

No More Excuses!

I DON'T HAVE TIME / I'M TOO BUSY / I HAVE OTHER WORK TO DO (I.E. LAUNDRY).

When will you make time for writing?

Prioritize. Make a schedule (and build writing time into it). Try your best. That's all that matters. Everything that doesn't get done today, wasn't supposed to get done today anyways. Work when you're supposed work. Relax when you're supposed to relax. Write when you're supposed to write. When you have the choice to write or not, do it. When you don't, that's okay. It's truly okay. Be grateful that you have the freedom of time to choose what to do.

NO ONE WILL READ IT.

Act as if. You believe in your story, or else you wouldn't be writing it. That's one reader right there. And I'm sure there's other people who need to read your story too.

You must first write for you. Write the story you want to read. Write the story because you need to – because you need closure or acceptance or you just have to get it out of your head. Write for you. Don't worry about the readers right now – they will follow.

EVERYONE ELSE IS WRITING A TON / GETTING PUBLISHED / BEING SUCCESSFUL, BUT NOT ME.

Every literate person can put words on the page. Not everyone will be published. That is true. The difference between an occasional writer and a published author is grit. Yes, the road is difficult. Yes, it's not always fun. Yes, you have to write when you don't feel like it and you have to deal with a bazillion rejections and you have to invest a lot a lot a lot of time. You have to have grit. You have to persevere. You cannot give up.

Quit comparing yourself to others. You cannot control their success, and dwelling on it does nothing good for you. They may have started at a different time than you. They may have gotten lucky. They may just be pretty badass. That's good. Good for them. Be inspired. Be excited. Be happy that someone is doing it, because it should give you hope that it can happen for you too. You're not going to reach your dreams by climbing someone else's mountain; you have to pave your own path. This is YOUR story written on YOUR schedule to reach YOUR goals. Not theirs.

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NOBODY WILL KNOW IF I DON'T WRITE TODAY/MEET MY WORD COUNT GOAL.

You're right. You can go hide on your sofa and watch Netflix all day long. No one will have to know.

Except you.

Can you deal with your inner critic nagging at you all day and night? Really? Go for it then.

But let me ask you this. Would you not do your job just because no one else was in the office? Would you not do your homework just because there's no teacher? Would you not ever ever clean your house because no one was coming over? You'd probably still do it. Because things have to get done. Just because no one is watching you write, doesn't mean you don't have to do it.

I'M NOT INSPIRED.

If you wait for inspiration to strike, you'll be waiting for a very long time. Start writing and inspiration will show up eventually.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING.

You DO know what you're doing. You know how to speak, read, and write, otherwise you wouldn't be here reading this post right now. You are smart and capable. Think of all the people who believe in you – your friends, your family, your teachers, the special people in your life. They think you're amazing and wonderful and beautiful and intelligent. Believe in yourself! Put your thoughts on paper. That's all you have to do. If you want an extra refresher, check out some resources. But don't get sucked into the internet. Just take a quick break, then put words on the page.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT.

Write about that. It's still words on the page! Try a free-write. Try a writing prompt. Try an online story generator. Try working on an old draft. Try to write something incredibly boring. Try writing a letter to your potential readers about why you can't write a story because you don't know what to write about.

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WHAT IF...?

What ifs are NOT real! They're based on F.E.A.R – False Evidence Appearing Real. Fear and doubt are the enemies. DO NOT BELIEVE THEIR LIES! Just take the next step. Just do your work. 95% of the things we worry about don't end up happening anyways. Look at facts, not feelings. The fact is you need to be writing.

MY LAPTOP DIED.../I'M SICK.../TV SOUNDS NICE...

I don't care what your excuse is – it's an excuse. And it always could be worse. Is there literally absolutely no possible way you could be writing right now? I mean, do you have no computer / paper & pen / napkin & crayon / text message / voice recorder / anything to document your thoughts? You probably have something. If you don't, you don't have to write right now. Go ahead and skip it. But until then, shut up and write.

NOTHING IS GETTING DONE. / I'M OVERWHELMED. / I'LL NEVER FINISH A WHOLE NOVEL.

Yes, you can. And you will. Take a deep breath. One day at a time. One minute at a time. Just focus on the sentence in front of you. Do not give up. This is part of the journey to where you are going. It's scary. And it's hard! To complete a big task, it takes a bunch of little, smaller tasks. Write one word. Then one sentence. Then one scene. Then one chapter. Soon enough, you'll have written one book. Just keep writing (and dreaming about the finished project) and you'll get there.

I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.

When will you feel like it? Just like inspiration, if you wait till you feel like it, you'll be waiting a very long time. To be productive, truly productive, you can't just write when you feel like it. Nothing would ever get done. Would it hurt you to write for half an hour? Or even just five minutes? No. Do that. See how you feel then.

If you really, really, really need a break. Take a break. Relax. Watch TV or read a book or take a walk – whatever you want. It's good to have breaks. But not so many that you keep saying you never feel like it and then nothing ever gets done.

If it's a particular section that's bothering you, write a different section. Come back to the one that you don't feel like writing later.

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IT'S NOT COMING OUT RIGHT.

Then don't write that part right now. Escape to something else. Escape to a different scene, or a completely different story. If it's general writing that's not coming out right, try brainstorming, mind-mapping. Try writing badly on purpose. Take a break, and do it again. Keep writing. Keep going. Don't stop and succumb to it. You've written stuff that has come out right before, and you will again. Just keep going.

You are a writer.

NOW, GO WRITE!