



Course description:

Many writers go into writing with nothing more than a dream. But dreams don't always just happen--sometimes they need a little help (and work) to make them come true. This workshop could be all the help you need.

About the Instructor:

Award-winning author Jean Drew wanted to be the next Agatha Christie but all that changed when she read her first romance. It was love at first read and she's been in love with romance ever since. Writing as Jean Adams, her second book, *Beats A Wild Heart*, won the Treble Heart award for best contemporary of 2003 and third place in the Lories 2004 for best published contemporary. Jean is the founder of Romance Writers of New Zealand and regularly gives workshops at RWNZ meetings and conferences. She also belonging to several chapters of RWA.

To learn more about Jean, please visit her online at www.jeandrew.co.nz.

PLAN FOR SUCCESS 1: Keep your dream

Good morning ladies (and maybe even some gentlemen)

Welcome to Plan for Success. Much of what I'm going to say you've probably heard somewhere before. Some of you may have eagerly embraced it, others may have dismissed it. What I want to do is try to give you another perspective.

If you have any questions, I won't get to them right away. I'm in New Zealand and the times don't match up.

First though, I'm going to tell you a story, so get comfortable and enjoy.

In the original book *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Jack Canfield tells the story of Monte, who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer of little means. During his senior year Monte was assigned a writing project to describe what he wanted to be when he grew up.

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His seven-page essay minutely detailed the 200-acre ranch he wanted to own. It included a diagram of the ranch and a detailed floor plan of his 4,000 square foot home.

Despite the passion and effort Monte put into his paper, he received it back with a large "F" and a note written on it to see the teacher after class.

The teacher told Monte that the reason he had given him that grade was because his paper was unrealistic. He went on to cite all his reasons why, and told Monte that if he would rewrite the paper with a more realistic goal, he would reconsider the grade.

After considering it for a week, the young man turned in the same paper with NO changes, but added the remark, "You can keep the F, I'll keep my dream."

The conclusion of this true story has the teacher taking 30 students for a summer campout at the 200-acre ranch of the now grown (and successful) Monte who lives in his 4,000 square foot dream home.

If it worked for the son of an itinerant horse trainer it can work for you, The principle is simple:

1. Create a dream so big that it will keep you excited.
2. Define the dream in minute detail.
3. Live in the dream so that it becomes real to you on the inside
4. Hold on to it so tightly that no one can take it away from you.

I don't know how you feel about Monte's story, but I always find it inspiring.

Let's break down those simple principles.

1. Create a dream so big that it will keep you excited.

If you want to be a writer, be a writer. Are you excited, really excited, about your writing? If your dream doesn't inspire you, maybe you're writing the wrong sub-genre. Do you dream of writing a New York Times best seller? Well, why not you? You never have a dream without the talent to make it happen. You have to work for it, however. Do you take courses, online or otherwise, to grow your craft? Do you set aside some time

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each and every day to write? Or do you let life get in the way?

Yes but... I hear you say. Well; let me tell you that I consider "yes but" to be the most negative phrase in the English language. I don't know how true it is, but we are told that JRR Tolkien wrote The Lord of the Rings in the trenches in WWI. Not a lot of time for "yes buts" with guns going off all around you.

I don't mean it should consume your every waking moment of every day to the exclusion of all else, (except when you're on a deadline from hell <g>) but when you do think of it, let it excite you, inspire you, get your juices flowing. Dream big and you'll get big results. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

2. Define the dream in minute detail.

Monte obviously had a clear picture in his mind what he wanted. But ask anyone what they want from life and they'll immediately tell you what they DON'T want. We are not going there. Many people set goals in minute detail but to a busy working mum with a husband, two young children and pets, it can be time consuming. However, those who do it say it really works. I have to confess to you that I have never set detailed goals in my life but I've just inspired myself to get started.:-)

Let's share our goals. I'll show you mine, if you'll show me yours. All I want you to do for now is think about where you want your writing to go. There's no hurry, it isn't a race. But we'll share our goals at the end of the last class. I'm not asking for seven pages, just 100 words.

