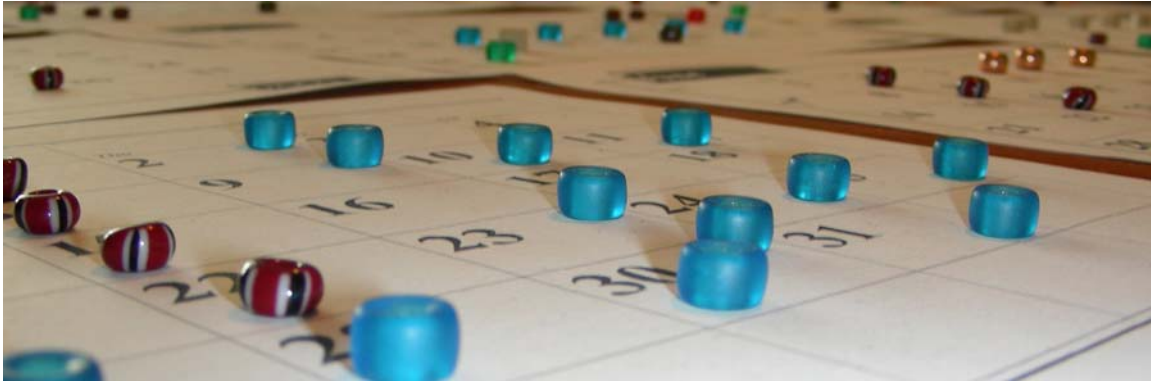


# A calendar Mosaic: Scheduling for Artists

by Therese Fisher ©2008  
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I recently realized that I'd fallen into a pattern of having my schedule be what I call a reactionary schedule. I planned my activities around other people's calendars. I began to realize that the practice placed unnecessary restrictions on what I was able to do in any given year. Don't get me wrong, I was doing a lot of great things that I loved, but I felt I'd somehow moved out of the center of my calendar, out of the center of my being.

With this in mind, I began to embark on my 2009 calendar planning adventure! This pattern is how I got beyond my dilemma. I share it with you because one, it was REALLY fun and two, because it might just help you to see your life from a new perspective.

## Gratitude

I would like to take a moment, as I do at the beginning of all of my patterns, to be in gratitude. I give thanks to all of those people whose schedules provide me with so much inspiration and so many fun and playful activities in my life. I would also like to thank my wonderful husband who so lovingly and playfully embraces my enthusiasm for a very full and active life and who patiently gave up the use of the dining room table for weeks while I worked on this project!

## Supplies

For this project you will need

- **Printout of a calendar** (for the period you are working on planning). I prefer one page per month. Microsoft Word has a built in Calendar Wizard that you can use or you can cut up a store bought calendar.

- **Small stones or beads.** These you will use as markers for various events on your calendar. Make sure you have a variety of colors/shapes to signify each different activity you want to schedule.
- **Notebook** for notes and also a page to use as a key for your calendar.
- **Pens** for notes and in matching colors to your beads for transcribing your calendar, you might want to have some highlighters as well.
- **Camera.** A camera is handy for in progress photos of your calendar. You never know when a gust of wind or a child or pet or houseguest might blow through and accidentally shift the location of all of your beads.
- **Other useful things.** Read through the directions before you start in case you get some other creative ideas and need supplies to implement them.

## General Guidelines

The key to scheduling, I believe, is flexibility. You also grow and change throughout the year, so why not let your calendar grow and change with you? You want to plan your year, but also be open to synchronicities and spontaneity. Sometimes the best events are the ones you didn't plan on! (OK, if you really have to, you can schedule in days to be spontaneous!)

A word about vacation- I used to think, oh, I work for myself, I don't need to schedule time off. I can take it whenever I want. It took me years to realize that I'd fallen into the self-employment trap of every day being a workday. It also took me years to acknowledge that business trips really do count as work for me, even if I am traveling and having fun, I need to schedule in time off to just rest and regroup. And so, I highly recommend scheduling time off. You can determine for yourself what is appropriate, but be bold. Play with it a little. What would happen if you gave yourself six weeks of vacation?

For those of you that do Reiki, you can of course call in Reiki at the beginning of this process and again anywhere along the line to assist and guide you to creating the most fantastic year possible for you; one that supports you accomplishing your divine purpose on earth.

I also recommend, if you are trying to break out from a pattern of a reactionary schedule, that you not consult anyone else while you create the first draft of your calendar. Spend time with just yourself, empowering yourself to create your ideal year. Once you've got a solid draft going, then you can ask others for feedback and make desired adjustments.

## Instructions

1. Spread the calendar pages out on a flat surface so you can look at each month all at once. I like to do the entire year, but you may find it helpful to do this a quarter at a time or even add in a few months prior to the period you are planning just for reference.

Hopefully you have a nice big workspace in the house, but if not, kindly ask your family if they will allow you to take over the dining room table for an indefinite amount of time. A nice stretch of floor is good also, so long as you have a good writing surface. If you like to cook, I do not recommend the kitchen.

