

Ten Tips to Beat PROCRASTINATION for Writers



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This ebook contains valuable tips and advice to help writers overcome one of the most difficult obstacles to writing a book – procrastination.

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Procrastination – The Bane of Many Writers’ Lives

Welcome. You’re reading this ebook, so I’m going to make a few assumptions. I’m going to assume that you’re a writer. You love writing, you love making up stories in your mind. You are a creative person. You always have interesting ideas that will make great books. You love to share your brilliant ideas in written form. You’ve always enjoyed writing a journal or keeping a diary. You’ve always loved the idea of becoming a published author. You dream about the day when you’ll hold a copy of your own book in your hands, and be thrilled at seeing your name on the cover.

But - that published book remains a dream for “someday” because the ideas are still in your head and not on paper. Maybe you are scared that you don’t really know how to write. Or perhaps you started working on it, but you gave up because it was too overwhelming. Perhaps you struggled with self-doubts and wondered if what you were writing was any good, and if anybody would read it. Or maybe you are juggling so many other things in your life: work, family commitments, studies, running a home, running a business, volunteering, etc., such that you just don’t have the time. Perhaps you started writing the book with enthusiasm, but you developed writer’s block and that

left you unable to move forward. Slowly, it became easier to just let the time pass, and leave the book unfinished. You keep promising yourself that you'll get to it soon. And the time passes, and the days turn into weeks, then months, and then years.

We're all familiar with procrastination. Many writers I speak to tell me that they have an interesting idea they're working on but so many other things crowd out their time and schedules and they leave the book unfinished. The fact that nowadays, we have an almost unlimited number of distractions competing for our attention, only makes it worse. Emails, TV, social media, online videos, phone calls, etc. all take up valuable time that we could be using to work on writing that book. These distractions squander away our free time and we put off important tasks we should be doing. And the more we put things off, the harder it is to pick them back up. Sometimes, we get a feeling of panic and wish we had started sooner. Sometimes we remember that we still have this unfinished project and we feel guilty for not getting to it and completing it. This cycle then repeats itself – procrastinate, feel guilty, get panicky, delay in resuming the work again.

Don't let procrastination take over your life. Imagine how much more productive you would be, if you stopped procrastinating and delaying your dream to write and publish that book.

I'm going to share some of the tips I use to beat procrastination, and I'm sure if you follow them too, you'll be able to do the same :

1 - Visualise your end goal

Think about the reason why you want to write your book, and picture yourself achieving that goal.

Do you want to share your inspiring life story to bless other people?

Do you want to write a novel that wins acclaim and awards?

Do you want to tell an important historical story that you feel the world needs to know?

Do you want to explore a new, unique insight into relationships?

Whatever the goal for your desire to write, really think about the end result.

When you're tempted to reach for the TV remote or watch a YouTube video, remember your end goal.

Think about what completing the book will do for your sense of achievement, your career, your bank balance and your esteem. When you can see yourself winning the award, sharing your wisdom with clients, or even just typing "THE END" on your finished manuscript, you will be motivated to stick with it until you make it a reality.

For example, I imagine myself at my next book launch, giving interviews about my work, and seeing a new product show up in search results when my name is typed into Amazon.

Visualising these end goals keeps me motivated to continue writing, especially on those days when I'm feeling discouraged and tempted to quit.

2 - Break the writing process up into smaller steps

Sometimes we procrastinate because subconsciously, the idea of writing a fifty-thousand word document feels too overwhelming for us.

The solution to this, is to break the book writing process into smaller tasks and then focus on one small task at a time. Make each task as simple as you can, so that it doesn't feel overwhelming but instead you feel confident that you're able to tackle it easily. When the task looks easy, you're more likely to think, "I should do it now", instead of, "I can't think about that right now."

For example, I'm currently working on the content for a writing course. Thinking about a twelve-week project seemed so overwhelming that I was not willing to start. Instead I've broken it down into stages such as (i) Research (ii) Choosing Topics (3) Drafting an outline (4) Writing one section at a time (5) Editing, etc. When it's broken down into smaller stages, it is less scary, and I can focus on one section at a time until I get to the end.