If it all sounds too daunting, maybe you could set a couple of hours aside each week so that your dream can grow in realistic, manageable chunks. Our last class will cover a really fun way to set your goals that doesn't take forever and that you can keep building on and satisfy your inner child at the same time.

3. Live in the dream so that it becomes real to you on the INSIDE.

This is what Monte did. Even though he must have had a job and a life outside his dream, when he woke up in the morning he probably sprang out of bed with excitement oozing out of every pore. That's how we should feel about our writing. When he went to sleep at night, I'll just bet that dream was on his mind. He would have been constantly visualising,

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(excuse the funny spelling, I'm English - LOL) and at some convenient times throughout his working day, he would have thought about his dream. Maybe even some inconvenient times, too. Once it's real on the inside, watch out world, here we come.

4. Hold on to it so tightly that no one can take it away from you.

You've probably heard them at some time in your career. The naysayers. The prophets of doom and gloom. Just like Monte's teacher they will laugh and say things like "You can't write a book". or "Get your head out of the clouds". What they are really saying is THEY can't write a book and they don't see why you should either. They are scared you can, and that you might leave them behind. As for your head in the clouds, here's an expressions I sometimes use.

Aim for the moon. Even if you miss at least you'll be among the stars.

But my favourite is: Dream lofty dreams and as you dream so shall you become. James Allen

Dream lofty dreams Think about that for a moment. Make you tingle?
And as you dream, so shall YOU become.

Oooh. Sends shivers down my spine.

On the final session, we'll share our goals and our dreams. No naysayers here.

Monte's story retold with the kind permission of Vic Williams,
www.asamanthinketh.com



PLAN FOR SUCCESS #2 Holes in the day

Today's subject is about finding time to write when there isn't much time in your busy schedule for writing. Filling in those small amounts of time that just slip by unnoticed.

On the wall in my office, there is a quote from Alan Bean, Apollo 12 astronaut. It's heading stands out in big, bold lettering and challenges me every day.
HAVE YOU WORKED TOWARD YOUR DREAM TODAY?

Bean says: "The most important quality I have noticed in successful people is that they have a dream. They want to be someone or something. They want to have something. They want to go somewhere.

"They think and work towards that dream every day.

"I often ask people who tell me their dream, 'What did you do today to move closer to your dream?'

"Eighty-five per cent didn't do anything. They're planning to do something next week; they're just too busy today.

"These eighty-five per cent will probably never see their dream come true.

"Ask yourself the same question: 'What have I done today to make my dream come true?' If the answer is nothing specific, then you probably won't make it unless you change."

Do you think he once dreamed of being an astronaut? You bet he did, long before anyone believed it was possible.

Is life getting in the way of your dreams? Working full time, bringing up children, housework - a thousand and one things constantly demand our attention, none of which move us towards our dreams. Admittedly, sometimes, there's not much you can do about it. At those times, you have to grit your teeth, get the job done as quickly as possible, then put it behind you. There are times, too, when something else can encroach on your precious writing time, something you hardly notice - holes in the day.

These are the small chunks of time that can be wasted; those frustrating moments that

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don't move us forward. We drift into tomorrow wishing, with nothing to show for yesterday.

Here's my remedy. Wherever you are, keep a notebook and something to write with at the ready. Those small jotters cost only a few cents, so you can keep one in every room in the house and on the passenger seat of your car. Chances are that the great idea you had while driving will have flown right out of your head by the time you get to wherever you're going. Great ideas are notorious for playing Will o' the Wisp.

By the way, I don't advocate writing while driving. Stopped at traffic lights will do. :-)
Maybe you could even consider a voice activated tape recorder to use in the car. There are probably plenty of times during the day that you can put to good use.

Waiting for the bus.

Waiting outside school to pick up the children.

Waiting for the repairman who never arrives on time.

