUE

www.carolinedonahue.com



CONTENTS

01 WELCOME

Let's celebrate what you've accomplished with your writing in 2023 and learn from all you've experienced. Even if you didn't get as much done as you hoped, everything that happened is valuable. This planner will help you close 2023 and begin 2024 on strong footing

02 2023 REVIEW

You've done far more this year than you realize. A lot of writing happens below the surface and it isn't until we reflect and actually write out what we've done that we see how hard we've worked. Please don't skip this step -- you'll be amazed what comes out of it.

03 2024 PLAN

The part I know you've been eager to get to: starting the new year of writing. In this section, we'll look at your writing dreams and make concrete maps to take you from dreams to actual writing. I've included some templates to get you started and keep you motivated,, as well as prompts for further reflecting.

04 CALENDAR

We've added a new option this year: digital! We have our usual month on two pages format as well as the week on two pages to print and include in a notebook, but for those who prefer to make notes on a tablet (I love Notability on my ipad) we have the month on one page, too. Pick your favorite!



HELLO

I'm Caroline Donahue.

I'm a writer, book coach, and the host of The Secret Library podcast, and this is the fourth time we've shared Your Writing Year

Welcome to Your Writing Year

So many times, I see planners aimed at productivity and I wince for all of us. I don't know about you, but the thing that has caused my writing to suffer and shrivel most is turning it into a widget that I need to make more more more of.

Instead, we'll be using this planner to find the delicious moments from your past year and to learn from the challenges.

Most of us are eager to skip ahead to the new year, but I want us to start in 2023, even if you're starting this process after January 1. We often belittle our previous efforts without taking stock. I've had countless clients almost cancel a session, for fear they've done "nothing" since we last met. Ever time, a list of achievements emerges in our conversation. Let's get started and find yours for 2023 first of all.



LOOKING BACK

Let's review your writing in 2023

Take a moment to get comfortable. Are you in a safe place where you can stare off into space? Have you got a tasty beverage and your preferred journal with you? This is your space and your time, so let others know you're not available for the next little while, if possible.

I like to light a candle and incense, when I'm at home. If you're out in the world, I hope you've chosen somewhere beautiful for this process.

Take a moment to reflect back on this year. Where were you in December 2023? What dreams did you have for your writing then? Set a timer for five or ten minutes and freewrite the hopes the you of twelve months ago was holding.

Leave extra pages in case you remember more. Take your time. Your writing self deserves this.



2023 Review

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

Once you have a snapshot of the last year, we'll be reflecting in three stages, with prompts to follow for each

1

YOUR PAST DREAMS

These are noted down in the journaling we just did. Keep adding to them as they come to mind.

2

THE WINS

If you look for wins, believing that they're there, I promise you'll find them all over.

3

THE CHALLENGES

We'll look at where you got stuck so there's help in 2024 to get past these points faster.

Your Wins for 2023

WHAT RISKS DID YOU TAKE WITH WRITING IN 2023?

01

WHAT ARE YOU PROUD OF FROM THIS PAST YEAR?

02

WHAT INSPIRED YOUR WRITING SELF IN 2023?

03

WHEN DID YOU PRIORITIZE WRITING THIS YEAR?

04

2023 Challenges

WHAT FELT HARD WITH WRITING THIS YEAR?

01

WHERE WAS THERE FRICTION WITH YOUR GOALS?

02

WHAT ARE YOUR TELLS WHEN YOU'VE OVER-DONE IT?

03

WHERE DID YOU FEEL ALONE IN YOUR STRUGGLE?

04

What I Learned

WHAT ALWAYS MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER?

When we reflect on challenges from the end of a year, it's helpful to remember that you have gotten through many of these challenges. Let's take a moment to gather a first aid kit for your creative self. List everything that helped you feel soothed and comforted when things were tough going in 2023.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU WANT TO SPEND ON WRITING?

Think about how much time you were able to write this year. How did it feel? Ideally, would you like the same amount of time in 2024? More or less? If we note your ideal amount of time based on what you learned in 2023, we stand a better chance of bringing that dream to life in 2024.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO WRITE?

For me, if I want to write more, I need to read more. I love author Christopher Castellani's equation: ideally, he'd spend 1/3 of his working time reading, 1/3 writing, and 1/3 dealing with earning money. This is an ideal for one writer, but it's worth knowing your ideal support activities and how much time you want for everything so we can adjust in that direction. Note them down here, and spread out in a journal if you need more space.

