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# WRITING DURING THE BUSY SEASONS

*lorelai angelino*

I know some of you are in a busy season right now. Summer activities are in full swing and school looms ahead. It might be hard to establish where writing fits into your life at the moment. This is something I've been learning and working on, so I hope this article helps you too!

## *getting your priorities straight*

I'm always procrastinating. I push things off until the very last minute. (Yeah, Grace gave me a month to write this post, and I only worked on it for the last week. #guilty) It's easy to shove your writing into a closet, or the back of your mind. You'll get around to it when you have the time, right?

Truth is, you will never have the time. You need to make time. If you say writing is a priority in your life, then you need to treat it like one.

Another truth: If you wait around for an opportunity to write, you most likely won't write for a long time. That's what I'm struggling with right now. I keep telling myself "Yeah, I'll achieve that goal...later" or "I'll have more time to write in the next season of my life." WRONG WRONG WRONG. Time to write doesn't magically appear—you have to work for it. So how can you work towards making time to write?

## MAKE A LIST

Make a list of everything you see as a priority in your life, and then rank them. Where does writing fit in? You can't just say writing is near the top and then not treat it like it is. On the other hand, if you have a lot of things that are more important to you than writing, then it's probably a hobby for you, and that's completely okay. You can continue treating it like a hobby.

Take time to think about your priorities and how writing fits into your life.

## CUT IT OUT

What can you give up and sacrifice to make more time for writing? I know that there are some things (sports or music or art, for example) that are really important to you, and that's great! But I also know there are some things that can go. In my life, that's my YouTube account.

But remember that there are things that you shouldn't cut out. God and family and other responsibilities are probably high on your priority list, and that's where they should be!

## SPEND YOUR TIME WISELY

Honestly, I do have time to write, but I'm wasting it watching YouTube and scrolling Pinterest and shopping on Amazon. Yet I still say I'm too busy to write!

When you look back at your day, do you feel like it was productive or are you ashamed that you wasted the time God gave you? Be mindful of how much time you're spending on other things.

Sarah Hamaker said (and I'm paraphrasing here): "Time is not ours. God has given us enough time in the day to do what we need to do, so don't waste it."

You can also avoid wasting time by making a schedule. Schedule writing into your calendar and make a timeline for each day, so you avoid getting sucked into any time-wasters.

## TRY SAYING "NO"

This is a big one for me. Saying "yes" to everything is going to put a huge burden on your shoulders and your writing on the back burner.

Let me get one thing straight with you first: It might feel like being busier means being more important, but that's a lie. You're just going to burn yourself out, friend. Stop trying to do it all. (Please, for me?) Learn how to say "No." Learn how to choose between what's worth spending your time on and what's not.

For me, every offer that comes my way seems like a golden opportunity that I don't want to miss out on, or if I say no I might be disappointing someone. I'm a pretty impulsive person, but something I've learned to do more is pause and think before I say "yes." Will doing this thing burn me out? Don't get me wrong, I love helping people, but it's just not realistic for you to help everyone. So you need to choose. (And hey, it's okay to be picky about what you're saying "yes" to.)

Measure the offers against your list of priorities. Maybe even decide on something that you're going to say "no" to more often. Pick something that stresses you out or takes too much precious time, and then learn to kindly refuse.

## *actually writing*

YAY, you made some time to write! Now what? Here are some tips to make the most of that precious writing time you have.

### KICK OUT DISTRACTIONS

They're not welcome here! You need to focus while you write, so try to find (or make) a peaceful environment. The internet and social media are two really big distractions, so turn off your internet connection and shut down your phone. That time spent scrolling mindlessly is better spent on your writing.

You worked hard to make this writing time, so now you need to work to make it productive.

Also, remember that you can't always rely on sheer willpower to ignore the distractions.

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

What's one distraction you struggle with that you could eliminate? For me, it's Pinterest and YouTube. Boy, I can scroll through those things for hours. Stop telling yourself you're going to stop after the next post, the next video, the next story, and *just stop*.

## USE SPEECH-TO-TEXT DICTION

A lot of us think faster than we type, and a lot of us are slow typists. If this is you, consider using the speech-to-text tool to dictate your book. Dictating your novel will require a lot of editing, but it is a great option if you aren't able to sit down and type at the moment—during car rides, when your thoughts are racing at night, when you're doing the dishes, etc.

## GET IN THE ZONE

Play some instrumental music. Sit in the place you are usually most productive. Put on some noise-canceling headphones. Do whatever gets you in your writing headspace.

## PREP BEFOREHAND

Even if you're in the middle of your book, you can still outline. Those moments when you are doing laundry or taking long car rides or walking your dog are perfect for doing some brainstorming for where you're going next in your book. This step will make your writing time so much faster, so you can get more done in a short amount of time!

## SET A TIMER AND SPRINT

You have limited writing time, so make the most of it! How do you make the most of it? By writing as much as you can as fast as you can.

Now that you've (hopefully) prepped for this moment, set a timer for 10-30 minutes and write as much as you can—distraction-free—until the timer goes off. Then give yourself a small break and go again!

You can also pair up with a writing friend to have fun and can keep each other accountable!

## MULTI-TASK

I have a little trick that works for me, so I'm sharing it just in case it helps you, too. I write until my ideas wane, and then I get up and do something productive—wash a pot or clean something—and while I clean, I think of more ideas. You can be dually productive, too! Try writing until you're out of inspiration and then go do some simple task that doesn't take much brainwork and stew over your writing. Of course, this might not be realistic for everyone, but it works for me. Let me know if you try it out!

## *setting goals*

### DETERMINE THE WHAT AND WHEN

What goal are you trying to accomplish and when are you trying to get it done by? Be as specific as possible. I recommend starting small. Make a small goal and a mini deadline.

### FOCUS SMALL. DREAM BIG

Set manageable goals. Be realistic. But motivate yourself by looking forward to those bigger goals—finishing your novel, writing 100 poems, reaching a certain amount of blog posts or subscribers, etc.

### REWARD YOURSELF

Along with the small goals you are setting for yourself, give yourself small rewards when you accomplish them! Writing is hard work, but little rewards can motivate us and make the process a bit more enjoyable (and make you more likely to choose to write)!

For me, because I work at a theater, I am continuously around candy (specifically CHOCOLATE) and I am continuously fighting the urge to buy it. When I reach a writing goal, I will allow myself to buy myself that bar of chocolate. What rewards could you add to your writing process?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Remember you're not the only one going through a busy time. Reach out to others and ask if you can keep each other accountable.

*don't burn yourself out*

As you're going through this busy season, remember that you can't do it all. Give yourself a break at least once a week, and enjoy that break, guilt-free! You don't have to do it all right now. It's all right to give yourself some grace. (We all need it!)

If you're feeling too burnt out to write, that's okay. You can take that time to listen to a podcast or read an article or watch a video about the writing craft. It will still be a productive time, and it will allow you to replenish those writing juices.

So during busy seasons, it can be challenging to find a balance between writing and other responsibilities. But following simple steps like (1) making writing a priority and then treating it like one, (2) cutting out unnecessary distractions and spending time wisely, (3) being selective about what you say "yes" to, and (4) focusing on achieving small, realistic goals (and rewarding yourself!) can help you as you go through your busy season. What steps are you going to take today to make time for writing?



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She is a featured author in Teen Writers' Nook's Imagine anthology and the Heard in Silence Anthology. She is also a part of the editing team for The Wilting Rose Project and the Assistant Editor for LBC's Charge Magazine.

Lorelei loves spending time with her family, getting lost in a good book, sipping chai lattes, and serving God through her writing!

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