Morning/afternoon tea break. (That concept tickled a New York agent so much last year at the RWNZ conference he thought he might try introducing it at his office)

Lunch break.

Mute those TV ads (if you're watching TV instead of writing).

Got to bed an hour later.

Get up an hour earlier.

There are probably several holes in your day that can add up to an hour or two. Here are a few suggestions I've used and gleaned from other authors on where they find time.

Only got 15 minutes? No problem. There's a lot you can do in that short time.

Write a paragraph.

Write a snippet of dialogue.

Line edit.

Check spelling.

Check grammar.

Look for typos.

Write a character sketch.

Fill in character charts

Write some scene detail.

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Listen to conference tapes.

Read a how-to book. Your mind retains information better in small doses.

Brainstorm ideas.

Plan your next scene. Decide what you want, turn it over to your sub-conscious and you'll be amazed what it will come up with.

Carry your WIP with you and some colored marker pens. Then you can check for repetitions in dialogue tags. How many times has the hero snarled, glared or grinned?

That should get you started. You've probably thought of another hundred and one times you can put those time-stealing holes to good use.

I can hear the excuses already and they all begin with "yes, but". Remember that? Plenty of people use it as an excuse to do nothing. Be careful - it can often be cunningly disguised -- so don't you fall into the "yes, but" trap.

Work towards your dream constantly or one day you might look back and say, "If only."

Filling small holes in the day can go a long way to changing "if only" into "I got the call!"

Have you worked towards your dream today? Good, I didn't hear one "yes but".

Okay, here's your reward. Another story: Stop me if you've heard it. <g>

Have you heard the one about the man who went backstage in New York's _Madison Square Garden during the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey_Circus? He was a fascinated at being able to walk around looking at the lions, tigers, giraffes and all the other circus animals.

As he was passing the elephants, he suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that _these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front_leg. No chains, no cages._ It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, have broken away from their_bonds but for some reason, they did not. He saw a trainer nearby and asked why_these magnificent animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away.

"Well," said the trainer, "when they are very young and much smaller, we use the same size_ropes to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up,_they are

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conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They think the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free." The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they BELIEVED they could not, they were stuck right where they were.

How many of us go through life hanging on to a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before? How many of us are held back by old, outdated beliefs that no longer serve us? Have you avoided trying something new because of a limiting belief?

Worse, how many of us are being held back by someone else's limiting beliefs?

Challenge your own limiting beliefs by questioning them. If you begin to question a belief, you automatically weaken it. Therefore, the more you question your limiting beliefs, the more they are weakened.

Once you realise you are, in fact, a capable writer, you have weakened that old belief and have begun to replace it with a new, empowering one. Look for references to support the new beliefs you want to cultivate and they will start to show up..

There is a technique called "fake it 'til you make it" that works well. I am not suggesting you live in denial, just that you begin to see yourself succeeding. Visualise your successes. See yourself vividly in your mind's eye making the sale and reaching your goals. Affirm, over and over, that you are succeeding. Write your affirmations daily. Make sure you take the appropriate action.

Your subconscious mind does not know the difference between real and imaginary. Before you start writing for the day, mentally rehearse the scene, just like actors and athletes do. Then tell yourself, "I'm a great writer," and get to work.

Try it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. It has been said throughout history that whatever you believe, with conviction and feeling, you can achieve. Don't be like the poor elephant and go through your life stuck because of a limiting belief you were given years ago. Take charge of your life and live it to the fullest. You deserve the best. What are your ropes?

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PLAN FOR SUCCESS #3 - GOAL SETTING

Oh no, not again, I hear you groan. I know, I know. But there's nothing there's too hard or technical, I promise. I;m nit going ti tell you how to make goals. You already know how. But I am going to attempt to tell you why they are so important.

"Failing to plan is like planning to fail". I'm not sure who said it but it's a great quote. Many people plan their vacations more than they plan the lifestyles they're living. A lot of people have a mixture of influences from friends, relatives, and others who shape their lifestyles. They end up leading what I term "accidental lifestyles" or "lifestyles by default."