“

“A word after a word after a word is power.”

--MARGARET ATWOOD

Now that you have a clearer vision of the past year, we can move forward with the knowledge you've gained. After all, a word after a word about writing is power, too.

Before you move on to the questions on the next page, take some time to dream forward.

Imagine yourself 12 months from now, turn to a fresh digital or analogue page, set a timer for 10 minutes and respond to this question:

Where do I dream of being with my writing this time next year?

Ok... begin!



2024 Dreams

WHAT DO YOU DREAM OF WRITING?

01

WHO DO YOU HOPE WILL READ IT?

02

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO WRITE? HOW OFTEN?

03

WHOSE HELP DO YOU NEED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

04

Next Steps

WHERE IS THE FRICTION?

The best thing we can do for our writing selves is to remove any friction that stops us from pursuing our goals. If your desk chair is uncomfortable, have a look to see where people are selling theirs or get yourself a brand new one. Too distracting at home? Try out libraries and cafés that are easy to get to.

PLAN TO STAY INSPIRED

What inspiration do you have in store this year? I love to note trips, local festivals, and books coming out over the next months by favorite authors in my calendar. My writing self needs something to look forward to, which keeps me feeling inspired. What can you add that will add sparkle to your year?

WHOSE HELP DO YOU NEED?

There is a reason acknowledgement sections in books are long and full of gratitude. It truly does take more than one person for writing to happen. Share your dreams with the people close to you and ask for the kind of support that most motivates you. Note what that looks like here, and commit to making these requests.

THE

Your Writing Year

Calendar Pages

Plus templates to break your big
writing goals down



a publication from

CAROLINE DONAHUE +
BOOK ALCHEMY

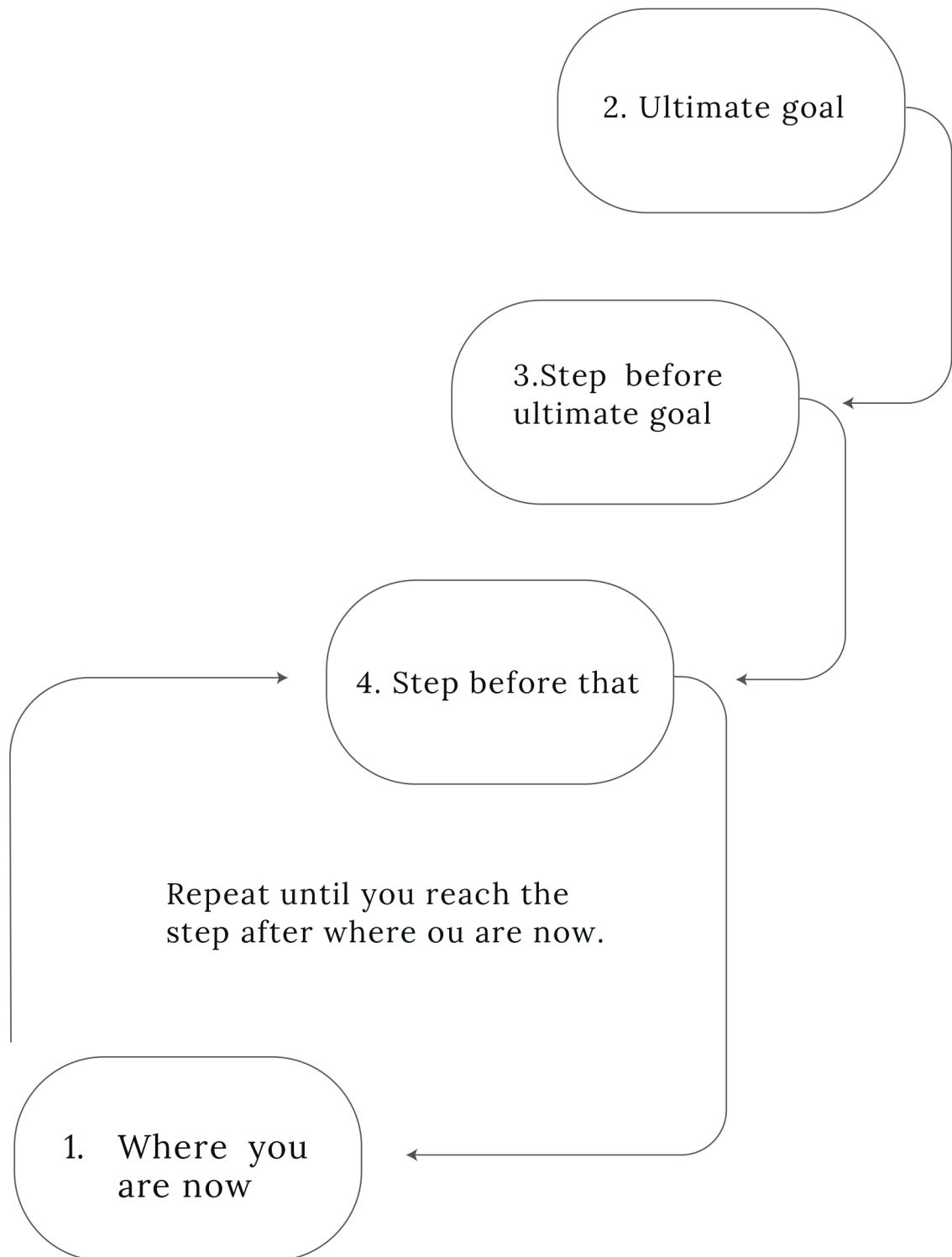
The following templates are here to help you visualize your goals in a meaningful way. For some of us, putting a sticker on every day that we write keeps us motivated. There's nothing like a chain of wins to fire us up, right? For others of us, starting from the end and working backward is far easier than asking "what next?" We often have no idea what we want to do right now now, but working backward from the end can change everything.

