

## SEPTEMBER 2018 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY

### *DO YOU HAVE A WRITING ACTION PLAN?*

BY CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER PHILLIPS

I've written about this topic before, but I want to circle back. I teach a workshop in local libraries about how to stop wishing and start writing. I created the session after reflecting on how I jumpstarted myself several years ago when I wanted to write for children. It is satisfying to encourage other writers in their pursuits.

I always leave these sessions happy when participants isolate practical strategies they plan to try. And I always leave reinvigorated about my own action plan. I've had to double down recently to make sure writing remains a priority.

One of the session goals is to uncover our assumptions about what it means to be a writer. This allows us to think more flexibly about options.

We explore the many writing paths available, what personal success looks like to us, barriers and strategies. We help each other identify micro-actions we can take to bust through a critical barrier. Often, this means challenging notions about when, where, how and even what to write.

Time is a common barrier cited by participants. And yet it rarely stands up to scrutiny when we dissect the range of activities consuming our time.

Usually, watching TV, surfing the Internet and such emerge as items we're willing to trade a bit to gain writing time.

We also can try short writing bursts instead of being locked into the notion that we must have large time blocks set aside to research and write. One of my early time barrier busters involved 5-minute writing spurts.

Another strategy? Keep simple writing supplies handy as you're on the go and encounter precious moments that can be leveraged to capture ideas, work on a passage, sketch out a character or scene, etc. A small notebook is a good choice, but so are sticky note pads or the memo app in cellphones or tablets.

Becoming—and remaining—a writer involves such a unique combination of skills, attitude, creativity, persistence, confidence and humility. A writing action plan can help you succeed. It doesn't have to be elaborate and it works best when done in stages. Plan to update it every few months or at least yearly. Let it keep you focused on making progress in busting through barriers and realizing micro-goals as part of your writing journey.

**[Here's the worksheet we use in my workshop.](#)**

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