2. If your calendar isn't pre-marked, I recommend going through and marking all of the holidays that are important to you. (Things like Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, your partner's days off, your anniversary... things that aren't going to move and shift as your schedule evolves.) You can go ahead and write these in with a pen or highlighter.
3. Create your Calendar Key. This is a list of activities and the bead they are associated with that you can use for easy reference.
  - a. Make a list of the different types of activities you want to schedule.
  - b. Choose a color/style of bead to go with each activity.
  - c. Place a line of beads of a color next to each of these activities. (It is your key, but also your "stock pile" of colored beads)

You might only want to do this process for a certain type of activities, and that's fine. You know what it most important to you. You can get as detailed or as general as you want. Here are a few examples suggestions based on the categories that I used:

- Classes you are teaching
- Classes you are taking
- Private lessons/clients
- Office work time (paperwork, bill paying, etc)
- Studio time (time spent on your artwork)
- Volunteer work
- Exercise class/Time at the gym
- Monthly meetings
- Annual or otherwise regular gatherings you participate in (conferences, retreats, parties, etc.)
- Show dates & Proposal deadlines
- Family visits/Vacation



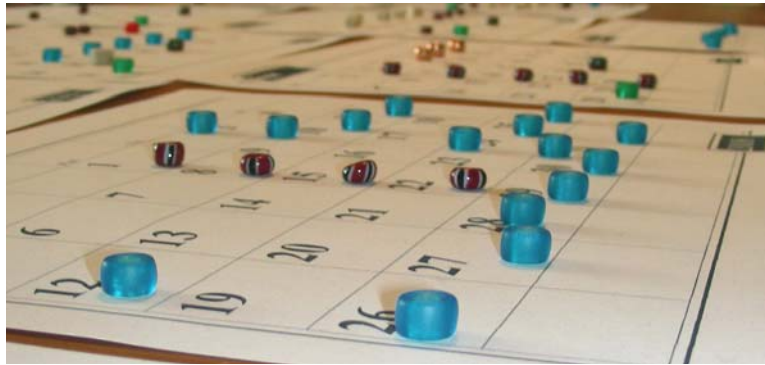
4. In your notebook or on your key page, make a section for goals (these would be things that you want to accomplish, but don't have a specific date associated with them. for example:

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>TIMELINE</u>
Write a poem	Once a month
See three clients	Each week
Write newsletter	Once a month
Reiki Treatment (self care)	Once a month
Finish art piece	Every other week
Write pattern	Once a month

Be as general or specific as you like. Remember, this is about setting intentions, not about keeping score. Throughout the year you might find goals and priorities will

shift. That's ok. In fact, it is great! It means you are listening to your inner guidance and honoring yourself as you grow and change.

5. Keep your notebook handy. You might find as you go through this process that your creative juices get flowing and you'll want to be able to jot down your new ideas. I found myself thinking of lists of ideas of classes I wanted to teach. Having the list handy, I checked them off as I added them to the calendar. The notebook is a nice place to make lists of dates you want to look up/research as well (events you heard about, things you are interested in doing but don't know when they are).
6. Now it is time to start placing beads on the calendar!



To place something on the calendar, take a bead from the activity's section on your key and put it on the calendar. In the beginning, just place the beads, that way if you need to move the event, you can just move a bead without writing and re-writing. If you need something more specific than just a bead, you can make notes in the notebook. That way your calendar doesn't get filled with scratches and scribbles.

Go head and start by placing things you know about for sure (commitments you've made, regularly scheduled events, vacations you have planned already).

Then start adding the other categories. The nice thing about beads is that you can set them on a date and then easily move them later. It is almost like playing a game of checkers or chess, only you get as many do-overs as you'd like!

7. Reflections and revisions- I recommend leaving this spread out for several days if you can. (I left mine out for a couple of weeks.) Take photos periodically to help you remember where things are in case it gets hot one day and you decide to turn on a high powered fan a little too close to your calendar mosaic. I'm just saying. It could happen.

As you look at your calendar from day to day in this visual way, you'll notice things start to stand out. When they do, notice them. Why do they stand out? You'll remember things that you forgot to add. You might even realize you added something that you promised yourself you wouldn't do this year.

As you walk by notice what color beads you have the most of. Are beads of a color spread out evenly throughout the year or are they sporadic? Does your calendar look visually balanced with activities? Did you remember to plan in time off? What color do you have the most of? Does that correspond to the activity you like or want to do the most of?

Keep it playful and don't be afraid to shift things around and see what it would be like if you did that activity on a different weekend or in a different month. Try moving beads around just to see how that feels. Is there something you've always wanted to do and never made time for it? What would it look like if you scheduled it in this year?



If you are comfortable with it, have your spouse, partner or a friend look at it. As you explain your process, you might remember things you wanted to schedule or notice things you didn't see before. They might remember an activity you've forgotten. Remember, anything they say is just a suggestion and you don't need to take it if it doesn't feel right to you!

8. Transcribing- when you have it where you want it, write the activity where the bead was and remove the bead from the calendar. Once all the beads are clear, you can stack your calendar pages and either make that your calendar for the year or take the loose pages and transfer the information into your official calendar. If you want to keep the color-coding of the beads, use different color pens or highlighters to code the different activities as you write them in your calendar. This is a great time to add in dates like birthdays and anniversaries.

And there you have it, your schedule for the upcoming year! Tell your friends, post it on your website, put it in your newsletter, start planning those vacations and most importantly, have a wonderful time enjoying the schedule you created for yourself!