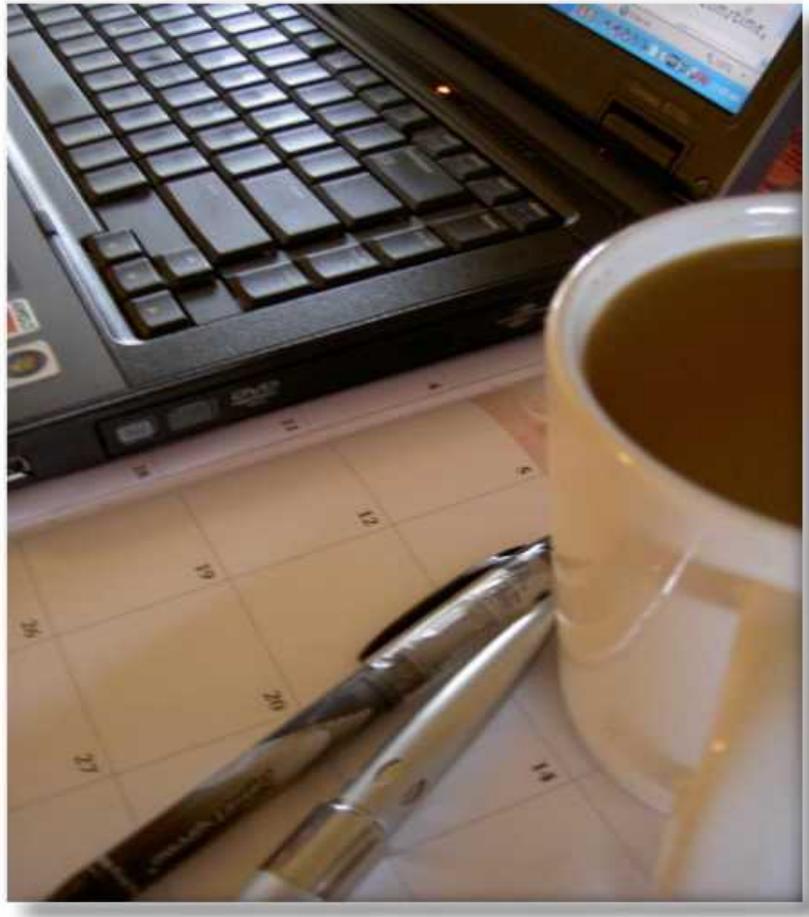


So You Want to be a Freelance Writer



A Motivational Newbie's Guide to Online Freelance Writing

by Felicia A. Williams

No Job for Mom

So You Want to Be a Freelance Writer
The Newbie's Motivational Guide to Earning Money Online

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Happy Reading!

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No Job for Mom

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INTRODUCTION

So...you want to become a freelance writer. The first thing you need to do is forget anything and everything anyone has ever told you about freelance writing. The reason I say this is because you probably have some preconceived notions about what freelance writing is all about.

We're in a new internet age and some of the old rules, while they still apply, have been updated and you must update your mind along with them.

As you read this book you'll find that my preferred method of earning money as a freelance writer is the online method. 100% of my income is derived from money I earn online as a freelance writer.

This is not to say that you cannot earn a healthy income from off line publications, it's just that prefer the ease and immediacy of online writing. So, there is a bias in this book and I freely admit that.

This book is written to provide lay of the land for new writers and offer much needed motivation. This is not a book on search engine optimization, choosing keywords or how to rank high in the Google search engine placement. This book is for new freelance writers who are just starting out and wondering what to do next.

A Little Bit about Felicia Williams (aka NJFM)



In a prior life that was an insurance broker. I have over 20 years of business experience in writing, quoting, making proposals and interacting with clients in the insurance field. After leaving insurance I became a technical writer. I also wrote documents for several different types of software and hardware. One of the things I found about being a writer is that if you can write, you can write about anything.

When my last full-time employer moved several hundred miles south, I realized it was time for me to make a change. I didn't want another 9-5 job since I have a self-diagnosed condition called work-aversion-itis.

I took on a few part-time positions and soon realized that my time would be better spent building online income. So, on February 9, 2007, I left the part time job and became a full time freelance writer and have never regretted the decision

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(by the way, by the end of 2007 I had replaced the income I earned from my part-time job; more than doubled it in 2008 and have been increasing my earnings each year).

I might be wrong, but I have the sneaking suspicion that you suffer from a mild (or maybe severe) case of work-aversion-itis too. Deep down inside, you're wondering if it's possible to earn a living working from home as a freelance writer. I'm here to tell you, it can be done. It doesn't happen overnight, but it can be done.

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CHAPTER 1: FREELANCE WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

Because this book is a guide for folks relatively new to the online freelance writing world, I'm going to discuss some of the basics, starting with the two most common methods available for earning money as a freelance writer. A writer can either earn money online writing for the internet, or earn offline by writing for print publications.

Throughout this entire book, I'd like for you to keep in mind that you don't have to choose between the two. You can do both. Freelance writing contains a lot of gray opportunities and it's in your best interest to entertain the gray areas too.



NOTE: CONSIDER THE GRAY AREAS WHEN IT COMES TO FREELANCE WRITING. IT'S NOT AN ALL OR NOTHING SITUATION.

Both methods of earning money have their merits and drawbacks. Let's briefly discuss the two methods and the pros and cons for each. Ultimately it will be up to you to decide which method or combination thereof works best for you.

WRITING FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS

There's no doubt that writing for print publications pays much better than writing for online publications. The only problem is the print market is shrinking while the number of available freelance writers looking for work is increasing. A quick look at the Department of Labor's outlook for freelance writers will give you a clue of the current market conditions (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos320.htm>). Things are looking promising for those writers who are able to transition to the online writing arena. While there are still jobs to be had at magazines and offline publications, the competition is stiff.



If you elect to pursue a writing career offline, in addition to the competition, you'll have to do quite a bit of pre-gig foot work. Writing assignments don't just land in writers' laps. In addition to searching for publications that are hiring freelance writers, you'll have to do things like send query letters, pitch ideas, become familiar with the publication prior to sending a pitch letter (you don't want to send a pitch letter on an article that was already addressed two months ago). Unless you receive a rejection letter, you also have to follow up on your queries.

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Soliciting writing assignments is a skill and numbers and game. It is not the norm to land a writing assignment by sending only one query letter only. It's more common to go through several rejections before getting an acceptance letter.



NOTE: FREELANCE WRITERS HAVE TO DEVELOP THICK SKIN AND LEARN TO DEAL WITH REJECTION .

If you find that your hit ratio is 1:10 (meaning 1 in every 10 queries lands an assignment), then there are two things you should do.

1. Get through your 9 rejections quickly to finally land a gig and,
2. Improve your ratio. Learn how to write more effective query letters.

After landing the gig, writing the article and submitting it to the editor, you then have to wait to see if the article will be accepted as is or needs modification (this is common for all writing venues, not just print publications). After the article meets the editors' criteria and it's published, you're not home free just yet. It's not over until the money hits the bank. Depending on your contract, you may not see payment for 6 months or longer (provided the publication remains in business).

I paint a bleak picture, and I may be exaggerating a little bit, but I'm not too far off the mark. Let me share my experience so you'll have a better understanding as to why I prefer to write for online venues.

A SHORT-LIVED EXPERIENCE IN WRITING FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

I had a preconceived notion that you could only land a writing gig for a print magazine if you have a large portfolio of published work or knew someone who could get you an assignment. I found that wasn't the case. As with anything you want to do in life, if you work hard at it, and are persistent, you can open a small door and create an opportunity.

Within a relatively short time I landed an assignment with a trade magazine. I was extremely excited because it was early in my freelance writing career. My first assignment paid 35 cents a word for a 1200 word article. Not to bad, I thought, for my first gig. (BTW, I found the opportunity online by visiting [Online Writing Jobs.com](http://OnlineWritingJobs.com) regularly).

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I approached the assignment with the same professionalism I used in my work career. I interviewed the necessary people, got the signed waivers and completed the assignment with a week to spare. The article was accepted, approved without edit and my invoice was forwarded to the publisher's accounting department for payment. Hot diggity dog, now that I have one assignment under my belt, I felt I had my foot in the door and the next would be a little easier.

As time went on, I realized the publisher had not issued payment in accordance with the terms of our agreement. Thinking it was an oversight or accounting error, I contacted them to gently remind them that I hadn't received payment. As time went on, the reminders became a little less gentle, until finally I had to get my attorney involved (luckily my attorney is a friend and didn't charge me for his services).



Needless to say, my \$420 article wasn't worth the additional aggravation, time and effort expended. That's when I started taking the online writing option more seriously. I've never had a problem with payment yet.

