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“Are you ready to get that promotion, start your own business, spend more time with family, or write that novel?”

## ROUND AND ROUND WE GO

BY CAMILLE MACCHIO

IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT TO KICK OFF 2009 AND NOT FOCUS ON GOAL setting. The New Year is a new beginning and a chance to start over. But, if every year you find yourself setting goals and never making any strides toward reaching them, perhaps it's time to ask yourself why. Could it be they aren't your goals, but someone else's goals you've adopted?

It doesn't matter what the goals are—stopping smoking, losing weight, spending more time with family, writing that novel—there's a reason they keep falling off the goal list. And until you figure out why, those goals are stuck in never-never land.

Is it because you don't know where to start? Is the project so big you're afraid to start? Are you stuck somewhere in the middle and don't know what to do next? Or is it because you really don't want to do it? I may have stirred up a few demons, but you can rid yourself of these issues that haunt you.

Are you ready to do what you can to get that promotion, start your own business, really spend more time with your family, or write that novel? Or, will you do pretty much the same as you did last year and the year before that beating yourself up for not accomplishing what you set out to do? Get 2009 off to a good start by writing down your goals for the year and take it one step further. Write down the steps you'll need to take to achieve those goals. There is power in writing things down, and I'd like to share a great technique I use for myself and my clients in setting goals: the S.M.A.R.T. goal technique. I was introduced to it about 10 years ago and have used it ever since. Here is what the acronym stands for and the characteristics of a goal that is achievable:

- S = Specific**
- M = Measurable**
- A = Achievable**
- R = Realistic**
- T = Timely**

To get started on developing your S.M.A.R.T. goals, here are some things to include:

**Personal Mission Statement.** What do you want to accomplish in your life? Not just as a creative professional, but as a person. Knowing your mission will make organizing your time much easier.

**Short- Long-Term Creative or Artistic Goals.** What do you want to accomplish in three months? Six months? This year? Five years from now?

**Short- Long-Term Financial Goals.** Don't forget to write down how much money you want to make. Yes, the current state of our economy will make this goal more challenging, but the R in S.M.A.R.T. stands for Realistic.

**Short- Long-Term Career Plans.** Break it down the same as your creative or artistic goals: three months, six months, one year, and five years. Utilize the marketing skills you use for your company and apply those same skills to your career. It doesn't have to be elaborate—just figure out who is in your network; who is doing a job that you would like to do; is your network local, regional, or online; and how will you reach your network.

**Action Steps For Each Goal, Including the Marketing Plan.** Break each goal into manageable steps, number each step, and add a completion date. Make a separate copy of this and put it where you can incorporate these action steps into your daily activities.

There's no need to rush. Allow yourself some quiet time to think and don't aim for perfection. This is a working document for you to review from time to time to determine where you are in relation to your goals and identify what has changed.

Take the time to go through the process; the rewards are worth it. ○