

## Guidelines for Stuck Writers

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- 1. Don't start anything new.** Instead, finish something you've begun. If your imagination insists on presenting a brilliant idea, quickly jot it down if you must, then go back to the writing already underway.
- 2. Do radical self-care.** This means solitude, sleep, bodywork such as exercise and massage, good nutrition and connection with respectful others. And don't forget fun! Rock out in the kitchen! Go to the beach! Crack wise with your kids or friends!
- 3. Buddy up.** Get together with another writer at a library, coffee shop or your home. When you meet, state how you plan to use the time, then write together for an hour or two. You can also do this on the phone or Zoom-type tech, keeping the audio open and muted.
- 4. Change venues.** Get out of your rut by, well, getting out. Hello, coffeeshop!
- 5. Open a file, any file.** Start writing anything. Don't edit yet. Just blather. It's drafting, throat clearing, experimenting. Revision comes later. Don't edit too soon.
- 6. Procrastinate creatively.** Use your stalled energy to get other stuff done, then surf on the satisfaction. Or, bag writing for today and start over tomorrow, refreshed.
- 7. Chain yourself to the computer or notebook.** Some writers stay put for a set number of hours every day. Others meet a certain word quota. Play around to discover what works for you. Go with flexibility, openness and experimentation.
- 8. Refuse to be deterred.** Do not give up. Ever. No matter what. At all. Do a page a day and at the end of the year you've got a book.
- 9. Don't talk so much about writing.** Release that creative energy through your fingers, rather than your mouth. Be equally mindful about jumping into every how-to book or workshop you see. A little goes a long way. Writers write.
- 10. Don't mistake thinking for writing.** Spinning out words in your brain is not writing. It's processing and preparing, for sure. But sometimes you don't know what you need to write until you write it.
- 11. Let yourself be.** You don't have to be a hero, a saint or a martyr for anyone, any time. A mental habit of kind, affirming thoughts about yourself is a beautiful thing. And an absolutely necessary thing, no matter what. You are perfect just the way you are, *and* your true self loves you too much to let you stay that way. Trust this.
- 12. Forgive yourself everything.** You can't be perfect. You *can* be powerful. If you fall short of your plans, dreams and desires, make amends where appropriate, congratulate yourself for being human, and move on.