Freelance writers that write for print publications make a nice income and they work very hard to earn that money. I worked harder soliciting the gig and following up for my payment than I did writing the article. After all, I'm a writer, I should be able to write the article; it's the other stuff that I wasn't too crazy about.

Now lets discuss online writing.

WRITING FOR ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

One of the factors that attracted me to writing online was the immediacy of it. Opportunities are always available. You don't have to search very hard to find writing opportunities and you get paid almost immediately. Some places pay weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or bi-monthly, but it is rare that you have to worry about not getting paid.

The downside to online freelance writing is the earnings are much lower than print publication earnings. While you don't have to spend a lot of time finding assignments and following up for payment, you do have to write more because the pay scale is much less. We'll address how they pay a little later on.

PRIVATE CLIENTS

Private clients are a hybrid of online and offline opportunities. A private client can be a neighbor, a local business or someone you have never met and is sitting half a world away. Bottom line, a private client pays you to write something for her, whether it's on line or off line.

The good thing about having private clients is they can provide a nice source of steady revenue. As a new writer without a current portfolio, it's a little tough to get private clients, but it's not impossible. Once, however, you have an established portfolio (and a little confidence) it becomes a little easier.

It's not so much the lack of portfolio, but the lack of confidence that stops a lot of writers from soliciting private clients. Determining a fair rate is tough for newbies.

Private clients are like a double edged sword. If you have a steady client that pays well, pays on time and has steady work, it's like the goose and the golden egg. The downside is that similar to writing for print publications. If you want private clients you've got to find them. Even when you have a steady stream of work, it's always good to look for new clients. In today's economy clients are here one day and gone the next.

There are a few things to take into consideration with private clients:

1. Establishing a price: You must determine the scope of the project and how much your time is worth. It's quite common for newbies to undercharge just because they are so happy to get a client. Keep in mind that you can raise your prices if you quoted too low (it's easier to ask for a raise than to lose a job because you priced it too high).
2. Keeping clients happy (there are some that no matter what you do, they just don't seem to be satisfied).
3. Invoicing and getting paid (similar to print publications).

SUMMARY

This chapter pointed out three types of writing venues. No one venue is perfect just like no one venue is without its downside. Too many freelance writers feel they have to decide whether they are going to write online, off-line or have private clients. The best thing to do is to diversify and do a few of each. By trying them all you can figure out which suits you best. This way you'll concentrate most on the venue that will bring you the greatest reward, both personally and financially.

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Once you get started, make it a habit to re-evaluate your freelance writing sources and adjust them as needed.



NOTE: EVALUATE YOUR CAREER AND MAKE CHANGES AS NEEDED

CHAPTER 2: HOW ONLINE ARTICLES MAKE MONEY

If you're going to make online freelance writing a career, or even just try to supplement your income, you need to know how online articles earn money. It's all well and good to know that if you write an article and place it online it earns, but knowing the difference between pay per view or pay per click and up front pay versus residual pay will dictate what you write, where you place it and how often you need to write. It will also help you to decide whether or not you should write for yourself to keep 100% of the profits or write for a content site and share the earnings with the publisher?

Let's start with the basics. There are basically two types of payment options when writing online. You can get paid up front, which means that you get paid \$XX for writing XXX number of word article. Once the article is complete, you get paid. This is a pretty straight forward formula.

Residual pay on the other hand, is a bit more complicated. You never know how much you will earn when you write the article. Let's discuss the simple one first

UP FRONT PAY

The good thing about up front pay is you know in advance how much you'll make. For example, if a publisher is willing to pay you \$15 for a 500 word article, you know how many articles to write if you want to earn \$300. The formula is simple arithmetic.



As mentioned earlier, the rate of pay for online work is much less than that for offline work and \$15 for an article, as unfortunate as it may sound, is a "good pay rate" for an online article. There are some sites that offer a fraction of the pay for longer articles. Don't get me wrong, there are higher paying online publishers, but you have to look long and hard to find them.

As with every good side, there is always a bad side. The downside to writing for up front pay is that writer burnout is very common. Because it takes a large number of articles to generate a decent income, often times writers bang out a ton of articles only to eventually hit a brick wall. Let's face it, spitting out article after article on topics that are not near and dear to your heart can become tiring after a while.

When a writer hits that brick wall and suffers from burnout, all writing stops for a period of time. Some cases a writer burnout are mild while other cases are not. Unfortunately, the need to pay the rent, mortgage, car note, etc., forces writers to work through it, but

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once a writer reaches burnout, the task of writing becomes a joyless endeavor (similar to a 9-5 job).

As a freelance writer, you don't get paid vacation, sick or personal time, so if you stop writing articles, the money stops too. This isn't too much of a problem if you have managed your finances responsibly and put money aside for those weeks when you just didn't feel like writing. But what about unexpected emergencies?

What happens when you get on a roll and start banging out a bunch of articles only to find that you are called out of town or your computer decides to crash repeatedly or your dog eats your homework. If anything happens and you are unable to write, you do not earn money.



TRY TO PUT SOME MONEY AWAY FOR A RAINY DAY OR COMPUTER CRASH

You can't call your boss and make an excuse for not coming to work or take a sick or personal day. As a freelance writer, you are the boss and when stuff happens (as it usually does), your income takes a momentary nosedive. When you write for up front pay you're trading time for money.



Something else that needs to be discussed here when writing for upfront pay is that sometimes the article you really needs to be revised. While rewrites and revisions are commonplace for writer, some unscrupulous publishers ask for extensive rewrites. Depending on the amount of the rewrite and how much you getting paid, sometimes it's just not worth it. Remember, writing for upfront pay is a time for dollars scenario. You'll have to make the decision as to whether or not the rewrite is worth your time.

RESIDUAL INCOME

The other side of the coin is residual writing. Residual writing means you write something once and get paid several times . Depending on the publisher, you could conceivably continue to earn money on an article that you have written for the rest of your life without ever touching the article again.

The good thing about residual income is if you accumulate enough articles online and receive residual income on all of them, you can conceivably continue earning without

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working.

The downside is that you will need a large foundation of articles in order to develop a sustainable income. There are the occasional fluke articles that seem to earn right out of the starting gate (like one of my articles that earns an average of \$300 a month each month), and other times there are financial duds (although the article is well written and informative, from an earnings standpoint it's a dud).

To diminish the duds and increase the lucrative articles, you will need to spend some time learning about search engine optimization and keywords. The more you master SEO and keywords, the better your chance of increasing your earnings. In addition to SEO and keywords, you have to get a feel for what readers want to read and which fields are the most lucrative.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) IS THE ABILITY TO WRITE AN ARTICLE IN SUCH A FASHION TO ENTICE THE SEARCH ENGINES TO SEARCH IT AND RANK IT HIGHLY IN THE SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS. THIS USUALLY INVOLVES REPEATING CERTAIN WORDS/PHRASES MULTIPLE TIMES THROUGHOUT THE ARTICLE.

Old is better when it comes to writing residual articles. The longer an article been online the longer the search engines have to index the article and the more readers and writers/bloggers have a chance to link to them. The more informative and well written the article is, the more people will link (called backlinks) and refer to it. The more backlinks you get, the more traffic the article gets. The more traffic the article gets the better the likelihood of earning money.

HOW RESIDUALS PAY

There are various ways in which writers earn money through residual writing. The two most popular are the pay-per-view method and the pay per click method.

The pay-per-view method of earning money means that every time someone looks at the article, there is a chance of being paid. Usually their rate is based on per thousand views. The rate may be two dollars per thousand views five dollars per thousand views \$15 per thousand views. This is all determined by the publisher.

Some sites like [Bukisa](#) pay a set rate of \$3.24 per thousand views. When writing for sites that pay-per-view, the goal is to write on popular topics that will get a lot of page



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views.

The other type of residual earning is called pay per click. This means you get paid every time a reader clicks on an ad. You'll receive a portion of the ad revenue. The percentage received will vary depending on the publisher. Some publishers state upfront that they share 75% of the revenue, others do a 50-50 split. Others such as Suite 101 and eHow do not divulge their revenue share formula.

When writing for a pay per click site you should write articles on topics that are known to generate high-paying advertisements. When writing for a site that pays by page view, write articles that are popular but are known to generate low-paying ads. For example, recipe articles are very popular, but the ads generate little revenue. Finance and insurance topics, on the other hand, don't generate as much traffic but the ads are lucrative.



PLACE ARTICLES WITH HIGH AD VALUE ON SITES THAT PAY PER CLICK, WHILE PLACING POPULAR TOPICS WITH LOW AD VALUE ON SITES THAT PAY PER VIEW.

