

How To Make Writing a Habit in 2019

*Note: Want to write more in 2019? Join our [30 Day Blogging Challenge](#) going on right now: [Click Here to Get Started](#)

Hey, we made it through the first week of 2019! I was exhausted after last week but I'm slowly starting to get back into the groove of work and realizing winter break is long gone. In fact, in times like this (when I need some motivation) I always turn to reading and writing to inspire great work. My journey hasn't always been like this. You might think I've been writing consistently for years and years, but that's not true. [The habit began only a few years ago...](#)

In March of 2013 I started to write on a daily basis. I decided to “commit” to the writing process and a system and see what would happen. As I began to write 100 words a day, it became easier to write 250 words a day. My system allowed for constant improvement because I wasn't focused on the end goal (writing a book or building a blog) but instead just the act of writing. Here's what that first year of consistent writing looked like in terms of blog traffic growth:



That summer I started writing 1000 words every day. I've continued that habit for over a year now. It's hard to do some days. I'll only get 500 one day, and have to make up for it the next day. I'll miss a day here or there and have to catch up over the next week. But I'm committed to the system.

Here are a few of the things that came out of my 1000 words each day:

- Over 430 Blog posts
- [8 Books Published!](#)
- *Scratch Your Itch* (the book I can't seem to finish writing!)
- Curriculum writing; Unit and lesson planning
- Grant writing
- Emails (lots of them!)
- [Weekly Newsletter](#)
- [Keynote and Workshop Presentations](#)
- [Genius Hour Master Course](#)
- Innovative Teaching Academy
- Video scripts

- Countless other side projects...

Since June of 2014 I've averaged writing 1000 words every day (which is only a few pages). That has led to over a million words. Never in my wildest dreams would I believe I could write that much, but when I do it everyday bit by bit, it's not only possible but also very doable.

THE POWER OF HABITS

Habits and systems are something we don't talk about nearly as much in education as we should. If we want to improve student engagement and performance, the trick is to work on systematic change. As the quote above said, "take control of consistent actions." What do your students do as soon as they walk into your classroom? What does your staff do as soon as they walk into a meeting? Are we building good habits?

My system of writing every day isn't necessarily a habit. The habit part comes when I tell you that the writing almost always comes around 5:30am with a cup of coffee next to my computer. Habits have triggers, specific times, and repetitive actions. James Clear gives "[3 Rules For Actually Sticking to Good Habits](#)" and I think they are spot on:

Here are the rules:

- 1. You have to start with a version of the habit that is incredibly easy for you. It must be so easy that you can't say no to doing it and so easy that it is not difficult at all in the beginning.[1]**
- 2. You have to increase your habit each day, but in an incredibly small way.[2]**
- 3. Even after increasing your habit, all repetitions must remain easy. The total habit should be broken down into easier pieces if needed.**

As a teacher or leader how could you implement these rules? As a writer I used these three rules to keep improving my system. So, even when I have days when my writing stinks (happens a lot), I'm still going through the motions and working.

When you ask yourself what your goals are, do you have a system of how you'll reach those goals? For a long time I didn't, and I thought they might magically happen with hard work. It's not enough to have goals, everyone has goals. The systems and habits you create for yourself are where the magic happens.

What's been really exciting for me is seeing how talking about "systems" can help other people I've worked with in the last year. Whether it is working with teachers, students, leaders, or other authors...I've seen the power of systems at work!

Thanks again

AJ

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