These templates are suggestions, not prescriptions. Take what helps and leave the rest.

My personal favorite process is jokingly called "The Gorman Projection." I have a friend, Melissa Gorman, who is an architect. The critical path method is essential in her work: you can't put in an elevator if there's no shaft to install it in for example. Most steps in a process need something to happen right before them. When she showed me a diagram she'd made in her gorgeous handwriting of a map of personal goals laid out as a critical path, I

was enchanted. Now, I make a Gorman Projection for every major project I undertake. I like to use an A5 notebook, and to work across two open pages, so it's A4 size. I've included a template to follow in the calendar section below. If you make one, tag me and add #gormanprojection so Melissa gets credit everywhere! In addition, there's a treat tracker to use like a cafe loyalty card. Mark your goal, then stamp your progress. Enjoy!

THE GORMAN PROJECTION



MEANINGFUL UNITS TRACKER:

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

HOW I WILL CELEBRATE:

ONE LAST TREAT

The spread I use whenever I sit down to write.

This spread is the antidote to nerves at the sight of a blank page.



CARD 01

The purpose of the scene in the scheme of the story.

CARD 02

What my character thinks is going on.

CARD 03

What's lurking underneath.

This is usually enough to get me going!

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
04	05	06	07
11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03	04
08	09	10	11
15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25
29			

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

	01	02	03
07	08	09	10
14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24
28	29	30	31

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
04	05	06	07
11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
02	03	04	05
09	10	11	12
16	17	18	19
23	24	25	26
30	31		

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

		01	02
06	07	08	09
13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
04	05	06	07
11	12	13	14
18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03	04
08	09	10	11
15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25
29	30	31	

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

			01
05	06	07	08
12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
03	04	05	06
10	11	12	13
17	18	19	20
24	25	26	27
31			

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

	01	02	03
07	08	09	10
14	15	16	17
21	22	23	24
28	29	30	

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

			01
05	06	07	08
12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29

JANUARY

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....

.....

.....

.....

FEBRUARY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

			01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

GOALS OR
REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MARCH

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....

.....

.....

.....

APRIL

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

GOALS OR
REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MAY

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....

.....

.....

.....

JUNE

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

						01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	

GOALS OR
REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

JULY

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....

.....

.....

.....

AUGUST

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

			01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

GOALS OR
REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
30						01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....

.....

.....

.....

OCTOBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

NOVEMBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

GOALS OR REFLECTIONS:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank You

I hope this planner helps you to feel more satisfaction and delight in your writing over the coming year. Above all, remember to celebrate all your wins and be gentle about the harder points.

Writing isn't easy every day, but it is always worth it. At least, it is in my experience. The stories we record and share make the world richer and more beautiful. That is always my goal, even when it's a difficult story I'm sharing.

Please take good care of your creative self and support them throughout this year and the years to come. Keep me posted about your experiences and share your wins so we can all celebrate together. Seeing what's possible for everyone with our writing inspires us all.

May this be your most wonderful writing year yet.