There are some publishers that pay a combination of both. They pay a small upfront payment and then the remainder is paid through revenue share based on either ad click or views.

CONTENT SITE VS YOUR OWN BLOG

Now that you've read how the residual articles generate income, you're probably asking yourself, "Why should I write for somebody else and share the revenue? Why not create my own site and keep 100% of the income?"

That's an extremely valid question and the answer to that is you can do both. If you have never started a website or a blog before, you should know that it takes quite some time to develop a following. It may take a year or more to develop a steady following and get enough traffic to generate serious income.



Blog

The publishers (also known as content mills) for which you write articles have already generated the traffic, readership, and have a steady stream of income coming in. By placing articles on their site, you stand a better chance of making money. After all, it's better to receive 50% of some money than 100% of no money.

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Since you're just starting out, I recommend that you learn all you can while earning money on a content site at the publisher's expense. Some sites have great editors to help you to hone and improve your writing skills. It's not so much that they're improving your writing skills, they are improving your online writing skills. What that means is they are spending time teaching you about search engine optimization and keywords. So not only are you gaining experience but you're earning money at the same time.

While you're learning, set up a free blog. Get used to playing around on the internet and see how long it takes for you to develop a steady source of traffic. You can also backlink to your blog from your published articles and visa versa.



DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF. WRITE FOR UP FRONT AND RESIDUAL EARNINGS. THERE'S NO LAW IN ONLINE WRITING THAT SAYS YOU MUST CHOOSE ONE OR THE OTHER.

GHOSTWRITING

A lot of the lower pay up front assignments are written on a ghostwritten basis. The client hires you to write a bunch of articles on which he will place either his own name, an assumed name or no name at all. Sometimes the articles appear on blogs or they may end up in article directories.

No matter where these articles end up, you cannot claim them. Once you received payment for the articles, you give up your rights to them and you cannot include them in your writing portfolio.

SUMMARY:

In this chapter we discussed the ways that articles make money online. We also briefly discussed how to mix and match article subject with the site payment method. As an online writer you can write for yourself while writing for someone else. Just remember, once you give away the rights to an article in ghostwriting, you cannot take credit for the piece.

CHAPTER 3: ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS

SET YOUR GOALS

If you dream it and work for it, you can attain it. I'm sure you've heard or watched the DVD "The Secret." The Secret, in my opinion, gives you the first step for achieving your dreams. You've got to define and see what you want.

When you have a clearly defined dream or goal in mind, then you have what it takes to go to the next step. This is the part that The Secret left out. After you clearly define your dreams you've got to create a clear road map to attain it. Visualizing the dream is great, for a starter. You've got to put in the work to make those dreams real.



What I have found, however, is once I started taking action to reach my goals, all sorts of opportunities and methods unveiled themselves to me. I would not have known about such opportunities if I had stayed in my nice place envisioning my dreams and not working on them.

It's sort of like driving down a long country road in the dark. You know the road goes on for several miles and you'll eventually get to your destination, but your headlights are only shining enough light for you to see a few feet ahead of you. As you continue down the illuminated path, you reach your destination.

If your goal is to have your freelance writing to bring in a certain amount of money each month, the only way you'll reach the goal is if you begin.

I'll be honest with you. My first goal was a modest one. All I wanted to do was earn more than \$125 a week. At the time I was working at a part time job earning \$125 a week. If I could match that income by writing, I was happy.

You could tell I was nervous and didn't dream very big. Now that I've reached and far exceeded that goal, I have much bigger dreams.

ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

Here's where most freelance writers get stuck – at the beginning. Too many self-doubts, questions, lack of confidence and scams cause many freelance writers to stop. They analyze and over analyze each opportunity and remain in a state of doing nothing.

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Just about everything involves some sort of risk. You've got to ask yourself if the writing risk is worth it. Most online writing sites are free to join. The only risk involved is the amount of time you spend writing your articles. If you sign up with a reputable site, the risk is all but removed.

Online writing is much different from a lot of business ventures where you must pay an initial financial investment and then work like crazy to earn the investment back. Such investments cost time and money. While you do have to invest time with writing online, you don't have to spend a dime and anything you earn, whether it's 1 cent or \$100 is profit.

IGNORE THE NAYSAYERS

I would be very surprised if you don't have someone in your life, or inner circle that will advise you not to do it. Some people are still afraid of the Internet and they believe everything is a scam. Part of becoming a successful online freelance writer is tuning out the naysayers.

Speaking from my own experience, back when I started freelance writing I was very excited about it. Like most folks, when I'm excited about something I talk about it to anyone who would listen. Most of my inner circle looked at me lovingly, humored me and nodded their heads. They warned me to be careful and not to get my hopes up.



They didn't see the promise of online writing the way I saw it. Yes, there were a lot of scams. Yes, I did lack self-confidence and experience as an online writer. Yes, I was nervous and afraid, but I didn't let that stop me. This nervous, scared, low self confidence woman with no online writing experience embarked on the journey *while* I was afraid (and you should too). Don't let fear stop you.

I wanted to take a little more time to analyze the entire situation, but instead I took one step forward and started my journey. I responded to an ad that paid \$5 per article. I've since progressed and have never looked back, except to see how far I've come. I was very afraid, but I did it anyway.

FOCUSED EFFORT

When you first begin, it is so easy to get distracted. You'll look around at folks who earn more than you, or folks who started writing last week and are already pulling down several thousand dollars (ask for proof).

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There are also folks who call every writing site a scam and scream from the high Heavens that the editors are unfair. The site is a scam. Online writers are polluting the freelance writing field and so on. Ignore them. Put on blinders and continue on.

As a newbie it will take a little while to determine which folks are trustworthy and which ones aren't. It will also take a little while to see which online sites (mentoring sites) are valuable and which ones are fear mongers.

Not to put in a shameless plug, but the contributors at No Job for Mom are a high-class valuable group of writers ranging from experienced to brand new. Even if you don't want to read the posts that I place on the site, I believe the reader comments will offer you just as much, if not more, insight into the online freelance writing game.

The comments will help you regain your focus and encourage you to keep writing. At the end of this book I'll list the blogs/sites of some of the NJFM regulars. You can see from the quality and personality of their blogs, these are straight forward folks of integrity. If your fears are getting the best of you, stop by for a pick-me-up.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

This was my biggest sticking point. I was able to visualize my goals, get over my analysis paralysis and I even started to gain focus and begin to write, but I was not confident. I just couldn't believe that a non-employer would want to pay me to write anything.



The other concern I had was that I was front and center with the client; I had to please this person directly. No manager, editor, supervisor or anyone else stood in between me and the client. What a scary thought. That thought was the very reason I took on low-paying writing jobs. Writing a \$5 article was a lot less intimidating to me than writing a \$500 article.

Time, confidence and necessity eventually forced me to look for higher paying gigs. I soon found that writing a \$500 article was just as simple as writing a \$5 article. It just meant I had to write a few more words. I didn't lower or raise my writing quality based on income. My writing quality remained consistent no matter what the pay scale (and yours should too).

The only thing that will build your confidence is writing frequency. The more you write, the better and more confident you'll become. You may not get it perfectly the first few times, but as you learn from your mistakes, you'll be amazed how your confidence grows.

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As with most writers, I look at some of my earlier articles and I cringe. I'm glad that I've improved over the years and continue to improve, and so will you.



YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR ONLINE FREELANCE WRITING CAREER. DON'T ALLOW OTHERS TO RAIN ON YOUR PARADE

SLOW AND STEADY

I might have said this before but it bears repeating. Most of us don't go from rags to riches writing online. There are some folks who have found their niche and have been able to make a very comfortable income in a relatively short period of time, but the vast majority of us increase our earnings on a slower, steadier pace.



The one thing I do notice, however, is that the earning increases from year to year far exceed any salary increase I've earned in the traditional job market. Employers usually offer anywhere from 1% to 5% in annual salary increases with an average of 2.5% according to the *WorldatWork 2010-2011 Salary Budget Survey*.

In my experience, the smallest annual income increase I've had was in 2009 and that increase was 184%. This from someone who is not a mover and a shaker. I've employed the slow and steady earnings method.

SUMMARY

Do it afraid!

CHAPTER 4: A FEW ONLINE WRITING TIPS

I think it would be unfair of me to give you the lay of the land when it comes to the online writing arena without providing a few tips on how to write online. The subject of how to write online is a large one and these few pages are only an introduction. All it takes is a quick search on the internet and you'll find a host of books and websites with detailed information on how to write online. I strongly encourage you to take time to study this topic a little further. In the meanwhile, here are a few basic tips:

WRITE TIGHTLY FOCUSED ARTICLES

Think about how you read an online article. What are you looking for? Are you looking for a long introduction that goes on forever with a slow and steady build up until you eventually find the information you want? Or, do you want your information front and center?

