

**The Eight Habits of
Highly Efficient Writers**

Irene S. Roth

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Introduction

Many writers find it difficult to write efficiently at all times. You may feel frustrated during such times because you could be doing a lot more writing than you're actually doing in your allotted writing time. Most writers experience times when they waste time and don't work as efficiently at their writing as they should.

Some of you tend to waste a lot of time surfing the internet or answering emails when you're supposed to be writing. And this can really affect your overall productivity every year. There is nothing more frustrating to a writer than to feel like (s)he could have done so much more and could be a much more efficient writer, yet (s)he seems powerless to do

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

anything about it. If this sounds familiar, this book is for you.

In this book, I will outline 8 habits of highly efficient writers, and show how you can become the most efficient writer possible with some patience and effort.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 1

Determine Your Three Long-Term Writing Goals

It is also beneficial for every writer to get into the habit of determining his/her three long-term writing goals for the year. Which writing goal would you like to complete in the next six months to a year? For instance, would you like to become a published book author? Or, would you like to become a published article author? Or perhaps you would like to make enough money from your blogs to be able to become a full time writer.

Once you've determined your long-term goals, you could easily determine your objectives for achieving these three long-term goals. For instance, ask yourself what part of your main writing goal you'd like to accomplish this week to bring you closer to completing one of your long-term goals. Once you determine your

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

next steps or objectives, write them down on your weekly and monthly planner. This will take the guess work out of what you should be working on when you sit down to write. But more importantly, you will be focusing on the most important goals and writing projects every day. And there is no better recipe for success than that.

See the Appendix I and II for a monthly and weekly form that you can use to list your writing tasks and to prioritize them.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 2

Plan Your Week's Writing Goals Ahead of Time

There are many benefits to determining your writing goals every week for a month at a time. Goals are an effective way to make sure that you do not leave any of your potential on the table. Even a small amount of progress can be the momentum you need to become an efficient writer. Chances are, you will be further along than if you do nothing. Regardless of the outcome, you'll be able to plan your writing tasks for optimal efficiency. Once you open your eyes to what you can achieve in your writing, you'll be able to see all the possibilities at a glance.

Here are a few of the benefits of setting goals:

- Create a vision for your writing;
- Clarify priorities;
- Enhance your motivation level;
- Provide a greater sense of excitement each day;
- Build confidence (the feeling that "I did it");
- Help you stay focused;
- Give you hope;
- Increase your accountability and results.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Isn't it time for you to sit down and plan your writing goals for your writing projects ahead of time? This habit can make you a much more efficient writer.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 3

Prioritize Your Writing Projects

The most important thing that you could do as a writer is to prioritize your projects. There are many different ways to prioritize your writing tasks. Here is what I do.

First, I align all of my writing projects on my desk. Then I assign a numerical value to each of them, from 1 to 10, with 10 being the least important project, and 1 being the most important. You may want to use a different colour ink to rank the various levels of importance to your writing projects. For instance, you could use:

- Red for urgent projects that need to be done right away.
- Blue for moderately important deadlines; and
- Green for ongoing projects.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

- Then I proceed to complete the **projects in red first**, then the projects ranked in blue next, and **lastly I work on completing the projects numbered in green**.

Usually, the projects marked in green don't get done until the next day or until I have completed the most important writing goals in red and blue first for that day. By prioritizing my writing projects in this way, I get the most important ones done first.

This practise can really help you to become efficient and productive. It can also help you to get into the habit of ranking your writing projects so that you don't waste time trying to determine what you should be doing first. You will know what's important just by looking at the numerical scheme, colours, and rankings of your projects.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 4

Write Quickly and With Intensity

Many amateur writers start writing for a while. Then they stop and get a cup of coffee or tea. Then they come back and check their email. Then they go off and do something else. However, they don't take the time to anchor themselves in their writing.

