

## **Retirement-Writing**

### **Building Your Confidence**

Nothing is more crucial to building a wanna-be writer's success than self-confidence. During decades of achievement in your former career, you felt secure in your abilities. Now that time allows you to fulfill your long-harbored dream of writing in your retirement years, you are eager to begin crafting a book or perhaps a series of articles. But when you're face-to-face with a blank computer screen, you find that your self-confidence has become a bit shaky.

There's a very simple secret to developing a positive self-image as an author. Write, write and write some more. Well known novelist Lawrence Sanders states it well, "We develop (writing) by practicing it. Whatever writing we do helps us to become better writers."

#### **Discipline Is Key**

It does require discipline. The willingness to sit down at your computer every day for a prescribed period of time. But the commitment is not that demanding, particularly with all of the free time you have now that you're no longer working full-time.

While most professionals write anywhere from four to six hours a day, you can comfortably turn out a finished book by devoting no more than two to three hours to the task daily. But you must be meticulous about sticking to your routine.

#### **Your Age Is a Plus**

Don't ever allow yourself to feel that age is a deterrent to writing well. Quite the opposite is true, and that should help to build your confidence. The tools required to turn out quality work are the same whether you are 60, 70 or even a 16-year-old teenager. But

you have a great advantage over a younger person because of your extensive life experiences.

As a retiree, you can call upon the knowledge gained throughout your years of hands-on involvement in your career. If you've enjoyed a lifelong hobby, you have an understanding that comes only from having watched your favorite pastime develop over the decades. No matter what you choose to write about, looking back from your "senior perch" gives you a unique perspective on life that younger writers just don't have, and that level of experience will impress an editor or a literary agent.

### **Set Your Own Regimen**

A lot of us bridle when we hear aggravating catch words and phrases like *stick-to-itiveness* or *keep your nose to the grindstone*. They bring back distant memories of grammar school homework and our parents' admonitions. But sticking to a disciplined schedule of writing is the only effective gateway to building your skills as an author. You can set your own routine, one that is comfortable for you. But you must follow it conscientiously.

In the magazine *Poets & Writers*, Professor David Galef states that he once polled a group of writers at an artist colony. They generally agreed that "persistence is almost as important as talent." The professor fully endorses that finding. He adds, "Writers need a daily regimen—waiting for the thunderbolt is too uncertain."

Returning to the computer day after day can be a lonely and at times trying experience, requiring a good bit of self-discipline. No one expects you to spend all of your free time at this task. Indeed, few writers do. "All work and no play make Jack a very dull author."

You obviously have many other activities programmed into your retirement plans. You'll have lots of time to enjoy them while devoting just two to three hours a day to this new and exhilarating activity.

### **Discipline Can Be Fun**

Discipline isn't a negative. If you stop and think, you'll realize that our lives are totally routinized...disciplined. We shower daily, we brush our teeth before heading to bed, we have to dress every day before going out, etc, etc. These activities become part of our being. We do them without thinking about them. They are an intricate part of our lifestyle, and writing can be too.

Every morning, I look forward to the time I can devote to my computer. It is a joy, an escape; not a chore. You'll quickly discover that. Sit down and let your thoughts pour onto the screen. Forget concerns about style or quality. Get started. Put your ideas on paper. Drop any inhibitions, and let the words roll freely.

Once you've expressed your thoughts, it's easy to go back and polish the prose. That's what rewriting and editing are all about, and the reason they play so major a role in every writer's routine.

The great Ernest Hemingway used to pride himself on the number of revisions he made to his work. He likened it to polishing a fine gem, and frequently rewrote his text as many as ten times.

In an article in *Playboy*, Hemingway wrote, "I take great pains with my work, pruning and revising with a tireless hand. I have the welfare of my creations very much at heart. I cut them with infinite care, and burnish them until they become brilliants."

### **Facing The Competition**

If you need an additional stimulus to chain you to the desk chair, try this experiment. Peruse the books and articles that are being published today. I guarantee that you will quickly build confidence in your own abilities. Although much of what's available on bookstore shelves is well written and interesting, the number of poorly crafted works that really don't deserve space is shocking.

Once you discover that, you'll realize that you can write as well as and probably better than many of the authors who have been lucky enough to find themselves a publisher and reach those bookstores shelves. You will be convinced that yes, you too can become a published author.

So set the routine. Carefully select what you plan to write about, and begin. You'll be amazed at how quickly the words will begin to flow.

You've heard baseball star Yogi Berra's quip, "If you don't know which road you're on, you'll likely end up somewhere else." You've chosen to travel the *Write Road*. That's why you have turned to this web site. Be assured that you really can become a writer. You can see your work in print.

All that's needed is the determination to follow the guidance this site and its related blog ([www.retirement-writing.com/blog](http://www.retirement-writing.com/blog)) offer. Once it is released in August, a new comprehensive guidebook to writing in your retirement, *The Writer Within You*, will offer even greater guidance.

By traveling the *Write Road* along with us, you'll experience the thrill of seeing your name on the cover of your own published book or your byline atop an article in your favorite periodical.. We'll post the road signs, give you accurate directions and guide you to success. If you follow them, you'll reach your goal. So welcome!