More than likely, your eyes scan through the article stopping at the subheadings until you find the subheading for the topic you're interested in. You may read the particular subheading first and if it is what you're looking for, you may go back and read the entire article, or you may not. The writer must capture your interest and provide action packed information in that one subheading. If not, you won't bother to read the rest.



As an online writer, you have to write for the way readers want to read. Most articles are to the point and tightly focused. Long drawn out introductions and buildups are better placed in novels. Online writing is information packed and to the point.

Write using subheadings and short paragraphs. Short paragraphs and subheadings helps the reader to quickly scan through the article and find the necessary information.

DON'T IMPRESS YOURSELF

If you have a large vocabulary and like to let everyone know it, write in a journal. Superfluous wording, unnecessary adjectives and over descriptive work takes away from the meat of the article. Only use descriptive words when necessary. You're goal is to keep your reader interested, not show the reader the size of your vocabulary.

KEYWORDS AND SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Why should a freelance writer learn anything about search engine optimization? After all, they're not webmasters. All freelance writers need to be able to do is write grammatically correct copy, use spell check and engage their reader with their content, right? Well yes, that is true but in order to be a well-paid internet freelance writer, you need to know a little bit more.

UNDERSTAND SEO & KEYWORDS

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a large field. The intricacies of how SEO works are always changing. Even though there are new developments all the time, there are some basics that remain the same.

SEARCH ENGINES: WHAT YOUR READER SEES:

A woman who is about to make a major investment in a pair of green shoes is curious to find out everything she can about green shoes before spending her hard earned money on the shoes. She uses a search engine of choice and inserts the words "green shoes."



As a result of her query, the search engine displays pages and pages of links to websites, articles, pictures and/or videos about green shoes. The search engine has reached into its green shoe bank and displayed everything it had on green shoes. The reader happily clicks on the various links to learn about green shoes.

SEARCH ENGINES: WHAT THE READER DOESN'T SEE:

In order to provide such detailed information about green shoes, the search engine sent out its army of spiders to comb the web looking for articles, websites, etc., about green shoes. The spider (who is actually as blind as a bat) cannot read the page itself to know whether or not the page is about green shoes, so it reaches into its 'spidey belt' and pulls out a weapon called an algorithm. Algorithms have the power to read the page and determine if it has information on green shoes.

These algorithms help spiders to find the words 'green shoes' and related terms such as 'laces for green shoes' and 'cleaning green shoes' and 'shades of green shoes' ...you get my drift. When the spider finds green shoe information, the information is sent back home to the search engine, which stores the information in its green shoe bank waiting for someone to perform a search for green shoes.

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This is an over simplified version of the process, but it gives you an idea of what goes on behind the scenes. You have to write your articles in such a way so that the spider can find your article and display the link in the search results. Keywords are what you, as a writer, must use to entice the spider to pick your articles.

USING KEYWORDS

Keywords determine how your users will find your blog. When you get through writing an article, ask yourself, "How will a reader find my article?" Think of words that one might type into a search engine in order to find it. Take those very same words and sprinkle them throughout your article.

Make sure the keywords appear naturally. Readers should not be able to tell which keywords your articles are targeting. If the reader can determine your targeted keywords, that means that you put too many keywords and your article can be penalized for "keyword stuffing." Keywords should be obvious to the search engines only.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION AND KEYWORDS ARE THE BACKBONE OF ONLINE WRITING. CONTINUE TO LEARN AND HONE THESE SKILLS.

CHAPTER 5: WHAT TO DO NEXT

Now that you have a general overview of what online freelance writing is all about, it's time to get started. Whether you start by creating a free blog (blogger.com) or by signing up for a content site, take action today.

Below is a list of sites that are usually looking for freelance writers. Some sites only require a registration while others require a resume and writing samples. Because content site guidelines change often, I'm not listing whether or not the site requires registration or resume. You can visit the site and review the latest guidelines and terms of use. Before you sign up for a site, make sure to read the list below first:

THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE YOU SIGN UP FOR A SITE

1. Sites that ask for unpaid samples. There are some unscrupulous sites that get newbies to write keyword targeted articles as samples. They later take the samples, put them on a website or blog without paying the author. This is not a common practice, but I do want to make you aware that it happens, so proceed with caution.
2. Find out who owns the copyright for your work. You don't want to write a batch of articles only to find that you gave up all rights to your hard work. Sites like Suite 101 hold the exclusive electronic rights to your work for one year. After that you are free to place it elsewhere online. However, during that year, you can publish your work offline.
3. Read reviews on a site's payment history. If you see, read or hear a lot of complaints about writers not being paid or not being paid on time, consider that a red flag.
4. Be careful of brand new content sites. Especially as a newbie, it's best to write for sites that are tried and true. There are new content sites popping up on the internet daily. They offer high revenue share percentages and all sorts of perks. The only problem with new sites is that a large percentage of them fail. You don't want to develop a large portfolio only to try to sign on one day to find the URL is no longer valid.
5. Look at the Google and Alexa ranking. The better the ranking, the better your chances of making money. There are all sorts of tools online for checking a site's Google ranking (do a Google search for "google page rank" and you'll find all sorts



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of page rank checkers). For the Alexa rating, go to Alexa.com. The Alexa ranking isn't as important as the Google page rank, but it can give you an indication of how the site is doing.

6. Trust your gut. If something seems a little too good to be true...it is.

REPUTABLE CONTENT SITES

Here's a small sampling of a few content sites that have been tried and true. Some pay up front and some pay on a residual basis. Do your homework before signing up:

- **Textbroker** (up front): For those of you who sign up for Textbroker, I highly recommend this book: Grandma's Little Black Book – **How to Make Money Writing for Textbroker**. Grandma has earned over \$3,000 in one month writing for Textbroker.
- **Demand Studios** (residual and up front): This site pays twice a week. Check out the thread on **How to Get Accepted as a Demand Studios Writer** for tips on writing for them.
- **Associated Content** (residual and up front): Check out Celeste Stewart's book **Online Writing Workbook Beginner's Edition**. She provides information and tips for writing for Constant-Content, Seed and Associated Content.
- **Suite 101** (residual)
- **HubPages** (residual)
- **eCopywriters** (up front)
- **Constant-Content** (residual and up front): Celeste Stewart has sold over 2,500 articles on Constant-Content. She shares her secrets in her book **Secrets to Success on Constant-Content**. It's a must read for anyone looking to earn a good income with Constant-Content.
- **Bukisa** (residual)



You can find additional reputable sites by doing online searches. I've compiled a database of writing sites and other helpful online tools for freelance writers. You can access the information for free by visiting the **NJFM Database**.

WRITING JOB SITES

Check out these sites for finding freelance writing jobs:

Online Writing Jobs
Absolute Write
Writing for Dollars
Freelance Writing
Writer Gazette
Writing-World

OTHER HELPFUL WRITING SITES

As promised earlier, I'm listing below the links to blogs of some of the No Job for Mom regulars. As you visit the sites you'll see that these are folks of integrity. Therefore, when they comment or share information on the NJFM blog, they're not commenting just for backlinks. They comment to offer quality information that enriches the community.

If one of these guys calls a site a scam, you can believe it is one. They don't throw the word around lightly.

DeAnna's Blog: [Write Moms](#)
Grandma's Site: [Text Article Sale](#)
Kidgas' Blog: [My Online Income](#)
Prerna's Blog: [The Mom Writes](#)
Lisa's Blog: [30Queriesin30Days](#)
Master Dayton's Blog: [Freelance Writing](#)
Crystal's Blog: [The Best 50 Years](#)
Ignatius (no blog link but valuable a contributor to the NJFM community)
April (no blog link but a great contributor to the NJFM community)
Last but not least, Felicia's Blog: [No Job for Mom](#)

There are many other valuable contributors (and I apologize guys for not listing your names individually) to the NJFM community and I want to thank them all.

CHAPTER 6: MOTIVATION

You'll find that as an online freelance writer, more than just learning SEO, using the right keywords and honing your writing skills, you'll need to stay motivated. Too many writers quit because they don't see the immediate rewards from their residual income or become burnt out from writing too many up front pay articles.

I decided to include some of the motivational posts that are available on my No Job for Mom blog. The idea came to me after receiving several emails from folks asking questions that I've previously answered on the blog. What I realize is that people didn't want to go through the blog's nearly 400 posts to find the answer.

