**2023 FCWC Children’s Writing Intensive**

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**Follow Up, Follow Through, Follow Your Dreams: Time Management Tips for Writers**

1. **Get a Plan!**

Some of you are probably returning to full-time jobs after this amazing conference, and now you have to figure out how to work your writing into your very busy schedule, right? Well, be encouraged—you can do it! But you need a plan—so here you go.

Get acquainted with your body’s rhythm. Now I know this sounds like a constipation commercial, but when I say, “your body’s rhythm,” I mean this—know your best work (most productive) hours of the day.

**\*Bright and Early:**

\*If you’re a morning person, get up an hour earlier and spend 45 minutes putting together query letters and finding places to send those letters or work on the marketing section of your book proposals, or write one devotion of your devotional book on deadline.

**\*Letters while Lunching:**

\*Eat a protein bar instead of going out for lunch, and use that time to create query letters, or write your children’s books, or edit your sample chapters, etc.

**\*Write at Night:**

\*Once the house is quiet (when most everyone else is in bed) spend some time writing. This is my best time, as I’m not a morning person. So, if you’re a night owl, write at night. Just make sure you allow for enough sleep. In other words, have a strict cutoff time when you write at night.

**\*Super Saturdays:**

\*Take one or two Saturdays a month and find a quiet place to write. Put them in your Happy Planner or type them into your iPhone calendar—just like you would any other appointment—that way you’ll stick to it.

**QUICK TIP:** Let others in your life know about your commitment to writing and ask for their help when needed. If they know you’re serious about it, they will take your writing career seriously. Here’s the key—you have to be serious about your writing first.

2. **Get a Focus!**

Chances are, you’re leaving this conference challenged, encouraged, and overwhelmed. That’s common! You’ve probably discovered many genres and writing opportunities, and that new knowledge has you saying, “I could do that! I could write that…” So, with all of the opportunities and genres awaiting you, what now?

**\*Determine what you feel called to write**: Spend some time jotting down your writing desires and dreams and prioritize them. I use the Burner Method. Obviously, your deadline assignments will be on the front burners…but what’s on your back burners? What’s your heart project? What’s your fun project?

**NOTE:** Write your personal mission statement for your life so you can keep your focus.

**Exercise for You:** Write down ideas for your mission statement. Describe how you want to live, and who you want to be. Describe your goals, and your dreams. Don't worry about how the words come out; you can refine them later, just write.

Things to remember when writing a personal mission statement...

*"Limited goals create limited lives."* -Anthony Robbins

\*If you are a perfectionist... don't be... you'll never get started.

\*This is your personal mission statement; it can look however you want!

\*Your mission can be as narrow or as diverse as you like.

\*Pray about it; God will show you. It says in His Word to ask for wisdom, so ask! ☺

**If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him (James 1:5, NIV).**

**\*Write it down:** That’s a biblical principle—write the vision! Once you figure out what you’re supposed to focus on, write those “assignments” on a post-it notes, and stick it to your computer, on your fridge, etc. Post it where you’ll see it. (I also like to keep a copy in my Bible.)

**\*Don’t limit yourself:** If you feel a tugging on your heart to write a book about fear, yet you say, “I’ve never written a nonfiction book before. I don’t have a writing degree. There’s no way I can ever do that,”—stop being so negative and go for it! It is possible to accomplish your writing dreams.

2. **Become Accountable!**

Even if you leave this conference with tons of useful information, lots of great ideas, and the interest to pursue writing for children, if you don’t follow up on any of those leads, write those articles, or submit that book proposal, you won’t have accomplished any of your writing dreams/goals when next year’s conference rolls around.

**\*Get an accountability partner:** Find another writer and be each other’s accountability partner. Have weekly or monthly “checkups” with each other and report what your writing goals are for that week and if you’ve accomplished them. Be tough on each other and help one another inch toward those dreams of publication!

**\*Give yourself a deadline:** Even if you’re not writing an article for a magazine that has a deadline attached, give yourself a deadline. And reward yourself when you hit that deadline! Treat your freelance career like a real job—deadlines motivate us to quit procrastinating and get on with it!

