

For Writers: How to Manage and Organize Your Writing Time

Writing is creative – a right brain activity. Organization and management are left brain activities. Is it any wonder that writers may feel bipolar – knowing they should be somewhat organized, yet needing to listen to their creative bent? How do you accomplish your goals while following your inspirational urges?

I think the answer is to have a loose organizational structure that provides you with some guidance, all the while paying attention to what is motivating you at the moment. You don't want to ignore times when you are energized to work on a particular project.

1. Know your passions and gifts. Where do you shine? About which topics do you love to write? What style of writing is your favorite? What type of publication do you prefer?
2. Based on your passions and gifts, determine your priorities. In which areas will you concentrate? Where do you want to spend the majority of your time? If you have several areas of interest, prioritize them in terms of preferred topics, preferred writing style(s), on which you want to spend more time, etc.
3. List those projects on which you are currently working or on which you want to work. How do they match up with your passions, gifts, and priorities? For example, if you are working on something that doesn't fit with your passions, gifts, and priorities, why are you doing it? Is it something you are contracted to do or can you decide to forgo this project? Prioritize your current projects in light of your priorities.
4. Create some tangible goals. How many hours will you spend daily on each project? Do you have a goal of a certain number of words each day on each project? How many articles/books, pages, do you want to write in a certain length of time? Is there research you need to do? Do you have deadlines? Do you need to set some deadlines?
5. Create a daily routine: what you will do first, second, third, etc. and how much time you will spend on each?

Remember, if you are hitting a mental block on one priority, take a break and do something totally different to refresh your mind, whether it is another priority or something unrelated to writing.

If you are eager to work on a particular project, listen to your urges. Determine whether working on this project will derail your priorities. If possible, act on your creative juices – your writing will flow if you are burning to work on the project. By acknowledging your creative motivation and knocking out this project, you will be energized to return to your higher priorities.