So, the remainder of the book contains a few of the motivational posts I wrote back in 2008. My goal is to help you understand that you're not alone and to encourage you to stick with it. Online freelance writing takes a little getting used to. Hopefully you'll be inspired and motivated to continue your journey as a freelance writer.

Let the motivation begin!

Motivation For all Writers

MAKING THE DECISION: LEAVE RAT RACE FOR THE WORK AT HOME PACE

March 14, 2008

There is an ever-increasing number of people who are unsatisfied with their job. Some people will stay at the job and gripe, moan and complain while others, decide to do something about it.

The complainers who remain at their less than fulfilling job justify their decision to stay by giving reasons such as, I need the money, or I'm not qualified to do anything else, or I'm too old, or too fat or too tall or... you get the drift. It's the select few who take the time and effort to investigate, plan and focus on the possibility of an alternative who make things happen.

The most difficult part about deciding to leave an established, steady paying job to work from home is making the decision to leave your established steady paying job to work from home. Once you make the decision, it gets easier. All of your energy is no longer torn in making the decision, but it is focused on plotting your 'how to work from home' course. Here are two of the biggest concerns that workers have when they consider leaving a steady paying job to work from home:

Money

The most obvious factor to consider is where, when and how will you get enough money to maintain or improve your current lifestyle. Working from home is a big change and you've got to be able to pay for things like your rent/mortgage, utilities, car note, auto repair, etc.

It's time to get **up close and personal with your money**. If you don't already have one, it's time to create a budget. You will be able to quickly see how much you make, how much you spend and how much income you need to earn from your work at home venture.

The other major concern is ...

Health Care Coverage

For most workers, health care coverage is tied to employment. It takes planning to make sure your health care needs are covered. This is even more important for those individuals with children and/or have special needs. Here are a few options to look into



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when it comes to health care:

1. Spouse. If your spouse has a plan, get added to it.
2. Individual health plans. Depending on which business you decide to go pursue, there are profession-related health care coverage options. Here's an article on **individual health insurance** for the self-employed. The article provides enough to get your investigative juices flowing. In addition to the options listed in the article, do some searching on your own (if you're going to work from home and earn money via the internet, research and investigation will be your middle name – get used to investigating things).
3. High Deductible Catastrophic Insurance. If you're generally healthy and are only looking for insurance to take care of big-ticket scenarios, look into **Catastrophic Insurance**.
4. Group Plans for Freelance Writers: If you belong to a writing association, you can enroll in the association's group health plan. Group plans usually cost less than individual health insurance plans. Check out a few of the writing associations listed in **this article**. You might find an affordable plan that works well for you and your family.

Research, research, research. If you truly want to earn significant money via the internet from the comfort of your home, as I've said before, do your research. Unlike the days of old, it's right at your fingertips (no need to make trips to the local library unless you want to).

DUMP THE CUBICLE MENTALITY

August 9, 2008



For folks like me who have had years of cubicle training, it's not easy to dump the cubicle mentality and unlearn everything you've learned. If you've worked in an office for most, if not all, of your professional career, switching up to work from home in your own business requires some transitioning.

Humor me for a little bit while I address my largest cubicle deprogramming. It's all about the number of hours you work.

Employee Work Hours

As a person working at home, do you feel you must work 7 or 8 straight hours to get things done? The thought of someone interrupting you sends you into a tailspin, right? It's that darned cubicle mentality.

Think about it. How many hours a day does the average office worker work? If they come in at 8:00 (usually 10 or 15 minutes late), get settled, get coffee, walk the office saying the daily hello's, make the bathroom run and then get settled, you're looking at 8:30 to 8:45 work start time.

There's the 10 minutes before and after lunch. It takes 10 minutes to go to the bathroom, send e-mails or interoffice phone calls to get the lunch group together to decide where to eat, get the coat/purse/wallet etc. and then finally go to lunch. Then, of course, there's the 10 minutes after lunch to repeat the ritual in reverse.

Smokers get smoke breaks and the really lenient employer allows for bathroom breaks.

There's the surfing the Internet, the broken copy machine, the call to the help desk for computer issues, the occasional fire drill, the office birthday, going away or baby shower parties. No, these don't occur daily, but they do occur.

When it's all said and done, the average worker works anywhere from 4.5 to 5.5 hours a day. Not too bad for collecting a paycheck, if that's the way you want to live your life.

Home Worker Work Hours

The work at home person tends to put in more hours simply because the work is always a footstep or a mouse click away. A fitful night of sleep can mean an extra hour or two of

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work. The lack of dress code and commute squeezes in an additional 2 to 3 hours of work time. Just the lack of commute and an occasional sleepless night for the work at home is just about the equivalent to a cubicle mate's full day of work.

True Work Hours

Not including the couple of hours squeezed in as a result of the lack of commute and lack of dress code let's talk about the real work at home time. You managed to get the kids off to school and the spouse off to work and you are finally alone to get some work done.

You brew your coffee, or squeeze your wheat grass, sit at your computer with your morning beverage of choice and start working. Engrossed in your work, you eventually look up from your computer and it's already lunchtime. You've been working non-stop for hours. Where did the time go? You were so engaged in your work, you didn't notice the time.

Just for grins, let's stop the workday here. You get up from the computer, shower, get dressed, eat and run a few errands. You're feeling a little frantic because you know the kids will be home soon and you've got more work to do.



Unwarranted guilt begins to creep upon you (here's the cubicle mentality rearing its ugly head again). You feel like you should work more to accomplish more (that blasted cubicle training). Before you let the guilt really force you to run back to the computer, stop and add up your work hours. The couple of hours when you couldn't sleep, plus the lack of commute/dress time and the hours you worked up until lunchtime would probably total somewhere around 5 to 7 hours.

Dump the Guilt

You already surpassed your cubicle counterpart. They average 4.5 to 5.5 hours. Now, being the driven person that you are, you don't stop there. After you're through with your daily family obligations you manage to squeeze out a couple more work hours at the end of the day.

If nothing else, you should be commended for your dedication and work ethic. Eradicate the guilt and the cubicle mentality. The sooner you dump the guilt and transition from the cubicle mentality, the sooner you can convert that energy towards promoting your business.

WORK AT HOME SUCCESS: ARE YOU LEARNABLE?

April 12, 2008

One trait of successful online business people is that they are teachable. Well, on the internet it is slightly different, you've got to be learnable. Can you read, comprehend, seek and learn new concepts? If you want to be successful with an at home on line business, you must become learnable.

The web is all about teaching old dogs (and new ones for that matter) new tricks. According to dictionary.com, teach means "to impart knowledge of or skill in; give instruction in" and to learn means "to acquire knowledge of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience."

If you've never done something before, it's difficult to teach it because you've got nothing to impart. However, not being or having a teacher does not prevent you from learning. The internet is a great place to 'acquire knowledge' as long as you acquire the right knowledge from the right sources.

Here are a few tips for acquiring knowledge to help grow your on line business:

1. **Find reputable sources.** Not all sources are worthy of learning from. Before you use a source as your basis for learning a new skill or on line business secret, make sure the source is qualified to be your teacher. Don't take everything at face value. Spend some time finding information about your resources. Qualifying your source is more important than the information learned from the source. After all, learning 100% of the information offered from a bogus source does not add to your on line businesses bottom line. All you've done is wasted valuable time.
2. **Stay abreast of the latest information.** No matter what line of business you decide to use as your means to financial freedom, you need to be aware of the latest developments. The internet is a moving target and you have to move along with it. If your on line business is based on the whims of your clients, you better keep your finger on their pulse to make sure you are addressing the current whim. Forums and reputable blogs are a great source for hands on up to date information. Be wary of books that were published a year ago as technology changes quickly.
3. **Find a mentor.** A mentor can be anyone who has successfully done what you're trying to do. The more mentors the better. There is more than one way to achieve financial freedom in your line of business, find several mentors and use the techniques that will work best for



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you.

4. **Give back.** Once you've learned and have become successful, become a teacher. You don't have to get a job at a University, you can teach by maintaining a blog or website of your successes. You can also offering quality advice in forums, the very same forums that you used to become the successful on line businessperson that you've become.

THREE WORK AT HOME PERSONALITY TRAITS

April 30, 2008

Not everyone is cut out for working at home. It takes a lot of organization, discipline and boundary setting in order to accomplish all that needs to be done. Even if you weren't born with the necessary work at home personality traits, if you want to do it bad enough, you will quickly develop the traits necessary to become successful.

