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FIRST THINGS FIRST: WRITING STRATEGIES

Marilyn L. Grady

Make TIME, Take TIME!

There are some fundamental principles that relate to writing. For instance, you must sit down and begin. Writing is an illusive task. Procrastination and hesitation are poor companions to the work of the writer.

One consistent excuse for not writing is a lack of time to do so. Recall, of course, that there are 168 hours in a week. It is essential that you schedule your week so that you have part of the 168 hours for the writing you want to accomplish. An hour each day (or more) would be a great beginning for a writing schedule. By writing each day, you establish a rhythm, momentum, and continuity to your work. If too much time elapses between writing sessions, each writing session becomes a new beginning rather than a continuation of the writing process. Valuable momentum is lost in the “start and stop” method of writing.

Consistency is an asset in achieving your writing goals. Pick the same time and location each day so that you develop the writing habit. The location should be free from distractions and conducive to your writing needs. Pick a location that has the right ambience and a site that includes all the writing implements you require. You do not want to squander your writing time in a search for a reference or a cup of coffee.

Alert others to your writing intentions. Your friends and family can be persistent task masters who will remind you of your self-proclaimed goals. Allow them to help keep you on track and encourage you in the lonely quest of writing.

Some individuals commit themselves to writing a minimum number of words or pages at each writing session. This practice assures consistent writing progress. Imagine how many pages you can write in a month or six months if you commit to a requirement of two pages each day. Consider not leaving your writing spot until you have written those two pages.

Writing requires discipline. One way to create structure for your writing is to establish deadlines. A section, a theme, or a chapter can be benchmarks for the completion of a writing session.

The key is in beginning!