If you want to be a successful writer, you must write for a given set of time without getting up or shifting your attention on anything else. For instance, you should plan to write for a half an hour to an hour without stopping. You can take a restroom break. But that is about it. Just start writing and continue until you've completed one of your most important and allotted writing tasks.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

One way to write with intensity is to keep moving your fingers on the keyboard as quickly as possible. Don't pause, look out the window, pet the cat or dog, or answer the phone. Just sit down and do nothing else but write with intensity and as quickly as possible, especially if you're working on a first draft.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 5

Write Every Day

This can seem like a straightforward habit to develop to be a successful and efficient writer. Yet, many writers have a difficult time to write every day. Expert writers say that if you try writing every day for a month or two, you will be hooked because your productivity levels will soar and you'll be motivated to write more.

Writing every day will also boost your self-confidence and motivational levels. You don't have to write for six or seven hours straight every day either. Even as little as half an hour a day of consistent writing can substantially improve your overall levels of productivity.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Further, writing every day can really add up in terms of finished products and completed manuscripts. For instance, if you even write a page a day, on most days, you will have over 350 pages of written material by the end of the year –which is the size of a novel! Now, that’s a lot of words and pages, if you ask me. Just think of how motivated and successful you’ll feel if you write a book within a year?

By getting into the practise of writing every day, you’ll no longer need an excuse to not complete your writing tasks. And you may even have some free time to do whatever you really want to do, such as go out for a walk or just sit and read.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 6

Eliminate Distractions

Most writers have to learn to eliminate time wasters and distractions in order to be successful. The best way to eliminate such distractions is to make sure that you do nothing but write when you sit down to write.

That usually means that you shouldn't answer email, cruise the internet, answer the phone or do anything else but write. This may be hard to do at first. However, with practise and patience, it is possible to make this happen. And your productivity levels will soar immensely as a result.

It can be very difficult to eliminate all distractions at first. You love to multi-task, don't you? But multi-tasking doesn't work well when you're trying to

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

become an efficient writer. However, if you concentrate on one writing project at a time, this will help you stay on track with some of your most important writing projects, and to get into the habit of completing one before you start the next one.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 7

Focus

Most of you have so much to distract your attention when you sit down to write. Sometimes, you bring your problems to your writing time. Other times, you have so many things to do that you can't decide what to work on first. All these things can prevent you from being efficient during your allotted writing time.

The best way to focus is to choose the first project which you must complete. Set a timer or stopwatch for $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour or 1 hour. During that time, don't do anything but write and think about what you're writing. The timer will give you the structure needed to keep your eyes and mind on the manuscript at hand. Nothing, except an emergency, should move you to do anything else but write during your allotted time.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

This may sound too rigid and overly idealistic to achieve. After all, you may wonder how you could learn to be so one-track minded. Well, it does take a bit of practise and effort to achieve this. But it is possible to get into the habit of focusing. Just try to focus on what you're writing for a short time. You'll be surprised how much you'll start getting done once you start focusing this way.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Habit 8

Finish What You Start

Seasoned writers usually try and finish every writing project that they start. They work diligently through discouragement and rejection. They also find a way to work consistently on a project until it is complete.

Writers will usually hit a lot of snags when they set out to write. This is to be expected and is very much a part of writing practise. Amateur writers, on the other hand, tend to quit at the smallest provocation. Many amateur writers have one or two filing cabinets of uncompleted manuscripts.

And many writers feel so discouraged that they don't have any inclination to work on them again. If you are in this predicament, take one of your long

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

forgotten manuscripts out and work on it until it is completed. Then take out the next one and do the same. This practise, in itself, could be an incredible confidence booster for you. But more than that, it will definitely help you be much more successful and efficient as a writer.

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Conclusion

None of these 8 habits of highly efficient writers are insurmountable. They can all be achieved with a little practise and diligence.

So, take the time to develop these habits. You will become a much more successful writer, one who will reap the benefits of long-term goal setting and working towards achieving them. This process will help you become much more confident about your writing and overall goals as a writer. And this is a win-win combination for everyone!

*TO YOUR ABUNDANT SUCCESS
AND EFFICIENCY*

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

**What Are My Next Steps
to Become a More Efficient Writer?**

Notes

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Appendix I *My Writing Schedule* *For The Month of* _____

Week of _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Week of _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Week of _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Week of _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Appendix II My Writing Schedule For the Week of _____

Monday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Tuesday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Wednesday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Thursday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The Eight Habits of Highly Efficient Writers

Friday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Saturday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Sunday

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____