Here are three personality traits that helped me to reach my goal of working from home:

1. **A burning desire to work from home** (this is the only trait I must have been born with). It has to be more than a "wouldn't it be nice if..." type of desire. It has to be an all-consuming desire to work from home. It will take that all-out desire to make it happen. There will be obstacles along the way, and at times you will second-guess your decision to work from home, but that strong desire will help to refocus you and carry you over the hump. Keep in mind that the desire and the actual living your dream may take some time (for me it took several years of trial and error, but the desire kept me going until I reached my goal).
2. **Develop an attitude of discipline.** The desire is great but without a plan and the discipline to carry out the plan, your desire to work from home is really only a wish. The discipline may include getting your financial affairs in order to be able to withstand a potential salary drop. Or, it may mean getting up extra early in order to get working before the kids get up. What ever it is, you must develop the discipline and stick with it.
3. **Confidence.** Confidence is the tricky part of the whole work at home plan. If you are like most people, you are nervous and have bouts of total fear when you think about quitting a day job to go out on your own. A biting comment from a naysayer may be enough to rob you of your fledgling confidence and make you return to a 9 to 5 job.



Confidence is built by doing what you've got to do. The more you do it the more skilled you become and the more confident you will become. Once you've made your first sale, or landed your first client or received your first check for your freelance writing, your confidence will grow. Keep in mind, however, confidence will only grow if you actually get out there to make it happen. Confidence comes from doing, Think about the first time you got behind the wheel of a car. You were nervous at first, but the more you drove the better you got (hopefully). Working from home is no different.

You will run into people who may shake your confidence, but if you have the burning

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desire and the discipline to do what needs to be done, you will begin to see results from your work at home efforts. It's amazing how results boost confidence. Stick with it. It may not be easy, but it sure is rewarding.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS IN PERCENTAGES

May 9, 2008

If you're in the process of starting a new online business, it's probably more encouraging if you chart your progress in percentages rather than dollar amounts. I'm not saying that you shouldn't keep track of your actual dollar amount, what I'm saying is that tracking your percentages is psychologically more uplifting in the beginning.

For instance, when I first started my online business, my first month's income was \$.63. I was excited that I earned anything, so 63 cents was pretty good in my book. The second month I earned \$2.63. Still not a stellar amount of money, but it was a 417% increase in income over the prior month. You see where I'm going with this?



The over all dollar amounts were rather pitiful but the percentages were encouraging. If over a period of a couple months if you notice that your percentages are going down (and your income accordingly) that means you need to take stock of what you're doing revamp revise and get back at it.

When discussing your income with friends and family members who are doubtful about your new business venture, talk to them in percentages. Don't give them dollar amounts. As a matter of fact, turn the question around and ask them percent increase did they earn this month verses last month, or this year versus last year.

It may make them stop and think that you're really onto something. Once they realize they're going to work day in and day out for the same amount each month or that they have received an annual increase of anywhere from 1 to 10%, your numbers won't look so bad.

Psychologically you need every advantage that you can get when you're working hard on a new online (or off line) business. The simple process of tracking progress in percentages is another motivational tool that will help you to keep you moving forward.

Even when your business takes off and you're rolling in money, keep track of your percentages. If your percentages rise, but begin to slow down, you know its time to take stock, revise and revamp again.

HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

May 25, 2008

As a work-at-home individual you have a unique experience. Depending on the type of business you're in, you may either come into contact with a lot of people or no people. There may be days or even weeks where your primary co-worker is the person you face in the mirror. As attractive as that may sound, it does have its drawbacks. The fewer people you come into contact with, the more you need to feed your mind with positive motivation in order to maintain the right attitude.

Motivation

As a solo worker, you've got to motivate yourself. You don't get to hold weekly meetings with your boss to prioritize your workweek, nor do you have customers calling you all day to remind you of what your most important priority on your desk should be. Instead, you have to set the priorities and carry them out. You've got to be self motivated.

If you feel particularly lazy on any given day, you've got to pick yourself up and get yourself going. That's why it is important to fill your brain with the right stuff. To be successful, you should constantly nourish your brain with positive material. Make it a habit to read positive motivation books, listen to positive motivation tapes and watch encouraging, uplifting movies. Stay away from negative influences that don't help you to reach your goal.

When the obstacles seem overwhelming and a lesser person may give up, because you have prepared your mindset by constantly feeding your mind with positive and encouraging thoughts, you look at the obstacle as something to make you stronger, not as something that will defeat you. Take a few minutes each day in the morning and a few minutes at night before you go to bed. Start and end your day on a positive note. You will find that over time, situations that would have stopped you in the past will become a stepping-stone to your future

Once you truly see the glass as half full rather than half empty, you know you've got the right attitude and you're on your way.



ARE YOU MENTALLY UNEMPLOYABLE?

June 27, 2008

I always thought I was fickle, but that's not the case. In browsing through a forum the other day I found the proper diagnosis for my condition. I am Mentally Unemployable!

For those of you who just can't seem to find the right job to keep you challenged and happy, maybe you're suffering from the same condition. Here are a few clues to help you self diagnose:

1. You might be mentally unemployable if you don't want to go to work at a job. The mentally unemployable don't mind working, but it's just the need to get up, get showered, dressed, make the lunches, get the kids off to school. They partake in the usual the usual morning madness of rushing just to hurry up and wait in traffic or on the train or in the elevator to get to a job where you spend hours in strategy meetings reviewing the same thing over and over again.
2. The mentally unemployable understand the merit rating system. If I work real hard, I should get really paid. If I sit at the water cooler all day, I shouldn't get paid.
3. A mentally unemployable person's middle name is efficiency. Mentally unemployable folks tend to find a faster more accurate way to accomplish a task. They get work done and get it done well.
4. The mentally unemployable just cannot stand the thought of wasting several prime hours in the morning commuting when they could actually be accomplishing a task that brings them closer to their goals.
5. The mentally unemployable are constantly flooded with ideas and new ways to accomplish tasks. Their minds are constantly flooded with brilliant ideas only to be shot down by upper management (who really doesn't understand).
6. The mentally unemployable are bored at work. They lack a worthwhile mentally stimulating challenge.
7. The mentally unemployable constantly think of ways to earn money doing something they enjoy. It's more than just a passing thought; it's more like an obsession.



The irony of it is that the mentally unemployable are usually well-respected good employees because of their driven nature. They know how to view and

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analyze a situation, come up with a plan of action and implement it. They know what it takes to get things done.

If you suffer with at least half of the above symptoms, my friend, you are in the same boat as I am. Welcome to the mentally unemployable club (do not confuse mentally unemployable with work-aversion-itis).

Now that you have your diagnosis, what are you going to do about it?

CAN YOU REALLY WORK FROM HOME WITH KIDS?

Many parents want to work from home so they can spend quality time with their kids. The thought of sitting in a cubicle while your child is in day care doesn't sit right with some parents. Parents are caught between a rock and a hard place. They need to make money in order to make ends meet, but they also want to be the primary care giver for their children, to raise them with their family's moral values and not those of the daycare center.

A perfect solution?

If you are one of the parents who likes to write or has a computer practicable skill, then working from home on the computer or laptop is a perfect solution, correct? Well, actually, in many cases, like mine, it's partially correct.

The idealistic vision of Mom and Dad working from home on their laptops while little Johnny is fast asleep in his bassinet is just that...an idealistic vision. The reality is more like little Johnny doesn't want to sleep, he wants to be held and big sister Sally who just turned 3 wants to show you how well she cleaned the bathroom using your favorite, and expensive, beauty products.

Reality Strikes

The reality is that it's not always easy to work from home with kids. My kids are older, but just as demanding. I find that I tend to dictate articles in my digital voice recorder while driving to and from basketball, football and cheerleading competitions. I edit articles in the wee hours of the morning while they're asleep and the house is quiet.

I use the snippets of overheard teen-aged conversations as material for articles and down time in the Dentist waiting room or while folding clothes as quiet time to formulate new ideas for blogging posts.



Be Adaptable

The one important quality that I've found that has helped me work from home is being adaptable. I'm not saying that you compromise your goals, what I'm saying is that you've got to be able to re-adjust them on the fly while still getting done what you need to get done.

I make my daily goals known to my family. Periodically throughout the day, they'll ask,

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"Mom, how many articles did you get done today?" Or, "Mom, did you finish that article on..." Sometimes I have to burn the midnight oil to accomplish my daily goals, but it's a small price to pay to be able to work from home.

ARE YOU OVER THINKING YOUR FREELANCE WRITING CAREER?

August 28, 2008

Think about it for a minute. You want to make money as a freelance writer. You start looking for opportunities or you begin to send e-mails and query letters to magazine editors, you respond to writing jobs posted on the internet, you bid for writing assignments on some of the more popular bidding sites. Remember, now, you're new to this freelance writing stuff. You're just starting out and you're a bit intimidated and unsure of yourself.

