

21 Tips To Start Writing Again After

YOU'VE PRESSED PAUSE

Every writer experiences a dry season now and then. No matter the reason for the pause in writing, we often struggle to restart. At COMPEL Training, we understand the challenges writers face, and we asked our members to share their best advice for pressing “play” on their writing after a pause. We hope you enjoy these tips and find creativity and inspiration flowing once again.

WRITE ON!!

1

Prepare with prayer. It's tempting to rely on our own strength when we sit down to decorate documents with words. We can easily write from our head and not from our heart. Before we begin each blog post, article or social media post, we can invite God into our work. We have the most creative voice available to us through the Holy Spirit. Before we muster up the strength to write one more piece, remember to prepare with prayer. The ultimate Creator is on our side, ready to fuel our best work when we go to Him first. - MANDY JOHNSON

2

The pause doesn't mean you missed the call to write. It's OK to give your creativity a stretch break, which allows you to experience life so you can write about it. When you're ready, sit back down to write. It will come easier when creativity is not forced. Remember, God gave you this calling, and He put the words in your heart to share. But life still has to happen. So embrace it, and then return to your work. - JILL COOK

3

Take some time to read your journal or past writings to remember how much you love to write. Ask God for insight and inspiration while you read. Then start writing without expectations, one word at a time, trusting God with the process and the outcome. - ERIKA OWENS

4

If you draw a blank when you go to post, remember this tip I learned from Tim Grahl: "Be relentlessly helpful." Always offer something valuable to your reader. Your post needs to either encourage, inspire, entertain or educate your reader and always needs to answer her hidden question: "What's in it for me?" When you write with your reader's needs in mind, you'll become known as relentlessly helpful. - SARAH GERINGER

5

Writer's block? Write psalms. After you write one or two from the Bible, write your own. It can be a prayer to unclutter your thoughts, a praise or a psalm of thanksgiving. It frees your mind so you can get to work. - CRYSTAL MANGET

6

Recognize that writing about God's truths in His Word is hard work. The inspiration comes when God is in it, but so does the hardship. Paul addressed this in Colossians 1:25 when he spoke of his commission to serve the church by teaching God's Word in all its fullness. The good news is that God enables us by His power to complete what He calls us to. Even in the hardship, Paul stayed true to his calling to spread the love of Christ. Even when we suffer, we, too, are to stay true to our calling, trusting God through it. - VIRGINIA GROUNDS

7

Striving to always carve out large amounts of time to write can leave me stressed and anxious. Instead of stressing over trying to schedule an entire day to write while juggling life's responsibilities, I substitute 15 minutes each day to tackle writing goals. God will take my smaller amounts done in obedience over several days and multiply them to equal one long day. - SUSAN DAVIDSON

8

There is truth in the statement “stronger together.” When lifting the “pause” button on your writing, it may prove useful to connect with a small group of aspiring writers, like a COMPEL Critique Group or one you put together on your own. A group like this gives you an opportunity to read the writings of other writers and get your writing in the hands of others. Your group will share what you did well, offer “polish points” and summarize what resonated with them. This keeps you accountable, actively sharing your writing ideas and receiving feedback every few months depending on your group size. It's a win-win. - KASSANDRA HAUGHTON

9

Use social media to find inspiration! Whether it's going through your own posts or seeing an inspirational quote, you can glean a lot from your daily scroll. Here are two examples: 1) While reminiscing and looking at my own old photos, I remembered an experience I had during a vacation. I was able to turn that feeling into an article submission! 2) I was scrolling one day and saw a random quote someone posted. It sparked something and brought about a memory that I could relate to that quote. I began writing, and next thing you know I had a blog post! - MELISSA LABIENIEC

10

Think about what made you pause. A difficult season, a negative review, a hurtful comment — identify it, and address it with your Father in prayer. Worship Him and remember who you are. You're a writer — you are a conduit of God's wisdom. You were preapproved by the One who gave you the gift, so go on and write. You've already got the thumbs-up from Him. - **CHIMAMAKA IGE**

