

Momentum matters and persistence pays

As I discover every day, no daily writing session stands alone, each hour of work, each day of work ties to the one before—and connects to the one to come after. Writing builds on itself.

With everything we all have going on in our daily lives, our minds can only be expected to hold on to a plotline for so long. Let's face it, life gets in the way. I'm a walking/talking example—I'm a month behind my personal schedule as a result of real life (and two colds) keeping me from writing. Life has an annoying tendency to take our minds away from our characters and make us talk to and interact with actual living, breathing people. When this happens and I get back to my writing, what momentum I'd built up has gone bye-bye. Then I have to take valuable writing time to go back over what I'd done before to bring myself back up to speed.

It's not just the words that we lose our grasp on when we don't (or can't) write every day. A particular character's emotional state, emotions they had in the scene where you stopped were right there, bubbling on the surface of your consciousness, ready to be tapped again. If you lose a day or two, that bubbling has stopped.

To write every day takes discipline and persistence. Discipline to do it, and persistence to see it through to the end of the book, and beyond to getting an agent and publisher. For those who want it badly enough, the dream of reaching that final goal is enough to keep us moving forward. There are plenty of roadblocks: life, family and friends who don't understand (or worse yet, who don't believe in you), and just the cold, hard truth that writing is hard work. It's lonely work. If you want to be a published writer, you have to trudge on despite all of this.

I have a full-time job, so carving out time to write wasn't (and still isn't) easy; but I *really* wanted to be published, so I found the time. I started writing on a more regular schedule, and I could see the improvement. And when I saw the improvement, I wanted to write more. With that came confidence and a determination to reach my goal.

I'd still be writing even if I wasn't published, because writing isn't just what I do—writing is who I am. It's like an addiction, you can't stop, and you don't want to. When I'm not writing, I'm thinking about writing. When I'm writing, I'm happy. When I'm between projects, I can get a little cranky. Just ask my amazingly patient and supportive husband.

Writing for publication is like any other goal worth working and fighting for. You have to put your nose to the proverbial grindstone and just *do the work*. Believe me, after working for it for over twenty years, it is so worth it.