

OVERCOMING THE ODDS AND FINISHING YOUR BOOK

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The odds are against you as a writer, finishing or even starting, your book. For every published author there are thousands of writers with manuscripts waiting to be discovered. But many more than that who cannot even start, much less complete, a manuscript. A reason for this are three detrimental habits that can turn the odds against you. There is hope, since writing a full length book can be accomplished by replacing these bad habits with good ones.

Bad habits, such as lack of motivation, procrastination and the mis-management of time and space, hamper writers. How do they manifest and how do we replace them with good habits?

Lack of Motivation. You want to write your book, you want authorship, to be published, to fulfill your dream, to climb your mountain. You know it takes work and discipline. Yet doubt overcomes you.

1. Ask yourself why you are writing this book? What is your motivation? Listen to your answer.
2. If you turn around and walk down your mountain before reaching the peak, what have you gained?
3. Remember that doubt is not real and doesn't further the project.
4. Decide you want it. Take the next step. The longest journey always begins with the first step.
5. Being motivated always comes first in any project.

Procrastination. Defined as a project not started or not finished. A book is a huge endeavor. When looking at it from page one, it is like looking at the summit from the foot of the mountain. The project seems too big, it seems insurmountable.

1. Take small steps. Athletic coaches say, “We’re not looking at next week, just the game today.” The task is at hand. Each word is created in the moment, not tomorrow. It’s the journey, not the destination.
2. Outline. Map it to keep on track. As you climb the mountain, you see the next bend in the trail. Yet every step brings you closer to the peak. Visualize your published book, but concentrate on taking only the next step.

The Mis-Management of Time and Space. Not setting a definite schedule and not controlling your environment.

1. Block a definite time of day to work. Same time everyday if possible. 4 to 8 a.m. 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. One hour at lunch. Even if you stare at the screen or the note pad for those hours, keep to it.
2. Find a location. Somewhere that you can leave your work undisturbed to easily pick up where you left off the next day.
3. Don’t allow for interruption. No phones. No email. A quiet, out of the way place, is best.
4. Research as you write; spell check as you go. Don’t become so bogged down in research that it takes away from writing. Beware of the addictive internet.
5. It is possible to become distracted with the editing and re-writing process, so write the first draft quickly without much re-writing.

Overcoming these bad habits, starts with your dream. Your motivation, which is defined as your “reason” to write the book, develops out of your dream. Once you really want it, you are more than half way to the peak. Work the first step and then take the second. Control your time. Control your space. Create your words in the moment. See the end result, see the manuscript, the book in your hand, see yourself on the peak of the mountain, see the fulfillment of your dream, knowing it can and it will be reached.

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