



A Letter From the Editors

How To Stay Present While Writing

When the act of *writing* begins to feel like the act of *typing*, it can be difficult to stay present and engaged in our work. Words start to blend together, sentences start to lose meaning, and typos and other errors begin to pop up. In order to write most effectively, we want to craft sentences with intention and a present mind. Staying “present” means being mentally and emotionally connected to what you’re doing. Rather than walking through the motion of a task, you’re engaging that task with a lively and attendant energy. Let’s talk about a few ways of doing so.

Take breaks. Get up and move around.

The monotony of sitting at our desks while writing constantly throughout the day is bound to wear on our minds. [According to Forbes](#), studies from recent years show that “while taking frequent breaks might sound counterintuitive when it comes to boosting productivity, it’s one of the best ways to do so.” Additionally, studies show that small breaks and consistent lunch breaks away from the desk help employees to “gain focus and energy” as well as “get those creative juices flowing.”

Practice taking short breaks throughout the day, and try giving yourself a lunch break away from your desk when you can. If you’re feeling especially burnt out while writing, do yourself one better and go for a walk. [Psychology Today](#) noted that “the benefits of taking brief movement breaks have been well-researched” and that “breaks refresh the mind, replenish mental resources, and help you become more creative” when you get back to your desk.

Change up or split your workflow.

Have you ever heard of “single-tasking”? The concept of multitasking is well-known, but in real practice, it’s unrealistic. Our brains can’t *actually* multitask -- it’s just our mind switching back and forth between tasks, which can lessen the effectiveness of our writing and work. Instead of having 10 tabs open and thinking about all the writing you have to get done by the end of day, which can easily pull you out of your current task and be distracting as well as stressful, try single-tasking and reminding yourself to focus on one thing at a time to remain present.

Single-tasking can also be done by splitting up or changing your workflow. Do you usually finish Boom all at once in the morning? Do you usually work on certain parts of the brand kit before others? Try changing things up: If Boom feels tedious or overwhelming, try doing 25% chunks instead (with posts in between). This sounds like multitasking, but it's another way of single-tasking that can refresh our minds with different types of writing and creativity while continuing to stay productive and present. And, by breaking up your writing into chunks with manageable goals, it makes it easier to see the finish line.

Practice conscious and connected proofreading.

Yes, it always comes back to proofreading. Don't allow yourself to quickly breeze over the words you've written -- really *connect* to the meaning of your words and the intention of your writing and what you're trying to say. Don't just proofread for grammar -- proofread for logic, meaning, and content as well.

If you're having trouble connecting to what you've written or you're getting distracted while proofreading, try practicing mindfulness. This [personal essay on mindfulness](#) suggests that "mindful learning ... cultivates insightful knowing rather than just (overloading) the brain with information" and that mindfulness "creates a space to let information in and to allow us to see how it relates to what we already know." In other words, by being present and mindful, we can cultivate a more powerful way of connecting to our mind, creativity, and writing.

Get inspired by those around you. Appreciate your own creativity.

Collaboration is often key to creative flow and sparks of inspiration. If you're struggling to feel present and focused in your writing, try reaching out to a peer. Ask them to share a brand description or social ad that they're proud of. Ask them to share what strategies *they* use in order to stay focused. If you're especially struggling on a particular piece of writing, send it their way and see how your collaboration can innovate.

On the other side of things, while it's important to be open to criticism and collaboration, writing with trust in your own skills can help boost your confidence and strengthen the connection you have to your work. Be proud of the great pieces of writing you create, and don't forget to appreciate your own creativity -- what you've written just might inspire someone else.

Approach your writing differently.

When you're feeling stuck, bored, distracted, or in a rut, try giving yourself a creative challenge. How can you approach your daily writing in a different way? For example, is there a particular sentence or word you often resort to when you're experiencing writer's block? If so, try brainstorming another sentence construction to refresh your language. By approaching your writing practices with a new and refreshed eye through the help of small challenges like these, you'll be forced to stay more present in your writing, helping you stay motivated and focused.

Lastly, remember that you're a professional writer and have something creative and of

value to offer to your peers, your customers, and yourself. Reminding yourself of the importance and value that your work brings to our customers can be a powerful push in staying connected. You've got it!

Challenge

Use one of the above suggestions for staying present in your writing this week and share with your manager or team how it affected your workflow!



Jourden Sander

Jourden is an Austin-born and -raised Sagittarius who remembers a time when Leslie was here and free parking spots existed. She received her MFA in fiction over the summer, and with that MFA, she's writing a novel and nagging you about commas. You can find her playing tennis, performing with her improv troupe, dancing to Toxic by Britney Spears, or declining ice cream in her spare time. She fully believes the Mattress Firm conspiracy theory and probably finds you suspicious. In da clerb, we all fam.

Main Street Hub