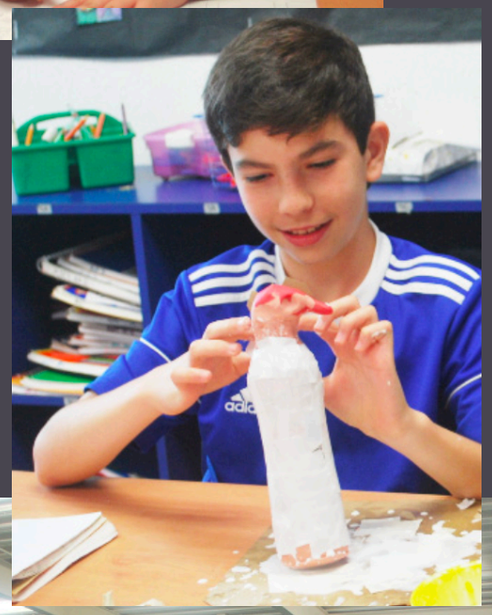


Goal-Setting & Time Management Workshop

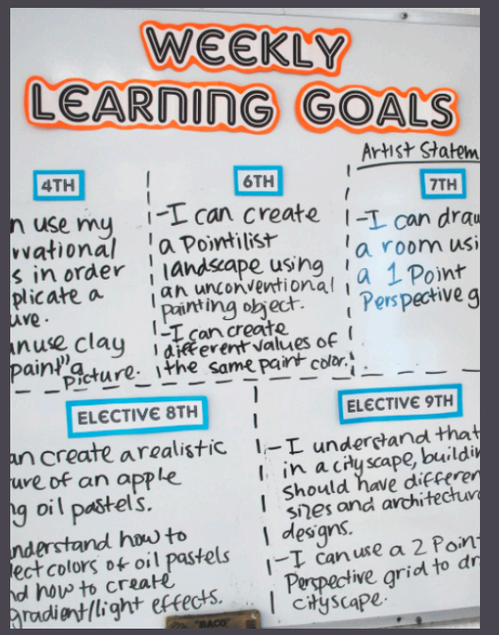
FOR ARTISTS

STORY TIME!



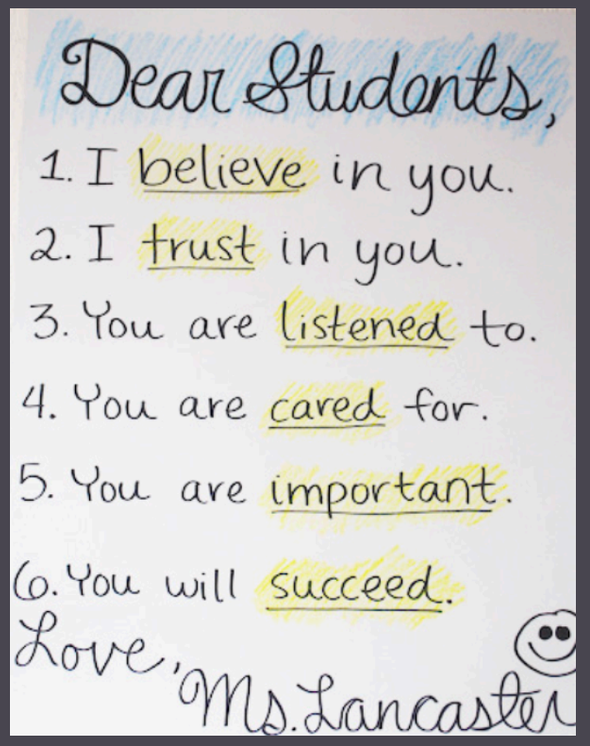





WEEKLY
LEARNING GOALS
4TH
6TH
7TH
ELECTIVE 8TH
ELECTIVE 9TH




MASKS


Dear Students,
1. I believe in you.
2. I trust in you.
3. You are listened to.
4. You are cared for.
5. You are important.
6. You will succeed.
Love, Ms. Lancaster


Abstract Expressionism

WHY GOAL-SETTING IS IMPORTANT FOR ARTISTS



Making real progress as an artist, whether that means improving your skills, creating a strong body of work, growing your name, or building a business, **requires clarity and intention**.

It asks us to prioritize our work and commit to it, just like pursuing any other meaningful goal in life.

Many of us need to learn to **treat our personal projects** with the **same importance as other life responsibilities**.

If we don’t, they’re the first things to get pushed aside.



