

THE “KEEP WRITING
(EVEN WHEN YOU
DON’T WANT TO)”
WORKBOOK

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MOTIVATE YOURSELF TO KEEP WRITING

Starting a new writing practice is easy.

Keeping it going is a little bit harder.

Especially once the novelty has worn off. We may struggle with coming up with a new idea every day. We may struggle with questions about the quality of our writing. We may get overwhelmed by the whole idea of ‘being a writer’ and everything that entails.

We’re starting to think:

- Do we really have to keep writing?
- Would it hurt if we skipped a day or two?
- Why the heck are we doing this to ourselves anyway?

This mini-workbook helps you clarify your goals for any long-term creative challenge, for your writing life.

Take 30 minutes today to go through it and answer all the questions.

Print it out and write in the spaces provided, or answer the questions in your journal, your blog, or wherever you like to write.

Come back to it any day when you’re struggling to start writing, and let your own customized roadmap propel you into your writing day.

KEEP STRIVING TOWARD YOUR GOALS

I spend a fair amount of time every year, discouraging writers from thinking about fame and fortune, or where you're going to send your stories when they're finished.

I'm constantly pointing out that you cannot find that 'flow-state', where the writing flows and you lose track of time, if you've got your publishing/career-development hat on.

But now, just for a moment, let's lift our heads from the trenches. Let's poke them up over the parapet and take a look and the lay of the land beyond. Because sometimes it's important to remember what all the discipline and drilling is for.

(There's a reason they give soldiers leave, and ship them home to visit their loved ones, in the midst of war!)

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

What is your long-term goal for your writing?

- Is it to become the next J. K. Rowling?
- Is it to develop a regular writing habit because writing makes you feel fulfilled, and you get cranky when you're not doing it?
- Is it something in between those two extremes?

On the next few pages we're going to use your long-term dreams to motivate you to get back to writing today

STEP 2: BREAK IT DOWN

Take one element of your dream career and ask yourself:

WHAT IS A SMALLER STEP TOWARD THAT DREAM?

e.g. I chose to start with "Give Talks and Inspire People". I wrote: Build authority by becoming known as a short story expert.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Get some stories published in respected short story markets, to help build authority.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Have a bunch of good stories ready to go out. Research markets and write stories that fit their niche and my style.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a lot of mediocre drafts.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Revise messy first draft stories.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a ton of messy first drafts.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a story today.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Gather 3 Story Sparks a day.

Now that you understand *why* you should care about writing today, don't you feel motivated to do the things you *can* achieve today?

e.g. If I skip a day of writing, it keeps me further from my ultimate goal, because I have fewer short stories to draw on when I think about finding markets and becoming known as an expert, which would lead me to my ultimate goal of giving speeches and inspiring other writers.

If you *like* the potential outcome, you're more motivated to take the small steps you need to take, today.

Motivated? Put this workbook down and keep writing!

Still need more? Turn the page.

STEP 3: PICK ANOTHER ASPECT OF YOUR DREAM

If the first aspect of your dreams didn't motivate you to get back to writing, it's possible you discovered something about your writing dream: perhaps the steps you need to take to achieve it don't excite you. Perhaps you should concentrate on a different aspect of your dream, today. Pick a new aspect, instead!

e.g. Build a massive fan base for my writing.

WHAT IS A SMALLER STEP TOWARD THAT DREAM?

e.g. Create a mailing list of people who like to know when I have new stories coming out.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Find a few people who'll read my stories.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Find/create/join a critique group who will read my stories before they are ready for prime time.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Show one story to one person.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Polish one story until it's good enough to show to one person.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a lot of mediocre stories and revise them.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a lot of messy first drafts and revise them.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a story today.

**Are you getting closer to feeling motivated?
Stop writing, or keep brainstorming!**

STEP 4: PICK ANOTHER ASPECT OF YOUR DREAM

This time, pick something and really try to visualize what it will be like when you get there. Are there any steps you're not willing to take? Feel free to jettison aspects of your aspirations, if you don't want to take the steps necessary to achieve them.

e.g. Publish novels, to deal with big, complicated ideas and break into the mass market.

WHAT IS A SMALLER STEP TOWARD THAT DREAM?

e.g. Write longer short stories and novels to increase my storytelling stamina and improve my craft.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a flash fiction series set in my novel universe to promote the project.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write short stories to help with backstory, character development and to get me unstuck on plot points.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Find my voice by writing a lot of shorter stories.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

e.g. Write a single scene today.

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

WHAT IS AN EVEN SMALLER STEP?

Print out and use pages 11-13 as often as you need them!

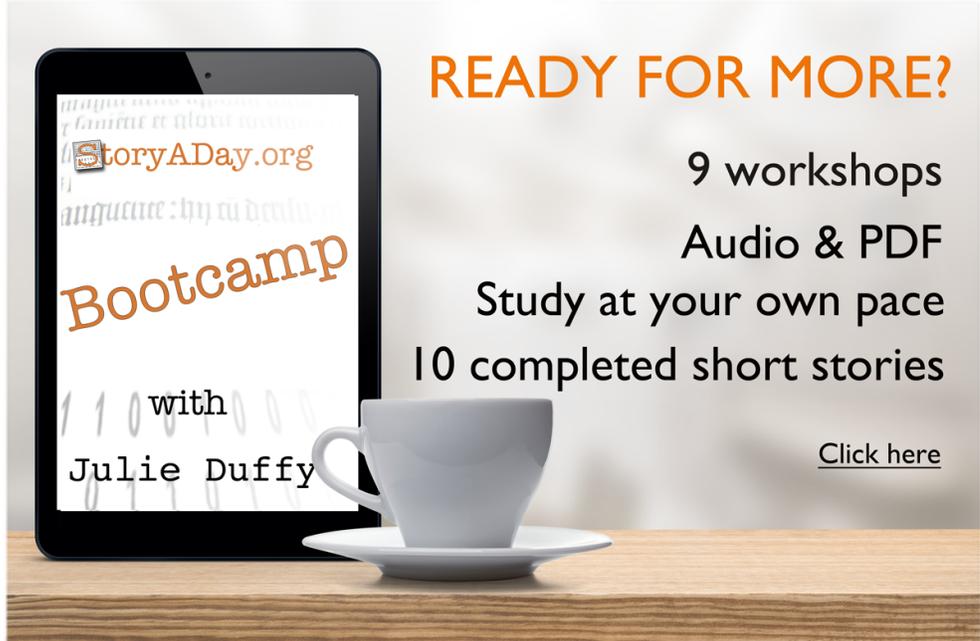
WHAT'S NEXT?

(Did you notice how, every time, the smallest step was to write a story or scene? This is not a coincidence!)

WRITE! OR DON'T WRITE

If you've decided that you're not willing to take the steps you need to take, then let it go. Forgive yourself. Perhaps the time isn't right, or you were chasing someone else's dream.

But, if you've remembered why you embarked on this exhausting, difficult, thrilling project, don't you feel much more motivated to hit the page, today?



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Keep writing!

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