What if we could plan our dream lives? Well, I've got good news for you. We can! There are no rules in this lifetime. None. You can live life on your own terms. How to get there is by planning. Planning and then taking action until you get what you want.

The first step is to decide your "End Result." How do you want to live? Where do you want to vacation? What does your dream house look like? Imagine yourself driving your dream car. What kind is it? Keep going and vividly make this real in your mind. After you decide what you want, you have to have a vehicle to get there.

Write your own eulogy. What will you have accomplished? Were you a good person? How many books have you published?

Most of us already know that it is vitally important to write our goals down. The simple mechanical act of writing makes your goal visible and tangible.

It's no longer just a thought Now it's a commitment.

But there is one rule you must follow to succeed that very few follow through: It's not enough to write down your goal down. You have to describe it in fully. Make it as specific as possible.

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Compare: "I want to buy a new home" and "I want to live in a two story gorgeous Victorian style home with 4 spacious bedrooms, luxurious living room with a fireplace and hardwood floors. I will enjoy my large backyard with swimming pool and patio."

"I want to make a lot of money" is not the goal. It's just a wish.

"I want to earn \$10.000 a monthly from writing."

Now that's the great goal.

After writing your goal down in complete detail, make it visible

You can write it on a yellow sticky note and stick it on your computer.

Or even better. Print it so it would fit 4x6 picture frame, then frame it and put it on your desk.

You can print it on your business card and keep it in your wallet.

This will help you to stay focused on your goal and create a clear mental image of what you want.

There is one question you must answer before you start achieving your goal.

Failure to answer that question will result in lack of motivation and failure to follow the plan.

WHY do you want to achieve your goal?

No, not just because "I like the idea id being an auhor". There are reasons behind your dreams, usually dozens of them. Only you know what they are.

If you realise WHY you want your goal, you are more likely to follow your plan to the end.

For example, you might want to 15 pounds in 2 months.

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Do you want to look good

Do you want to feel good about yourself

Do you want to fit into your favorite dress

Do you want to impress your spouse .

For your health's sake

List every single reason. Try to imagine all the benefits you will enjoy after reaching your goal. The longer the list, the stronger your motivation will be.

Read your reasons first thing in the morning. Even better, frame them and hang them on the wall. It will keep you focused and motivated.

You've heard this hundreds of times.

"Think Big!"

"Dream Big Dreams!"

"Make your goal as big as you can imagine!"

"Get excited about it!"

So, okay, you've written down your BIG, almost out-of-reach goal. Really stretch. You don't want to underestimate yourself.

Often after a full day's work you're too exhausted to start working on the big goal. Maybe you don't have enough energy to even write the big goals. You make dinner, flop in front of TV and make a promise to work on your dream tomorrow."

But tomorrow never comes.

Days pass, maybe even weeks. Then you get depressed..Have you ever been there?

If so, here's a small trick that will help you to get started no matter how big your goal is.

We're writers, right? So let's assume that your goal is to write a New York Times best-

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seller. Is that all? Groan.

Every night write a paragraph or two. Something that would take 15-20 minutes or even less. That's all folks, just 15-20 minutes then walk away and go do something else.

The secret is that the most difficult thing is to GET STARTED. Once you start you are 95% most likely to finish the whole scene. And NYT best-sellers get written one paragraph at a time, one scene at a time, one page at a time.

Even if you only write for 15-20 minutes day, it doesn't matter. You've fulfilled your assignment for the day. If you do more you'll feel even better.

The trick is to give yourself one really small task. Once you get started you will probably find out that you won't mind doing more than you planned! Set big goals, but keep your tasks small.

Are you waiting for a perfect moment to work on your goal? Are you sure you will be able to recognize the perfect moment when it comes?

There is one simple formula that instantly tells you the perfect time to start achieving your goal.

The perfect moment -- NOW!

Yes, right now. THIS very second is the only perfect moment to start working towards your goals. Not tomorrow or Monday or the first day of the month.