As creatives, we're naturally drawn to many interests. This **curiosity is a gift**, but it can also **scatter our focus**, leading to **shallow progress in many different areas** instead of real growth in a few. That's okay if you're creating for enjoyment or working on building consistency.

Setting goals and working within clear constraints (drawing/painting medium, subject matter, etc.), even temporarily, is *so* important. Focus helps us go deeper before moving on to the next thing.

When we get honest about what we truly want and set goals intentionally, we give ourselves a North Star, a clear direction that guides our time, energy, and decisions.

That’s what goal setting is really about: **choosing a direction that feels deeply meaningful to us and creating systems that support who we are and what we want.**

Even if we don’t reach the goal exactly on time, we’ll still make meaningful progress and learn a great deal about ourselves along the way, things we wouldn’t have discovered otherwise.



SHIFT YOUR IDENTITY TO REACH YOUR GOALS

To reach any goal, **you need to start with the belief that it's possible for you.**

For many of us, this means **shifting our identity and challenging limiting beliefs shaped by family, society, or past experiences**. Without this shift, consistency is hard to sustain.

Ask yourself:

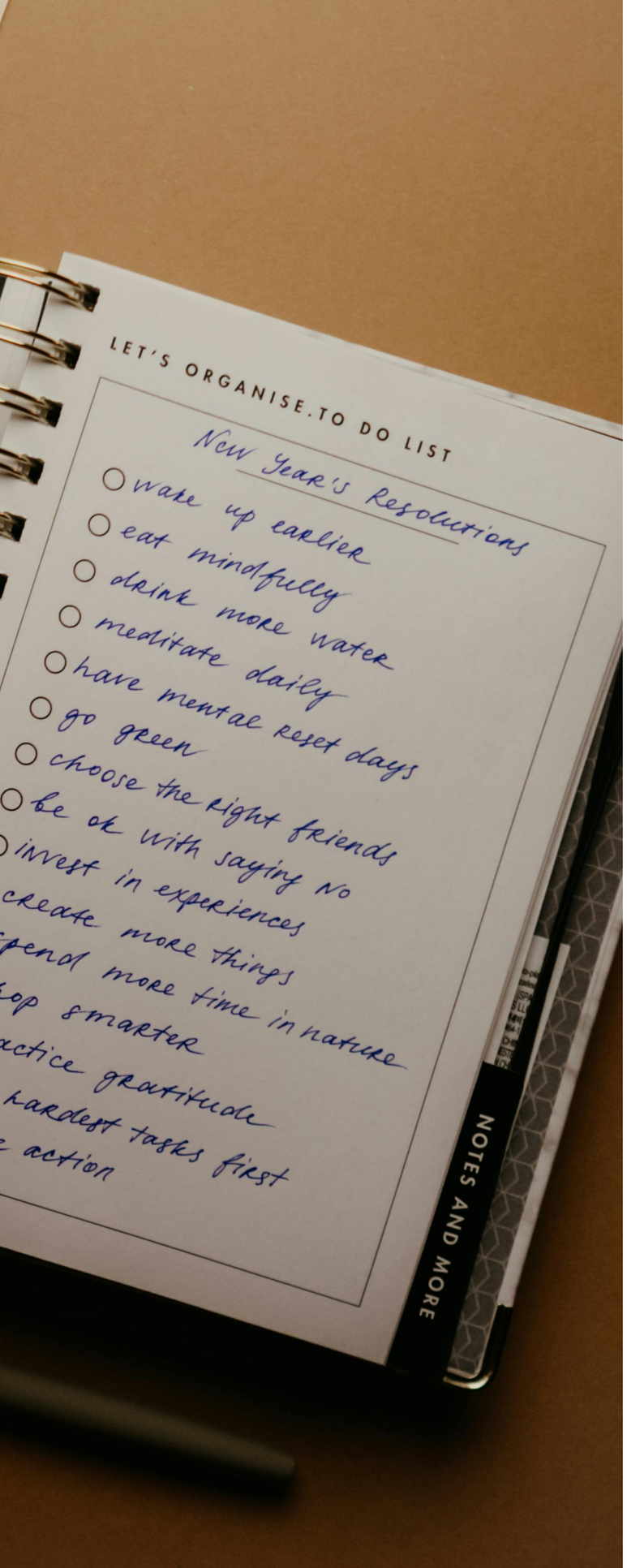
- *Who do I need to be to reach what I want? (Be–Do–Have)*
- *What kind of person treats these actions as normal habits?*
- *What habits or beliefs are holding me back, and how can I begin to let them go?*

Growth often requires **letting go of an old version of yourself** if it's holding you back, and consciously stepping into a new one. **Expect resistance.**

If you're here, you are an artist. The shift happens when you decide to prioritize that truth.