You can use this process for most other projects too, not just writing a book.

3 - Create a detailed timeline with specific deadlines

If you have the tendency to procrastinate, then you need to set targets and deadlines for yourself. Having just one deadline for your work is like an invitation to procrastinate. You may think you have plenty of time to achieve the target before the set time so you may keep pushing it back. After you've broken down your book writing process into smaller bits, you should create a timeline for completing each task. Make sure your timelines are realistic, but you must finish each task by a certain date, so that you don't jeopardize everything else you have scheduled to do after that. This way, it creates the urgency to act so that you stay on track with each small task, and also your overall project.

4 - Schedule your writing time and commit to it

When you've done the tips above, you now need to find the time to write. Most of us are pretty busy people, juggling a lot of other demands on our time. If you don't set aside time specifically for writing, you will never write. Take a look at your diary/planner and go through the hours in your day that are already taken up by activities you have to do, such as working or studying hours. Cross out commuting time, sleeping, eating, and other basic functions too. Now realistically look at how much time you've got left. Where can you

fit in an hour or two for writing? What activities can you cut down on? Could you write during your commute? Could you get up an hour earlier? Could you spend your weekends focused on writing? Schedule in your writing time and guard it jealously. I believe you should try to schedule in at least eight hours a week, if you're serious about working on a book. Obviously, you would need to be flexible and allow yourself some time to get into a routine, but if you respect your time and show up regularly to do your work, the results quickly add up. Before long, your 3000 words a week will add up to 12,000 words a month and 72,000 words in six months. When I first started writing an online series, I wrote during my commute on the train, and during my lunch break at work. When I was working on my novel, I used to go to bed at 9 p.m., then set my alarm to wake up at midnight to write until four in the morning. You'll have to find the perfect time that fits your schedule and lifestyle.

5 - Get rid of the distractions around you

Identify the things that are tempting you to procrastinate with your work and remove them. When you have made the sacrifice to schedule time to write, the last thing you need is to look up at the clock and realise that you've spent all the allocated time on YouTube! If you are procrastinating a little too much, maybe that's because the distractions are right in front of you and you can't

resist them. Here are a few things you can do, when you sit down to work on your book, that might help you resist temptation: (i) Ignore your telephone's notifications or turn the phone to silent (ii) Disable your email notifications (iii) Sign out of Facebook and all social media accounts (iv) turn off your TV (v) Turn off your Wifi or Mobile internet if necessary. You may also want to set yourself a timer. Say for example you won't check your email for 90 minutes. Or you could set a goal that you won't turn on the TV to watch a show until you've written at least 2000 words. Resisting temptations require discipline but when you have your goals to achieve, you'll sacrifice something to make them happen. I also think it would help if we are more conscious about differentiating between when we get tired or bored and need a break, and when we just want to procrastinate.

6 - Get Accountability

Sometimes, having someone else to motivate and inspire you makes the writing process more interesting. It also helps to keep you accountable, if you have a partner working on a similar goal and you keep tabs on each other. You can encourage each other, keep each other updated on your progress, and receive feedback, so that you're encouraged to carry on. You can also hold yourself accountable by telling other people about your writing project. Whenever people see you, they will ask how the book is coming on, and that

will spur you on. You can tell your friends on your blog or social media pages that you're working on a book, get them excited about it, and keep them updated with your progress on an ongoing basis. You don't want to disappoint your friends, so it's a great way to keep yourself accountable. Finally, you can get a coach who will keep you accountable by checking up on your progress at regular intervals, and encouraging you to continue until you have reached your goals.

7 - Look for people who inspire you to keep going

We've all heard the saying – “you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with”. Which means that the people you spend time with, become your strongest influencers. If you want to stop procrastinating with your writing goals, you should spend time with people who are successful at what they set out to achieve. Also look around you – among your friends, colleagues at work, even online acquaintances. Who are the hardworking people achieving milestones in their careers? Look for them and hang out with them. If you can't meet them personally, you can buy books written by personal development gurus, influential writers and thinkers to discover their working habits. If you find something practical that you can apply to your

own life, do it! Chances are, you'll be more inspired to follow in their footsteps, than if you did nothing.

