



Writing Tips + Soul Care for August

Learn How to Deal with Writing Stress

-Edie Melson



In honor of this back-to-school-time-of year I want to share some lessons in how to deal with writing stress.

Tips to Cope with Writing Stress

- **1. Take your fears and feelings to God.** Begin with prayer, but take it a step further. Journal your prayers and what you feel God is saying to you. When we begin with a connection to the Father, the other things we do to cope are more productive.
- **2. Stay connected to the present.** This is also a kind of non-judgmental mindfulness. Look honestly at your situation and evaluate what's bugging you. Examine and emphasize the differences between truth and lies. Don't beat yourself up for your feelings, instead study them and acknowledge what you've learned and apply that.
- **3. Start a journal.** Give yourself the gift of a place to pour out your feelings. I've found that especially for writers, writing down the confusing emotions we're dealing with brings order. Give yourself permission to be messy. Don't try to write only once a day in an orderly fashion. Instead write when you feel like it. It may be several times a day or only a few times a week. The important thing is that you have a place to pour out what you're dealing with.
- **4. Surround yourself with good smells.** Yep, aromatherapy can actually help. Use essential oils, candles, and even soothing lotions. Our mood is affected by the odors around us. Be deliberate about enhancing that part of your environment. I've begun lighting a certain candle when I write. Now I've got a kind of Pavlov's Dog situation. When I catch a whiff of that candle, I'm almost instantly in the mood to write.





Writing Tips + Soul Care for August

Learn How to Deal with Writing Stress

-Edie Melson



Tips to Cope with Writing Stress (cont)

- **5. Avoid caffeine, tobacco and alcohol.** Yes, we're writers and we are caffeine-fueled word machines...sometimes. Now is not that time. Instead find a beautiful glass, fill it with sparkling ice cubes, a slice of fruit and fresh water. Hydrate your water-starved body. Need something warm? Choose an herbal tea.
- **6. Walk away regularly.** You may find yourself on a deadline again, but the time you spend on a short walk or another healthy exercise will make you MORE productive. If you're a knitter, spend an hour with yarn and needles. Pull out your Bible journal or bullet journal and let creativity reign. Whatever renews your spirit is what you need to build into your routine.
- **7. Find a support group.** You are not the only one who has ever experienced this. You are not weak or stupid or defective. Listening to those lies isolates us from the community we desperately need right now. In addition to leaning into God, find His people, open up, and let them support you. When you're feeling better, you can return the favor.
- **8. Don't neglect physical activity.** Go for a walk, take a hike, but most of all—work up a sweat. You need those endorphins right now. By getting back into a regular exercise routine you'll also bring order from chaos.
- **9. Weed out the unnecessary.** Now isn't the time to add to your work load. Instead look for things you can drop from your regular routine. Cut back on social media, subscribe to a meal service and let that hall closet rest without cleaning it out.





Writing Tips + Soul Care for August

Learn How to Deal with Writing Stress

-Edie Melson



Tips to Cope with Writing Stress (cont)

- **10. Unplug from your electronics.** Yes part of being a writer in 2020 is having an active online presence. But this does NOT mean 24-7. Resolve to check your phone only a few times a day. Otherwise, leave it in the other room. Consider even writing old school. Walk away from your computer, pick up a pen and record your ideas on actual paper.
- **11. Refuse to give in to shame.** We have all been where you are. But when we all hide it shame creeps in. Instead be the brave one who admits life can be overwhelmingly stressful. You'll find freedom in that and release others from their bondage in the process.
- **12. Prioritize daily and weekly.** Every evening I use my bullet journal to make a list for the next day. By recording my to-dos then, I free up my first-thing-in-the-morning for time with God. I also keep a running list for the week so I don't forget anything vital. I'm developing the habit of NOT looking at my phone or email until after I've had some precious time with God. Knowing I already have a list, frees me from the stress of feeling like I'm already behind when I climb into my work-mode.

The biggest thing to remember is that we're not alone. Being a writer can lead to an incredible life, but it can also bring extreme times of difficulty. With these tips you can begin to recover from the stressful times and help others in the process.