Giving yourself permission to fully commit is essential. For many of us, especially those not used to making space for our own wants and needs, this takes effort, but it's necessary. It gets easier over time, once you start becoming "that" person.

Starting is a choice. Not a matter of motivation, the "perfect" time, or waiting for permission. You have to take it for yourself.



SYSTEMS, NOT JUST GOALS

Ultimately, reaching any goal requires systems.

Systems create *habits*.
Habits create *consistency*.
Consistency leads to *progress* and *achievement*.

Setting goals is easy. What *actually* gets results is **breaking those goals down into small, doable tasks** that fit your current season of life, then **sticking with the system** and refining it as you go.

Goal setting isn't about controlling everything or being perfect all the time. It's not even about hitting a goal exactly on the timeline you originally planned.

Life is messy. Unexpected things will always come up. But when you have clear systems in place, it becomes much easier to return to what matters most.

HOW TO SET S.M.A.R.T. GOALS



For goals to be meaningful and doable, they need to be:

Specific
Clear and simple. Answers *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.

Measurable
You have a way to track progress, even if it's small. You cannot improve what you cannot track.

Achievable
Realistic with the time, energy, and resources you have *right now*.

Relevant
Meaningful to *you*. Aligned with your values and what actually matters in this season.

Time-Bound
Connected to a timeframe that creates focus, not pressure.



Examples of a S.M.A.R.T. Art Goals

• Each month in 2026, I'll create two original watercolor paintings based on my own still-life photo references.

• By the end of Quarter 1, I'll fill all 120 pages of this sketchbook with graphite drawings of faces and heads.

• By mid-2026 (June or July), I'll complete three online courses taught by artists I admire to strengthen my acrylic nature paintings.

Each of these goals is:

- **Specific**: clear about what's being made and how much
- **Measurable**: progress can be easily tracked
- **Achievable**: realistic within current time and resources
- **Relevant**: aligned with personal interests and growth areas
- **Time-bound**: anchored to a clear deadline



SET GOALS IN THREE KEY AREAS

1. Wellbeing

What will I be doing each week to take care of my wellbeing? Eating nutritious food, moving my body, journaling, therapy sessions, meditation, etc.
Your wellbeing is the foundation for everything else in life.

2. Art + Work

What do I want to learn and get better at?
What classes, workshops, or mentors can I seek out this year to support that growth?
How can I surround myself with, or spend more time with, other artists?

3. Relationships

What will I be doing each week or each month to nurture relationships with the important people in my life?

**These areas are interconnected. Neglecting one for too long will eventually affect the others and is often where burnout begins.*

TIME MANAGEMENT

+ PRODUCTIVITY TIPS



1. Establish *when* + *where*

- Decide where you'll work on your art each week. This might be the end of your living room table, a corner of your bedroom, or a dedicated room.
- Make the space **inspiring**, and **keep your art supplies visible and easy to access**.
- Use a planner and **schedule your art time** the same way you would a doctor's appointment, meeting, or class. *Yes*, it really is that important!
- Do your best to honor those scheduled times. Life *will* happen. Stay flexible!
- Remember, **inspiration often shows up *after* you begin working.** Don't wait for it to get started. It's fickle and unreliable.
- Be sure to **account for breaks.** Don't push through when you're overly tired. Rest is part of sustainable progress and keeping things enjoyable.
- Use timers or alarms when helpful to stay focused or to remind yourself to stop and rest.



2. Minimize distractions + set healthy boundaries

- **Drawing and painting require focus**, so it's important to minimize distractions as much as possible.
- Even small interruptions can pull you out of a flow state, and it can take time and energy to fully get back into your process.
- Before you begin, **close unnecessary tabs**, **step away from social media**, and **silence your phone or leave it in another room**, at least for the time you've scheduled.
- If you live with others or have family or friends who rely on you, **communicate clearly about when you'll be working** and when you'll be available.
- Setting expectations ahead of time helps protect both your focus and your relationships.