You get a few rejections or you find that your writing portfolio is a bit sparse (or actually non-existent). You become a little more dejected with every rejection. Here's where your thoughts start to really get in your own way.

"I'm not good enough."

"I'll never get published."

"It's too hard."

"I might as well give up."

Sound familiar? Now I've got to ask you a few questions:

- How long did it take you to learn to walk? Did you hop out of the crib, and take off or did you stumble and fall a few times (if you don't remember, ask your parents)?
- How long did it take you to learn to read?



See where I'm going with this? No? Okay, here are a few more questions since it seems that I haven't clearly made my point:

- If you're away at school did you learn the layout of the campus on the first day or were you late to a few classes because you got lost?
- If you currently hold a full-time job, did you understand the ropes on day one or did it take time to learn the computer system, the office policies and the job duties?
- How long did it take you to learn to drive, or ride a bike, or roller blade, swim, ski, play basketball?

Do you get it now? Contrary to popular belief, freelance writing success doesn't happen

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over night. When you get your first few rejections, always remember that the law of numbers is working for you. You're getting closer and closer to your first acceptance. You just have to get by those initial rejections to get to it.

Can you imagine if you quit the first time you stumbled as a child and decided, "Forget it! This walking thing is just too hard. I'll crawl for the rest of my life."



You didn't "think" your way into walking. You just did it. As we get older, we tend to over think things rather than just setting out to do it. It's a good thing we were too young to "think" about walking when we were babies, or else there would be many adults still crawling around on all fours now.

When it comes to your freelance writing or blogging career, think like a baby learning to walk. Just do it!

DID SOMEONE MOVE YOUR FREELANCE WRITING CHEESE?

September 13, 2008

If you're a freelance writer for Demand Studios, the answer is a resounding, YES! But, that's not a bad thing. Here's how I look at it.

Get Who Moved My Cheese and Read it

You'll have a better appreciation for this post if you're familiar with the book *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D. If you don't have it, go out and get the book and read it. It's an easy read and you can finish it in about an hour or so.

As a freelance writer, keep a copy near and read it every couple of months or so. It's amazing the additional insight you'll gain.

My Cheese and Demand Studios

The four main characters, Sniff and Scurry (two mice who react to situations as situations arise) and Hem and Haw (two 'intelligent humans' who analyze situations when situations arise) are placed in a maze with cheese stations from which they gain their purpose for life. The 'Cheese' in this book is a metaphor for money, wealth, health, status, whatever it is that makes people happy in life.



The book begins with all four characters enjoying an abundant amount of cheese at Cheese Station "C." The insights begin to unfold when each character reacts to the dwindling and eventual total consumption of the cheese supply. When you read the book, you'll see aspects of your own personality in each of the characters. Hopefully the more you read the book, the less you'll relate to the undesirable character traits and see yourself in a more positive light.

Demand Studio Cheese

When Demand Studios recently changed its editing criteria, I got pretty annoyed. I mean after all, "I've been writing this way for them for months." For about a week, I sang the same annoying song to my friends and family about how I spent so much time writing articles as I've always written them only to suddenly have them returned to me for rewrites. "How dare they!" What a pompous fool I was.



I'll Fix Them

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So, in full Hem and Haw mode I analyzed the situation and I decided that I'd fix them. I just won't write for them anymore (They moved my cheese from cell station C). I mean let's face it, as a freelance writer, I've always done it this way and that's just the way I'm used to doing it!

I resolved the problem by not doing anything. After all, what's a hundred or two hundred dollars a week? Why should I have to change? So, like Hem and Haw, I sat at that cheese less Cheese Station C until...

In Comes the Cheese Book

I call it Divine intervention, but for some reason I was prompted to pull out my copy of "Who Moved My Cheese." I haven't read the book in quite some time so I sat down and started to read it again.

Like a lightening bolt, I saw Demand Studios as my cheese and my reaction as Hem and Haw, the two 'intelligent' humans who sat around complaining and not doing anything about the situation. Sniff and Scurry, on the other hand, noticed the dwindling cheese supply so they put on their sneakers and ran through the maze looking for new cheese.

The Lesson I Learned

While it's a daily habit of mine to scour the Internet looking for new opportunities (cheese), my current dilemma with Demand Studios doesn't have to be an 'all or nothing' situation. If I take a little time to get a better understanding of their new editorial guidelines and modify my writing accordingly (and stop being so Hem and Haw like about it), I could partake of the old cheese while Sniffing and Scurrying around looking for new cheese. A win-win situation.



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PUT ON BLINDERS AND KEEP ON WRITING

September 23, 2008

Sometimes you have to put on blinders to become and remain successful. Learn to selectively ignore what people, TV, radio and the newspapers are telling you.

The World's Reality

All you need to do is turn on a TV a look at the front page of the newspaper to know that these are seriously challenging economic times. The price of oil, gas, food, clothes, etc is rising. Unfortunately, salaries are not rising accordingly (for those folks who still have jobs). We're all feeling the financial pinch.



My Reality

Having acknowledged the current economic climate, I cannot consistently focus on the failing economy. I need to put as much effort as I can into writing, blogging, earning money and increasing my revenue. If I keep listening to the news, I would eventually lose all hope and throw my hands up in the air in despair. However, I've made it a habit to gain my focus from looking at where I want to be, rather than where I am.

Put on Blinders

According to the media, my earnings should not be increasing year after year. When I look at my earnings and see that as of September 23, 2008, I've earned 53% more than I earned last year, I realize that if I allowed the media hysteria to direct my actions, I would stop doing what I'm doing and watch my earnings decline.

This year, my residual (passive) income alone is well on the way to surpassing my entire last year's earnings. That means that residually, I'll earn more this year than I earned both residually and actively last year. Is that a step in the right direction? Yes it is. Is it difficult to do? No, if I can do it, anyone can.

Regain Your Focus

I'm not sharing this information to look for a pat on the back. I'm sharing this

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information to help you to regain focus. Turn off the news, get to the computer and start writing. Don't get caught up in the mass financial hysteria. Do something about it.



Don't get me wrong, I do feel the financial pinch and I understand that we are living under financially challenging conditions. However, the best way to combat the rising prices is to consistently increase your income one day at a time.

Lessons Learned:

1. Watch what you're focusing on. Focus on the resolution and not the problem.
2. Anything is possible with constant and persistent effort.
3. There is money to be made on the internet.

FREELANCE WRITING A LITTLE OBSESSION AND A LARGE DREAM

October 6th, 2008

It is my opinion that in order to become a successful freelance writer you've got to be a little obsessive and have a large dream.

Here is what I mean. When I find a new writing opportunity or the chance to earn money, I throw myself into it totally (obsessively). I envision a large stream of dollars flowing into my account. I know the only way that will happen is if I work hard to make it happen. As long as I have my dream, I'll continue to work at it.



On occasion I wake up to see that my typing fingers are burned to nubs from typing at such a breakneck speed. Depending on the writing format, I could usually bang out a few articles in a day, but at the end of the day I always wish that I could bang out a few

more.

When I stop to take a breather, I look at all of my other writing opportunities and realize that I've let them take a back seat so I then start working like a mad woman (obsessively) on those opportunities (of course I do this because I have a dream of dollars rolling in).

Passive Income Lifestyle

My motivation is my belief in the 100% passive income lifestyle. I want my passive lifestyle to be a lobster tail and shrimp lifestyle, not a hot dog and hamburger lifestyle. I could work at a slower pace, but while I have the energy and the opportunity (the kids are in school all day), I might as well take advantage of it.

Lucrative Times Ahead

There will come a time when I could leisurely write one or two articles a day or maybe skip a day entirely, if I choose. If you're anything like me, however, it gets tougher and tougher not to write daily because its in the bloodstream.

Stop and Smell the Roses

Every once in a while, I stop to smell the roses. I look to see where I was, where I am and where I want to be.

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Where I was: A little over a ago on February 9, 2007 I made a vow to quit my part-time job and work full time as a freelance writer. I believed I could match and exceed my part-time income through freelance writing.

Where I am: On February 9, 2008, I accomplished the task and have exceeded my part-time income. I'm well on my way to doubling my old part-time salary through my freelance writing. As a matter of fact, as of this post, I've effectively given myself a 22% salary increase over my old part-time job. Imagine telling your boss you want a 22% salary increase.



Where I want to be: My goal is to continue increasing my income but I want to increase it residually. I want my work to pay me in the long run over and over again rather than work daily for pay. Right now 34% of my income is from active (write for pay) opportunities while the remaining 66% is residual. I guess I'm moving in the right direction because last year my active income accounted for 68% of my earnings and residual a mere 32%.

