

The Keep Writing (Even When You Don't Want To) Workbook

Motivate Yourself To Keep Writing

Halfway through any writing project, it's common for things to come to a screeching halt. The StoryADay challenges are no exception.

By somewhere around the middle of the second week, the novelty has worn off. We're struggling to come up with a new idea every day. And Day 31 seems like a really long way off. 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 this challenge (or any long-term creative challenge).

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.

Keep Striving Towards Your Goals

I spend a fair amount of time every year, discouraging writers from thinking about fame and fortune or “where will I send this story when it’s finished?”

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.

Why Are You Doing This

What is your long-term goal for your writing?

- Is it to become a best-selling writer with a movie deal?
- 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 to reach an audience that needs to hear the stories you craved (but couldn’t find) in your own reading life

Is it something else?

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



Step 1: What's Your Dream For Your Writing?

Don't linger too long on this. You're not setting anything in concrete; just thinking about some things that get you excited about writing.

e.g. Creative World Domination ;) Publish novels; get massive fan base; movie deals and publishing support. Give talks. Inspire people to tell stories and to be awesome human beings.

The example covers several audacious and not-necessarily complimentary aims there. Some of them might fall away as others become more important, but write them all down for now.

My writing dreams:

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



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. Break down the bigger dream into segments e.g. "Give Talks and Inspire People". So: Build authority by becoming known as a short story expert.

A large grid of small dots for writing notes, consisting of 20 columns and 20 rows.



What is an even-smaller step?

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

A large area of dotted lines for writing notes.

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.

A large area of dotted lines for writing notes.



What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Write a lot of mediocre drafts

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What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Revise messy first draft stories

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What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Write a ton of messy first drafts

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What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Write one story today

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What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Gather 3 Story Sparks today

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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

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.

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



What is an even-smaller step?

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

A large area of dotted lines for writing.

What is an even-smaller step?

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

A large area of dotted lines for writing.



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.

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What is an even-smaller step?

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

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What is an even-smaller step?

e.g. Write a single scene today.

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What is an even-smaller step?

A grid of 10 rows and 20 columns of small dots for writing.

What is an even-smaller step?

A grid of 10 rows and 20 columns of small dots for writing.

What is an even-smaller step?

A grid of 10 rows and 20 columns of small dots for writing.

(print out and use pages 10-13 and use as often as you need to!)



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?

Keep writing,

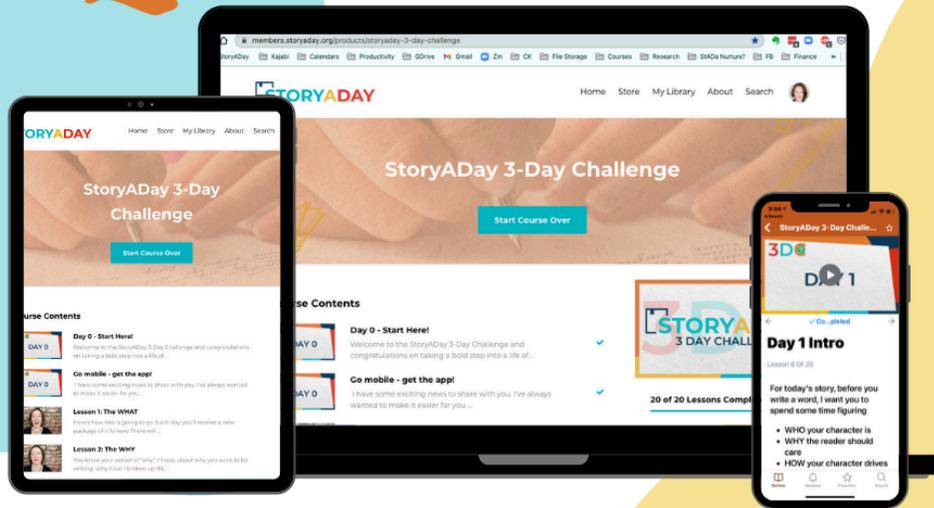
Julie Duffy

Founder & Director, StoryADay



READY FOR MORE?

Take the StoryADay 3-Day Challenge



storyaday.org/3dc

Find out more: storyaday.org/3dc