3. Learn to say ‘*no*’

- Many of us feel guilty saying *no*, but this is a muscle that improves with practice.
- **Our time and energy are our most valuable resources**. They’re limited, and they need to be protected.
- Learning to say “no” and setting boundaries is essential if you want to make progress. Without them, your time and energy end up going toward everyone else’s needs.
- When something isn’t an emergency or truly important, ask yourself: *Will this move me closer to the goals I’ve set in the three areas we discussed earlier: wellbeing, art and work, and relationships?*



4. Find a task-tracking method that works for you

- If you don’t track what you’re working on, **it’s very hard to know whether you’re actually making progress**.
- Your system doesn’t need to be fancy. It just needs to be something you’ll use consistently.
- For example, I keep a simple notebook with me throughout the day, transfer my daily to-dos into it, and check them off as I go.
- **Writing things down or creating a visual system that suits you best (chart, etc.), creates clarity and accountability.** In fact, people who regularly write down their goals and revisit them are far more likely to follow through than those who don’t.



5. Reward yourself!

- **Reward the *process*.** What will your reward be?
- Many of us stay focused on everything we still need to do, learn, or improve, and **forget to acknowledge how far we've already come**.
- It's essential to **pause and recognize the effort and consistency you've shown over time**. Every sketch or painting is a success, even when the outcome isn't what you hoped for. Treat it that way.
- When you reward yourself, **your brain releases dopamine**, which makes it much more likely you'll keep showing up and creating over time. And that consistency is the real goal.

LET'S SET OUR ART GOALS FOR 2026!

3 TYPES OF ART GOALS

By acknowledging what stage you're currently in, you can focus and prioritize specific goals over lesser important goals that can be done later. Though there is some overlap, and you'll always continue developing your skills, you shouldn't be distracted by tasks that are better left for later.

1. Developing Technical Skills

Ex. Goals- Learn Art Fundamentals, take a course on _____, improve my drawings of animals, create a series with a specific color palette, etc.

2. Growing Name/Audience

Ex. Goals- Start YouTube channel, build up Instagram page, visit local art events and galleries, launch website, local networking, start sharing blog posts where I talk about my process and inspiration, etc.

3. Starting/Building a Business

Ex. Goals- Launch online shop, monetize YouTube channel, set-up affiliates, participate in local art events, offer commissions, take an online business or marketing course, etc.

GOAL-SETTING STRATEGY FOR 2026

1. Reflect on your current life chapter
Take time to honestly reflect on where you are right now and how 2025 went for you. Consider your energy, responsibilities, and priorities.

2. Start with a brainstorming web
Begin with your larger, phase-based goal in the center (see previous slide), and build outward from there. Let related ideas, skills, and tasks branch off naturally. If you have more than one larger goal, create a separate web for each so your focus stays clear.

3. Choose your focus for Quarter 1
From your web, select up to three specific things you want to focus on in the first quarter. Fewer is better. You can always add more later if time allows.

4. Plan month by month
Decide what you'll work on in January, February, and March.
Look at your calendar and factor in ongoing responsibilities and any special events before committing to goals and adding them into your calendars.

5. Break monthly goals down into weekly tasks
Turn each monthly goal into small, doable weekly tasks.
Schedule them into your planner *after* accounting for life responsibilities so your plan stays realistic and sustainable.

6. Reflect and adjust
At the end of Quarter 1, review what worked, what didn't, and what needs adjusting.
Then repeat the process for Quarters 2, 3, and 4.

EXTRA RESOURCES

- **Enjoy Your Art Journey: Here's The Key https://youtu.be/FMHCrwkfZak**
- **Tips for Artists: Feeling Scattered or Overwhelmed With Too Many Ideas? https://youtu.be/_kDwOhaWyvM**
- **The Difference Between Technical and Creative Skill https://youtu.be/UCPuPPRe0sI**
- **Top Productivity Tips for Artists https://youtu.be/mg-an0H_Nvw**
- **Flow State: What it is + How to experience it more consistently https://youtu.be/u4TWpiGmEBI**
- **Artistic Burnout: How to Avoid + Overcome It https://youtu.be/DO-q8nEkxog**
- **Setting Constraints in Your Art Practice + Why It's Important https://youtu.be/4mQIXUujoWk**
- **The Difference Between Principles, Concepts and Techniques https://youtu.be/_tV-24Mgxt4**
- **How to Push Through the Messy Phase When Working on Art https://youtu.be/sKiuYP3tvbA**
- **Motivation for Artists: Persistence Matters More than Talent https://youtu.be/l2IHXWIoiJc**
- **How to Handle Criticism as Artists https://youtu.be/cCWMPKhvaB4**
- **2 Things to Let Go Of for Faster Artistic Progress https://youtu.be/02tyU9YJXEw**

For step-by-step sketching and watercolor tutorials, check out the Collections tab on Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/c/erika_lancaster_artist/collections