Right now.

Don't waste your life waiting for a perfect conditions or perfect opportunity. They don't exist.

Use what you have, start right now, never ever procrastinate!

Have you noticed how dynamic successful people are? They don't lie on the couch (unless they are writers thinking about their next scene LOL) waiting for the perfect time to start doing something. They get up and DO it.

If you're putting things off and making excuses to do it later, here's a way to learn to

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overcome procrastination and become a person who loves the thrill of getting things done.

If you are a person who always puts things off, promising to do it later, maybe this technique is for you.

Next time you'll catch yourself trying to put important task off, take a piece of paper and answer three simple questions.

1. Where you are?
2. What do you want to achieve?
3. How you will feel while doing it?

By writing down what you want to achieve, you will already be imagining yourself doing it. And it won't be very difficult to make the transition into doing it.

Let's say you've think you've got writer's block, which I don't happen to believe in, and have been putting off working on your next scene. You can always find more important things to do, like cleaning out a closet.

Sit down, take a piece of paper and begin writing: "It's Saturday, 3:45pm. I'm sitting in the kitchen, drinking coffee. I want to write my next scene It will only take me about 1 hour to draft it out. I will then feel energised and happy that I'm closer to my goal."

Just as you're writing it you feel the desire to get started on it.. You feel it. And because you want to enter that contest or submit it to that editor who showed interest at conference, you will be closer to The Call! You'll be happier about yourself and tour writing.

Just for asking yourself three questions. Where you are? What do you want to do? How will you feel while doing it.

It's a very simple technique but it works like a magic! :)

Okay, that it for goal setting. Wasn't too bad, huh?

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PLAN FOR SUCCESS #4 - FUN STUFF

If, like me, you haven't the patience (or the time) to sit down and write seven detailed pages of goals in minute detail, you might like to try using a LIFE MAP.

Life Maps are fun and appeal to your inner child -- the ultimate in "cut and paste".

They are a little like mind maps, where you have a core idea with a lot of branches and veins. Life Maps are like a collage but not quite. Let me explain.

Instead of the idea, YOU are the centre of the Universe. Now that's an intriguing concept.

To begin, you will need a big piece of card from an art shop, or a stationer. Any colour you like. This is YOUR dream. Place a small photograph of yourself, or simply write your name (pseudonym) in big bold letters, and place it slap in the centre of the page. Now you're on your way.

Your Life Map can be a WIP in itself. What fun!!! Give that inner child their head. It doesn't matter if you don't have much to put in it, more room for the future. Yes? Take anything pictorial that represents your writing goals, however vague, or any goals come to that, and place them around the central picture with an accompanying few words, such as book titles. Vague ideas are okay too but not too many words. For instance, I have an Egyptian goddess on one side of the page, and several small pictures of locations where I want to set books. BTW, people's goals change but that's okay.

My words are in big, bold red lettering, typed, printed and cut out. I chose red capitals because red is a vibrant colour, it's alive and it's assertive, but you can choose whatever colour you want as long as it stands out on the page. Choose any words you want, but good strong verbs are best.

Decorate it with an abundance of colour as long as it represents your writing. My map also has lots of those sticky gold stars you can buy in stationers. It tells me I'm a star without needing words. <g>

It's important to put it where you can see it every day because it imprints those words and pictures firmly in your mind. Mine is on the wall beside, and slightly in front of my computer, so that every time I look up, my Life Map is there reminding me what I'm working towards.

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A Life Map can be for any length of time. Mine extends over the next ten years. It can be added to or altered when goals are realised or if they change.

Detailed goal setting, such as our friend Monte did in the first lecture, can then be reserved for six-month blocks which may not be quite so daunting.

I'll end by repeating one of my all time favourite quotes:

You were never given a dream without the talent to make it happen. You have to work for it, however

So, have you written down your dreams and goals? Bullet points are fine. You can flesh them out later in your own time if you want. I think you'll enjoy building and growing the Life Map.