

GOAL SETTING

.....FOR THE ARTISTIC MIND

One of the first things we are asking of you in **The Enso Circle Residency** is to set a goal for yourself that can be completed in three months and outline the steps that you will need to get there. But, if you are like me, the word GOAL can be paralyzing.

“My goal is to be in this residency and to make art. Isn’t that enough?”



It is. And it isn't. We artists are a very productive lot. We engage in projects with deadlines and budgets, work on committees and boards and get things done. We create a concept, develop a body of work, and then organize a show with all of its marketing and commercial aspects.

We must be making goals. *Right?* And creating action plans. *Right?* So, while we might shy away from the language of goal setting, we do get there in our own way... through the back door. Here's why.

As artists we face two issues in setting goals. Most of us, I dare say, are not trained to be linear thinkers, the language of goal setting, and if we are, it is likely not our preferred way of making decisions. Artists, especially women artists, are more comfortable using a **circular thinking process**, meaning that we gather information through interaction and insight, responding to that data through recognizing patterns and chasing ideas. I call this “following breadcrumbs,” – a random research process powered by bits of insight that slowly develops into a direction.

The other issue that many of us, as artists, face when asked to set A GOAL is that we usually have too many goals! You probably have a long list of materials you want to explore, processes you want to learn, ideas for art you want to create and concepts to research. That is part of our circular thinking process. As we meander down the byways of creating a body of work or tackling a creative project, we will collect a lot of breadcrumbs. As the direction becomes apparent, not all of those breadcrumbs are right for the project at hand, so, we tuck them away in a “not yet” file for future work.

If you have done some bread crumb collecting in your art life, YOU will already have a fairly good idea about what you want to accomplish during this residency. You could even have a list of materials or new skills you want to learn. If you are a long-time creator, you probably even have your own language for this process and your own tried and true roadmap for getting to

A starting place. So, if it is a matter of semantics, don't let the words **Goal, Resources and Action Plan**, get in the way of claiming a direction and making it happen. However, if you do need some help with **Getting to a Goal**, the next few pages should help.



SOMETHING ABOUT A GOOD GOAL

WHY DO WE EVEN SET GOALS? DON'T IDEAS SORT OF "MAGICALLY APPEAR" FOLLOWED BY AMAZING ART?

We all know that feeling of being directionless for a time. We call it playing in the studio. Artists need space for exploring new media or seeing how a new tool can be useful. It is also helpful to look at other artist's work and doodle in your sketchbook. But there does come a time for a focused excursion into something new. The Enso Circle Residency is that opportunity. Knowing where you want to go with your work and being able to visualize and name your goal is the first but necessary step to getting there.



The positive aspect of setting a goal is that it gives direction to your time and energy. If you set a goal of having a solo show, for example, that goal becomes two years of focused work with many intermediate goals. Without that big goal, those same two years can slip by without much accomplishment. A goal is a motivator to stay the course when the ideas dry up and you get stuck. Goals provide visible, measurable progress allowing you to actually *DO what we most want to do*. There is deep satisfaction in turning a dream into a reality.

So, whether you are at the beginning of a large goal or in a step along the way, it is time to get to the next step by defining where you are now and where you want to be in three months. *A good goal can do that.*

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Most productive people can agree that for a goal to be "good", meaning something that will work *FOR you instead of AGAINST you*, it will need to have the following characteristics:

1. A goal should be something that you want badly enough to use your limited time and energy.
2. A goal needs a time limit or a deadline. And it has to be able to be achieved within that timeline.
3. A good goal is specific, measurable, and simple to state and understand.

Your goal should excite you a lot and scare you a little bit. When you both tingle and tremble writing your goal or sharing it with someone else, you know that your goal is important to you. You also know that it is just challenging enough to insure you are creating at your cutting edge. Your goal is personal, but it should stand up under the discerning eye of a colleague or friend. Sometimes we can bite off more than we can chew and sometimes we need to be prodded into biting off a chunk just beyond our safe spot.

When your goal feels *exactly right*... You will find that the action steps you need to take and the resources you will need to get there will flow in ordered steps with ease. You will be amazed at the steady progress you will have and what you can accomplish when you consistently set goals. Writing your goals down along with their action steps and timeframes will make your goals easy to review and revise as needed.

HOW GOALS WORK IN ENSO CIRCLE

As a community Enso will be with you *full circle*, seeing what you envision and watching you progress and develop your work. To that end we will ask you to post your goals and action steps so that Lyn and Michelle and members of the circle can link you to the resources that you might need. There will be occasional live progress reviews where you will be able to invite us into your process and troubleshoot issues.

As a circle of colleagues who are traveling the same road with you, we share your artistic struggles and celebrate your artistic success. Through accountability to your fellow artists, your own dedication and a culminating online show, The Enso Circle will be your Third Eye and your studio mate for the next three months. Enjoy the journey!

OPTIONAL CIRCULAR THINKING EXERCISE FOR GOAL SETTING

ADAPTED FROM THE NATIVE AMERICAN MEDICINE WHEEL

In the Native American Medicine Wheel there are five points, including the Four Directions—East, South, West, North—and the center of the circle. To arrive at a goal for your residency is to travel in imagination, with writing or through images from the center point to each of the directions as you explore options, challenges, and opportunities to understand what you most want and need at this moment in your artistic life.

Read through all of the directions before you get started with the exercise.

(Allow an hour for this exercise.)

Materials:

- Long handled ink brush
- Bottled Black Drawing Ink
- 10 x10" square of Illustration Board or Paper
- Journal and Pen
- Timer

Using the meditative single brush stroke of the Enso practice, draw a circle that fills the space of your paper or board. With a pen, mark the directions (*East-Right Side; South-Bottom; West-Left Side; North-Top.*)

1. Set a timer to 7 minutes.
2. In your journal write the word **East** and the phrase *I am an artist that is committed to do my best and authentic work.*
3. Read the questions for the Direction of East. Close your eyes for a moment to allow the questions to resonate within yourself. Begin by free writing. When you free write, you let your thoughts flow as they will by writing down what comes to mind. Don't be overly concerned with rules of grammar and punctuation. Try to remain as an observer to what is emerging on the page. Continue writing without stopping until the timer sounds. If you can't think of what to say, write *that* down.
4. Put down your pen and sit for a moment with the experience. Add any concluding thoughts or insights if you want.
5. Repeat the steps for each direction.
6. When you have completed the writing for each direction, create an image within the circle that captures your experience. Name your goal for your residency in a succinct sentence. List the resources you will need and outline the steps to arrive at your new place.

East: *I am an artist that is committed to do my best and authentic work.* What do I most want right now for my work? How will it look when I get there? Be detailed in your mental images with colors and style, size, and content.

South: *I am a student of the world who is curious and open to learning and growing.* What must I learn or master to do this work? What experiences or whose expertise can I seek out? What materials or supplies are necessary?

West: *I am a person with talents and skills developed over many years of work and dedication.* Which of these skills and talents will serve me? Which natural gifts and resources do I already have available?

North: *I hold assumptions and expectations that can prove disappointing.* What am I assuming and expecting? Which new possibilities could emerge as I move forward? Which questions are beneath the surface?