



As The Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing
from

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What's Happening?

Another year, another set of goals. I'm keeping it simple this time. I have 3 basic goals for the year:

- Eat right. If I can lose weight, great. More importantly, though, is to get the right mix of vitamins from my food so I don't have to fuss about my health.
- Write daily. I got out of the habit of doing a bit of work on my books each day. I would try to do it, but so many other things intruded and writing often was pushed to the back burner. Well, now I'm doing at least *something* every day on my current book(s).
- Daily promo. I really dislike promoting my work, so I figured if I did a little bit every day, it might be more palatable.

In addition, I chose one overall "theme" word for my year, and this year, my theme is "flexible". I will be flexible when confronted with a busy schedule; I'll be flexible changing my writing plans as needed; I'll be flexible if a roadblock gets thrown my way and I have to go around it.

Flexible is me.

I'm halfway through the month, and so far, I'm staying on track. I've written every day, done something related to promotion every day, and I'm keeping good eating habits except for the occasional, planned-for detour. I've read that it can take as long as three months to develop new habits, so I guess I still have some work ahead of me.

In Other News

I finished my edits on *Woulds* and it is now in the hands of my beta reader. I plan to publish it later in the year, or --

My favorite publisher, The Wild Rose Press, has expanded their guidelines for submissions, and now they are accepting mysteries, women's fiction, and other genres that aren't directly tied to romance.

I always had trouble with the romance guidelines, because often I would want to focus more on the mystery than on the romance. So this is great news for me. While I've had good success as a self-published author, I think it would be very useful to have a book a year with a publisher, because that will keep my name in front of the readers who pay attention to that publisher.

What does this mean for me? It means I may submit *Woulds* to them for consideration. And I am polishing a book that I was considering for submission, but wasn't sure if I would. There is a romance in the book, but the mystery is really the focus of the story.

So I'm staying *flexible*, and I moved that 'polish' book up on my To Do pile, right after "review *Righter* and get it ready to publish," "develop new cover for *Grace* and new title," and right before "finish Book 2 of the *Endless American Dream*" saga.

You can see why I need to write every day?



What's Next?

I am getting ready to kick off the conference year with the Love Is Murder Conference in Chicago, during the first weekend of February. I'll fly into Chicago on Thursday then I'm speaking on two panels throughout the weekend. I'll fly back on Sunday.

I have a somewhat busy conference schedule this year:

- Love Is Murder in February, which focuses mainly on mystery authors. I've gone to this conference four or five times and it's a great one to connect with readers.
- Romantic Times, in Kansas City in May. This is the enormous conference that draws people from all over the world. I'm a little fish in a big pond at that conference, but it is a good place to meet readers. I'm not doing the "complete" conference. I'm just going for the day programs and not participating in any of the nighttime parties. That will save me some money and will save me from a few headaches, as well (those parties can be wild!)
- RomCon, in June in Colorado Springs. I've gone to this conference twice before and I enjoyed it. The Wild Rose Press is one of the featured sponsors this year, so 'their' authors will get some publicity from it. I thought it might be a nice opportunity to spend some time with family in Denver and do a conference.
- I *may* try a new conference in October called Magna Cum Murder, which is in Indianapolis. I've heard from other authors that this is a good conference to connect with readers. If I go to it, I'll probably drive to Minneapolis, fly out from there, then come back and work in the office for a few days. Plans are still taking shape.



I'll keep you posted on all the doings -- and until then, I'm busy writing and staying *flexible*.