8 – Look for people who have already written books

Closely related to the point above, but now you want to deliberately choose to contact writers and authors who have been through the process of writing their own books. These people will constantly remind you that your own dreams of becoming a published author, are possible. You can attend writers' meetings or networking events. You may seek to associate with more experienced writers in your genre, for example. They can give you guidance as a newbie in writing your own story. If you regularly associate with people who have walked the path ahead of you, you're more likely to continue working until you reach your end goals too.

9 - Stop Waiting for the Perfect Time

Or just get rid of the concept of perfection altogether. Why? Because it doesn't exist. There will not be a perfect time to write a novel. Most people who procrastinate on this issue often say they will write a book "someday", maybe when they retire, when they get a less stressful job, when their children grow

up and move out of the house, etc. But the truth is, if you're waiting for a perfect time, you'll never get round to starting or finishing your book. Are you waiting for a perfect time to do this? There's no time like the present. In fact, the present is all you've got because nobody knows tomorrow.

Perfectionism can also be a huge deterrent in terms of writing your book because you think the story has to be "perfect" before you can release it to the world. But most published writers know that the first few drafts of your book are going to be less than perfect. Once you have the first draft written, the editing process is what refines and polishes your book. But you're never going to publish a book if you never get to the end of the first draft, because you are thinking it has to be perfect. Remember, it's better to have a finished imperfect first draft that you can improve on, than an unwritten "perfect" story in your head.

10 - Take action

As the Nike slogan says, "Just do it". The truth is, you can do all the scheduling, planning, networking, etc, but if you don't actually take action, you'll never finish writing that book. It's one thing to desire something, it's another matter entirely to take the appropriate actions to achieve it. Remember, to be a writer, you have to actually sit down and write. Nothing

else will get the book done. I know a lot of people who spend so much time doing research, that they never actually write the book. I also know some people who read books on how to write, attend a lot of writers' events, join writer's forums, and talk a lot about writing, etc. but guess what, they don't actually practice the writing. Reading, research, planning, talking and so on may keep you busy and give you the illusion that you're being productive but if you're not actively writing things down, then you're not really progressing with your book.

Pause to reflect

If you have been procrastinating for an extended period of time, it might reveal a clash between what you want and what you are currently doing. Often times, we outgrow our goals as we discover more about ourselves, but we don't change our goals to reflect that. Sometimes you may need to take some time out of your normal schedule to pause and reflect on your goals, and your reasons for wanting those goals. What exactly do you want to achieve? What should you do to get there? What are the steps to take? Does your current work align with that? If not, what can you do about it?

Sometimes, some people struggle with an unconscious urge to self-sabotage. They want to achieve something, but they are afraid of what that success would mean to them, so they sub-consciously prevent themselves from reaching that goal. An example of this would be someone who wants to tell the story of how they grew up and survived a horrible upbringing, but they are scared of opening up and becoming vulnerable. So instead they procrastinate on that desire, and it never comes to light.

Whatever the case, remember, half-finished projects are not going to do anything for you. Nobody will buy a half-finished book. Nobody will publish an unfinished manuscript. Whether your writing ambitions involve hitting the New York Times Bestsellers list or living off the income from your books, you have to finish writing what you have started so that it can add value to your life. Stop procrastinating and get to it. The world needs something that only you can write!

Who am I?



Hi! My name is Tolulope Popoola. I'm an Author, Book Writing Coach and Publishing Consultant. I'm also the founder of Accomplish Press. I love reading and writing, I love helping and inspiring people to pursue their dreams. I'm on a mission to help aspiring authors to write and publish their own books too.

If you need help with any of the topics discussed in this book, and you're not sure where to start, then I can help you. I offer coaching, consultations and training for aspiring authors who want to learn how to write and publish their books.

You can contact me through our website and social media links below:

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I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Book Writing Coach and Publishing Consultant

PS: Here are my fiction titles – my novel [Nothing Comes Close](#), and two collections of flash fiction stories, [Fertile Imagination](#) and [Looking For Something](#).