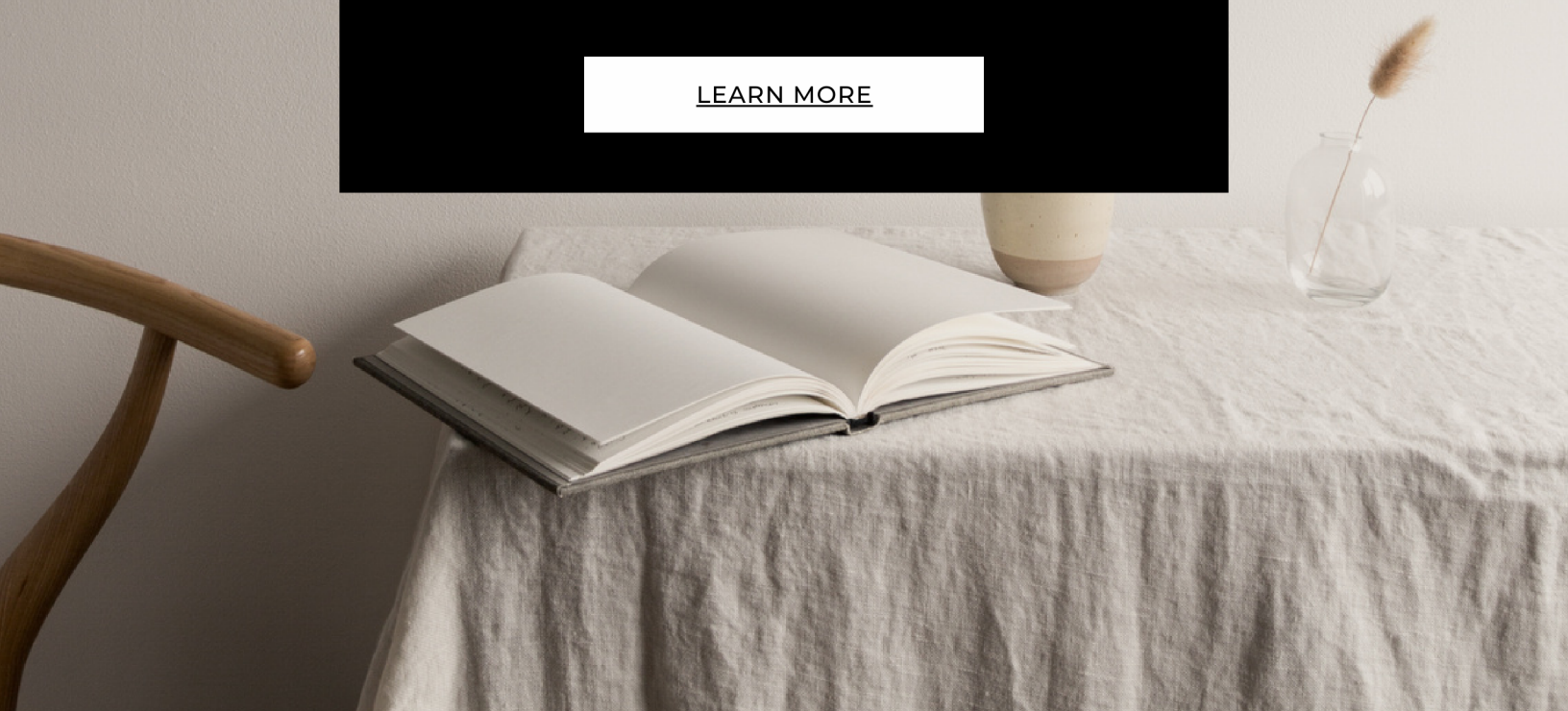
**CAROLINE
DONAHUE**

If you want community

THERE'S NO NEED TO STRUGGLE
THOUGH WRITING ALONE.

My writing community, the Manageable yet Meaningful Writing Lab, is a safe space for writers to share goals and motivate each other. You also get a library of expert calls, Live co-writing sessions, group coaching on writing and access to all my paid workshops during the year. We begin January 15, 2024. I'd love to see you there.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Contact

hello@carolinedonahue.com

carolinedonahue.com

secretlibrarypodcast.com

book-alchemy.com (Substack)



[CARODONAHUE](#)



[SECRETLIBRARYPODCAST](#)

Keep in touch! I'm on substack most often these days, but please tag me on Instagram, too. I'm watching that space, even if I post less often these days.

If you want to share this planner, please send everyone here:
yourwritingyear.com