11

Start by journaling a Bible verse each day. Pray for God to help you understand the verse, and journal your thoughts about it. It could be as simple as writing out a few questions you have about the verse or what God is saying to you through the verse. Once you get comfortable with writing your observations, begin to turn your observations into short teachings. You may even find you've written a microblog. The more you write, the more comfortable you will feel writing. - **SHARON CLAASEN**

12

Dedicate a day and time each week to write. I call mine "Writing Wednesday." When I am working on a project, I dedicate almost the entire day to writing. Other times it is just the afternoon. As you close your writing session, jot down your thoughts about where to pick up writing the next day. It will save hours of shuffling through your work and trying to remember where you left off. - **LAURA DENNIS**

13

Choose to think of writing as more than a collection of well-crafted sentences and paragraphs; think of it as a means of honoring and glorifying Jesus — an act of worship. As aspiring writers, it's important to intentionally avoid becoming so absorbed in the mechanics of writing that we lose sight of the Master for whom we are writing. - **SALLY JOHNSON**

14

I carry a small journal in my purse at all times. When a situation or quote catches my attention, I write it down immediately. Then, when I start my scheduled writing time, I refer back to the notes in the journal for inspiration.
-ETTA GRACE ROSS

15

When I finally felt ready to write again, I didn't know where to start. Two and a half years had passed since the last time I hit the "publish" button on my blog. Feeling a little lost, I decided to revisit some of the things I did when I first began my writing journey. Reading older articles, blog posts and even the notes from past writing classes helped me remember why I started writing and inspired me to begin again. -KELLY BASHAM

16

Sit down. Set a timer. Do the work. Inspiration is great, but, as Jim Cress points out, we need to move from "inspirational" to "intentional" in our work! Applying the discipline of writing — even when we don't feel inspired — will help move the needle from "I want to write" to "I'm a writer"! You may work best when writing in large blocks of time. However, if your life doesn't allow that, decide to write where and when you can. Give yourself grace to do what you can, where you can, for as long as you can. And then trust God with the outcome! -GINA GROVE

17

Start fresh with no regrets about your season of pause! This time and place in your life exist for a reason. Don't look back on the pause as time that has been lost. It was a time of preparation. God has been with you in every step of your journey, and this one is no different! As you pick up your pen, open your computer or tap on the Notes app in your phone, go forward with confidence. This is the season for the words God has placed on your heart. -MICHELLE FLANIGAN

18

Don't stick to the same script! In the space between who you were before you pressed "pause" on your writing and who you are now, things have changed. And that's a good thing! Embrace the space God gave you, and ask Him to show you how this time has given you new perspectives or insights you didn't have before. Trust this season of pause wasn't wasted. Even in the absence of words on paper, God never stops crafting the message of our heart. -KIMBERLEY JELLEY

19

A publishing company does not determine your gifts or calling. GOD DOES! Prayerfully resist questioning the legitimacy of your writing gift or calling, regardless of publisher interest. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you rest in the truth of Romans 11:29 (AMP): "... the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call]." Remember, neither humans nor Satan have a "delete" button for God's call on your life. God's purposes are unalterable! -REGINA G. DAVIS

20

Quiet the critic in your head and just start writing. Even if it's your to-do list, your groceries, your loss for words. Write it down. Gradually, when you've unclogged what's stopping you, the words will start to flow again. -SONIA ABRAHAM

21

When I need a jump-start for writing inspiration I go to my photo collection, either on my phone or the actual hard copies that, yes, I do have. I look for a photo that stirs my heart and begin writing. Sometimes, I focus on just a one-inch square from the picture. Why does that color grab me? What was going on with Aunt Jane's hair? How grateful am I that someone thought to snap this picture? Now, dear writer friend, it's your turn. Go find that picture! -MELISSA BAKER