**\*Goals aren’t enough:** “You need goals plus deadlines—goals big enough to get excited about and deadlines to make you run. One isn’t much good without the other, but together they can be tremendous.” – Ben Feldman

**\*Become part of a writers’ group:** This will help you so much! Try and find a group that focuses on the kind of writing you do—children’s, non-fiction, adult fiction, poetry, etc. If you can’t find a group in your area, why not start one or join an online group? Word-weavers.com is a great group! Eva Marie Everson runs that group.

**3. Become a Professional!**

Now that you’re committed to writing, you need to make regular investments in your passion/career/goals. Attending a conference like this one is a HUGE first step and one you’ll want to repeat year after year if you are able, but you need to do more...

\*Join professional organizations: For example, if you’re a children’s writer, you should join both the national and local chapters of the Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators. (SCBWI) The society publishes a newsletter and various reports, including a list of legitimate agents and several market surveys, which members may obtain for the cost of postage. It is especially well known for hosting conferences all around the country. Their conferences are open to members and non-members alike. In addition, SCBWI has a web site where you can download useful info. If you’ve never been published in the world of children’s writing, that’s OK. You can apply for an associate membership. Find SCBWI online at [www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org)

(Note: This is not a Christian organization.)

**\*Attend Writers’ Conferences—both secular and Christian:** This is a must on your writing journey. To learn more, go to shawguides.com online, and make sure you look in the last section of the newest “Christian Writer’s Market Guide” for more information on conferences by state.

**NOTE:** When you go to conferences, go prepared. Go armed with story ideas appropriate for each publication that will be represented—or at least the ones you have an interest in writing for. Then, pitch those ideas. If you can’t get an appointment with an editor because all of his/her times are taken, make a point to introduce yourself to that person sometime during the conference and see if there is another time you can meet

\*When the conference is over, make sure you follow up with publishers and editors. Send them thank-you notes for meeting with you. Make sure you send the query letter you promised and make mention of meeting with that person at that particular conference. If you weren’t able to meet with one of the faculty members who was on your “list to meet,” write that person a note stating just that—“I wasn’t able to meet with you during the Conference but I have an idea for an article that I believe is a perfect fit for *Clubhouse.*…” Always put the name of the conference on the outside of your envelope so the editorial assistant knows to take your mailer out of the dreaded slush pile. Or if the publication allows electronic submissions, put the name of the editor and conference in the subject line of your email.

**\*Buy copies of the various writer’s market guides and take several writing newsletters and magazines:** I believe every inspirational writer needs a copy of *The Christian Writer’s Market Guide* on his/her bookshelf. It’s a must! And every children’s writer needs a current copy of *Book Markets for Children’s Writers* <https://www.instituteforwriters.com/product/book-markets-guide-for-childrens-writers-2023/>

Also, you might consider purchasing the *2023 Magazine Markets for Children’s Writers*

If you buy both, you save money. Here’s the link: <https://www.instituteforwriters.com/product/2023-market-guides-bundle/>

**\*Get business cards & brochures:** I use vistaprint.com online for my business cards and brochures. In fact, I just made new ones last month to match my updated website. ☺ Branding is important…I’m known for leopard print, so I often use that in my “stuff.”

**\*Get a website and an email list:** It’s an investment, but it’s important. I recently had my own website overhauled and it cost me about $3,000 but you can do a website yourself for free. There are many online helps in that area. Or here’s some news that is hot off the press—Crystal Bowman’s daughter Teri McKinley and her sister-in-law Madison Asher have a new company called “The Word & Design Company”—offering help creating websites, logos, branding, business cards, copywriting, editing, etc. Here’s their email: hello@wordanddesignco.com

**4. Do the Do’s Every Single Day!** It’s important to do something every single day to further your writing career. Whether it’s as little as writing a thank-you card to a writing professional you met with this week, updating your LinkedIn home page, or as big as writing two chapters in your novel—do something! Make sure you keep track of what you do every day in a Freelance Logue or your Happy Planner or your writing journal.

**5. Spend time meditating every morning:** Start your day in prayer. Spend a few moments of your morning meditating on your goals and envisioning yourself accomplishing those feats and thanking God for His favor. Keep a journal and celebrate the small and big victories on the path to publication. It’s a great journey!