

Developing Your Writing Ritual

Deep writing can't be sustained for long periods and a writing ritual will keep you focused and productive. It will foster writing habits that stick and cultivate the right mindset for deep writing. There's no one *correct* deep writing ritual – the right ritual depends on you and your writing venture. Here are some tactics to consider as you develop your writing ritual:

- **Identify a space for deep writing:** This can be any dedicated writing space that you set up to be free of distractions and that's a comfortable writing space for you.
- **Pick a time of day to write:** Writing at the same time helps you create a habit in your mind and in your schedule. You might need to try different times of the day at first in order to identify the right time for you. But once you find your peak time, stick with it!
- **Pick a length of time to write:** Your brain can maintain focus for only so long before it starts to get sloppy. Instead of trying to write for long periods, carve out shorter time blocks, like an hour, where you keep your mental focus sharp and throw everything you have into your writing.
- **Decide how many days a week you'll write:** Writing every day would be ideal, but it may not be realistic for you. You'll need to find your writing frequency sweet spot because if you have large time gaps in your writing, you'll lose track of your story and waste time getting back on track – you'll be on a treadmill going nowhere. Find that sweet spot of writing frequency that enables you to establish a writing pace and rhythm that keeps your momentum going. Create a routine so writing feels normal, habitual, and a part of your life.
- **Schedule your writing sessions on your calendar:** Why? Because you don't want to forget your writing sessions!
- **Develop a before-writing ritual that will shift you into a writing mode:** A before-writing ritual, which is unique to you, can be a powerful trigger that shifts you into a deep writing mode. This can be anything. For example, before writing you might go for a walk, or garden, or do jumping jacks, or stretch, or wear a special outfit designated only for writing, or light aromatherapy candles. The key is to find a routine that helps you shift into a writing mode.
- **Create Just-Write, Just-Revise, and Just-Edit sessions:** Trying to write, revise, and edit all at once will make you dizzy and unproductive. Dedicate individual sessions to *just-writing*, and other sessions to *just-revising* and *just-editing*.
- **Reward yourself for productive sessions:** When you have a particularly productive session or a major breakthrough, reward yourself with something that's on the same level as the triumph. Small rewards for modest triumphs and larger rewards for grander triumphs. Rewards can create powerful shifts in your mindset and cement the good feelings required for a writing ritual habit to take root.

- ***Treat your writing ritual with respect:*** Your writing time is sacred – treat it as such. It's for writing, not for doing a million other things. Clear away distractions. Turn off your phone and leave it in another room, close other windows on your computer, turn off the tv, clear your desk of clutter, etc. Do what it takes to honor your writing ritual.

Try it yourself!

Writing rituals and good writing habits are hard to develop, but once you've acquired them, you'll have an energizing writing process for life! A writing ritual creates a climate and a series of actions that gets the brain to show up to write – it triggers your mind into going into a “writing mode.” The rewards of cultivating a writing ritual are immeasurable. Create a writing ritual that inspires you!

Experiment with the conditions that trigger your mind into going into a writing mode. It doesn't have to be complex or woo-woo. It just has to be something that works for you. That special sauce of things that will help you get into a writing mood.

As a starter, try some of the writing ritual tactics that we recommend in this module –they'll help you hone in on a series of actions and an environment that work for your writing ritual.

Take a self-inventory of your own writing rhythm. Think about what time of day feels the most natural and most productive to settle into a writing mode. If you're unsure, try different times in the day and evening. Find those writing sweet spots that work for you.

Most importantly, treat your writing ritual with respect and dedication. It will reward you richly!