

10 Tips to Simplify Your Writing Life

-Edie Melson



1. Evaluate Your Goals

It's important to have goals—and it's important to have written goals. It's easy to just float along, taking things as they come. But when we do that, it's hard to make progress—and it's even harder to evaluate progress. Beyond that, there's something almost magical about writing down your goals. Having them recorded somewhere gives them weight and makes it easier to make them a priority.

2. Track How Much Time on Social Media

If it's more than thirty minutes a day, it's time to re-evaluate. After thirty minutes, your return on investment takes a severe nosedive in the downward direction.

3. Let Go of Your Expectations

No this isn't a contradiction of #1 above. There is a huge difference between goals and expectations. I bet if you're honest with yourself you have quite a few expectations—from what you expect from yourself, to what you expect from others. For me, when I took a hard look, a lot of those expectations were totally unreasonable. So spend some time and take a hard look at your expectations. The ones that are reasonable, make into goals and priorities. The rest of them . . . well . . . just throw them away.



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4. Determine YOUR most Creative Time of the Day

Some of us are night people, some are morning people, and some of us work best in the afternoon. But we each have a specific time when the words and ideas tend to flow easier. Look at your internal clock and figure out when that time is. Then, guard it like you're guarding gold. Really that's what you're doing. Our income and dreams are locked up tight with our ability to create. When we figure out the time that work best for creative work, it's like someone has handed us pure gold.

5. Schedule Your Time

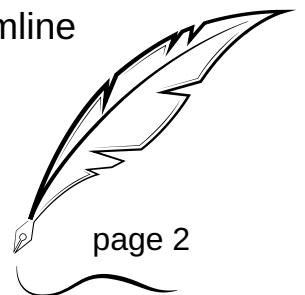
I know not everyone can have a detailed schedule. But truthfully, if you're trying to carve out time to write (and who isn't?), you need to schedule that time. There are lots of methods to help with time management from an old fashioned spread sheet to the Pomodoro Technique. Do some research and find something that works for you.

6. Stop the Negative Self Talk

When someone bashes our ability and/or our manuscript, it takes time to recover. The same holds true when we do it to ourselves.

7. Take Care of Yourself Physically

This means getting enough sleep, eating well, and especially exercising. The sedentary lifestyle of a writer can quickly take its toll on us physically and mentally. Sure these things take time—often time we don't feel we can spare. But even though this may seem counterintuitive, it will streamline your writing life. You can accomplish so much more when you are physically healthy and mentally alert.



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8. Build in Regular Breaks

Especially when I'm on a deadline, I've found that taking regular breaks greatly improves my productivity. A good friend and spiritual mentor of mine Kent Pate has a saying, "Divert daily, withdraw weekly, abandon annually."

9. Surround Yourself with Encouraging Writers

You don't just need encouraging friends, but also encouraging writers. We writers are an odd lot, and we need others around us who understand our thought process, our struggles and our quirky joys. These writers should be active and growing—not those who just talk about writing, but those who spend time writing.

10. Engage a Prayer Team

This may seem odd, especially if you're fairly new to even calling yourself a writer, much less having something published. But the truth is, this life is hard. When we answer God's call to step out and share His message, we're going to encounter spiritual warfare. For that, you need people to pray for you. If you're also building a ministry, trying to grow an income and/or beginning to speak, that's even more of a reason to surround yourself with prayer. These folks don't have to be writers, but they should have a connection to you.