To that end, I'm writing like an obsessive mad woman, burning my fingers to the nub to be able to have substantial residual income flowing into my accounts. If I can do it, I *KNOW* you can do it too. All you need is a little obsession and a large dream.

DANGERS OF WORKING FROM HOME

August 2, 2008

Working from home is great! You have all of the obvious benefits of the short commute, relaxed dress code, impromptu vacation days and the list goes on. There is, however, one potential danger that comes with working from home (unless you master it), and that is the ever-present refrigerator, the tendency to work too much and exercise too little.

Potential Problem # 1 – Work Hours

When you work from home, you tend to blur the lines between work time and down time. I know that when I first started, it seemed like I worked all the time. I enjoy what I do and I also wanted it to become lucrative fast so I spent most of my waking hours at the computer.

Yes, I did manage to throw together a few meals for the family in between writing articles, formatting websites and making blog posts and searching for new opportunities. I also managed to wash a few loads of clothes, go to the grocery store, take the kids to the doctor and the dog to the vet, but the remainder of the time was work, work, work.

Potential Problem #2 – Lack of Exercise



Although my brain and my typing fingers were working overtime, that's all the physical work that I did (well of course there were the errands). As a result, after a few months of working at home I not only gained an appreciation of the work schedule, I also gained a rather rotund rear end.

It's not that I changed my eating habits so much; I just changed my movement habits. All work and no exercise makes Felicia a rather round person. It's not too noticeable because the work at home dress code allowed my mid section to expand because sweat pants are forgiving. It wasn't until the first social outing where sweatpants were not an option that I rather sadly (and very emotionally) came to the conclusion that I needed to make a change.

Work Habits and Exercise Habits

I then realized, just as I had to develop the work ethic to continually write, find new opportunities and doggedly search for viable income streams, I had to apply the same determination to



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getting rid of the “work at home” bulge.

I now apply my work at home work ethic to my workouts. The only problem is, I thoroughly enjoy working from home. The workouts...well that's another matter.

It all comes down to...a person's gotta do what a person's gotta do. I want to be healthy enough to enjoy the fruits of my financial labor. How about you?

TIME TO PUT MY FREELANCE WRITING FOOT DOWN

September 10, 2008

How many times have you had to have a talk with your family, spouse, or significant other, reasoning with them to allow you to work more? Sounds strange, right? Well, if you're a freelance writer working from home, it's not so strange.

Imagine my surprise this weekend when I had to sit down and have a chat with everyone in the family. The bottom line to my fireside chat was that I wanted/needed to be able to work more.

Checked Myself

I had to take a quick look in the mirror to see if it was really me telling my family to allow me to work more. For all the years I commuted to work and worked the 9-5 routine, I always tried to figure out how I could work fewer hours. You know, an additional vacation day here, a doctor's appointment there. Now, here I am asking my family to pitch in so I can work more.

The Joy and the Necessity

Working from home is a joy and necessity. My request to be allowed to work is a win-win situation. I get to do what I love to do and I get to earn money from it (actually, don't tell my family, but it's my way of getting a bit of peace of mind).

My Guilt Created Monsters

Actually, I created my own situation. My working from home changed the family dynamics. Years of self-inflicted guilt for working out of the house caused me to be "Super Woman" when I started working from home. You know, the need to have the house clean, the meals prepared, dishes washed, clothes washed and folded, etc., etc. I soon realized that I wasn't Super Woman material. As the writing demands increased, it seemed that the family demands also increased.



The kids and hubby enjoyed having me home and my household responsibilities kept growing. I began to overhear conversations like "Oh, yeah, my Mom will be home, she'll drive us," or, "Felicia's home, why not let her handle it," or, "She works from home, so she can take care of it."

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Time to Put Everybody in Check

Everyone in my household is old enough and mature enough to be able to pitch in with the household chores. My children are pre-teen and teen aged and my hubby, well; he's old enough to have kids that are pre-teen and teen aged. Therefore, everyone in the household can and must help out to allow Super Woman to continue to do a super job at being a wife, mother and freelance writer.



Guilt Free Request

My request to my family is a guilt free request. There's no anger or resentment. The fact of the matter is I'm a wife, mom and freelance writer. If the folks in my family know what's good for them, they'll allow me to be all three.

(I'm sure I'm not the only one who has had to give their family a similar fireside chat).

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FREELANCE WRITING, IT'S ALL ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM

September 3, 2008

As a freelance writing professional you want to make sure that the product you release to any client (large or small) is up to your standards of quality. No matter what the cost it's worth it to deliver a professional product.

If you accepted a writing assignment only to later realize you're spending more time than the assignment is worth, your choices are 1) take the loss and deliver the professional product or 2) speak to the client to see if you can negotiate an increase in price and deliver a professional product whether the client agrees to the increase or not. In my book, there's no third option.

One shoddy piece of work can follow you through your freelance writing career. We now live in the Internet age where things follow you for the rest of your life and longer (I'm sure Michael Richards wishes he could burn that unflattering YouTube display).

Don't burn your bridges. If you're not proud of what you're about to release, don't release it. You don't want it to come back to bite you in the rear later.

One small financial loss in your freelance writing career now is a great learning experience for how to negotiate your rate for future assignments. Learn from your mistake and keep on writing.



MOTIVATION FOR BLOGGERS

KEYWORDS, CONTENT AND PATIENCE – QUALITIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL BLOG

April 23, 2008

Having a successful blog does not happen overnight. It takes proper keywords, quality content and a lot of patience before you begin to see the fruits of your labor. If you're looking to make money from your blog, you'll need more than just passion. Successful bloggers will tell you that there are a few rules to learn and one very important quality to have.



Rule Number One: Keywords

Keywords determine how your users will find your blog. When writing a post, keep those keywords in mind. Before you publish your post, ask yourself how will a reader find this particular post? Think of words that one might type into a search engine in order to find your blog. Those search terms should be sprinkled throughout your blog entry.

Make sure your keywords appear naturally in your blog posts. Readers should not be able to tell which keywords your posts are targeting. If the reader can determine your targeted keywords, that means that you're probably using them too frequently or they are occurring unnaturally in your post.

Keywords should be obvious to the search engines only.

Rule Number Two: Quality Content

Your content will determine whether or not a reader will come back to your blog. If you write quality posts, readers tend to come back. However, if your content is lacking you will never see them again. Keeping that in mind, do your best to write a quality post and then insert keywords afterwards.

Some more experienced bloggers are able to write posts right off-the-cuff with keywords inconspicuously sprinkled throughout their entry. Not all people are so gifted. If you're not one of the gifted ones, write from your heart so



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that your passion shines through in your blog entry, then go back and sprinkle your keywords so that they flow naturally within your post.

Quality Number One: Patience

Think about your blog as if you're raising a child. It takes much care, nurturing and patience to have a successful blog. Just like a child, it may take a year before your blog is really able to take off running, but if you're passionate about what you're doing, it's worth it. Just stick with it.

AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL BLOG

July 24, 2008

Since making the decision to become a successful blogger, I've been checking out other successful bloggers. By successful, I mean they blog full time and their blogs provide the financial means for them to do it.

A few characteristics of successful bloggers



In each of the articles I've come across the two things I have in common with all of the bloggers is that I'm a human being and that I blog. That's pretty much where the similarities end. The top successful bloggers all seem to be young and the majority of them are male. Upon further reading, most of them started their blogging empire before family, meaning that they didn't have the daily responsibility of children.

After reading the above statistics I could take one of two paths. I can throw my hands up in the air and say, "I'll never become successful." Or, I can say, "Congrats to them, but now its time for me to grab my piece of the blogging pie."

Guess which direction I'm going...

Tips on how to create a successful blog

There are tons of "How to" articles on the internet on how to become a successful blogger. Here are a few:

- [How to Write a Successful Blog](#)
- [7 Tips to Successful Blogging](#)
- [5 Steps for a Successful Blog Post](#)
- [How to Make a Successful Blog](#)

- There's even a book written by Prologger's founder Darren Rowse called [31 Days to Build a Better Blog](#)

I could go on and on and list a full page worth of blogging tips, but I wont. Check out a few of them. Some have more tips than others, but they all pretty much recommend the same thing, unique content, regular posting, SEO, backlinks, etc., etc...

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The one missing ingredient

If you will notice, all of the How To's are missing one ingredient. They all seem to be missing Felicia Williams (insert your name here instead of mine). You see where I'm going?

You can follow all of the steps on how to have a successful blog but still fall flat on your face if you don't add the missing ingredient of your own personality, your own flair, your own authenticity into the blog. It's like learning a new dance step. You can learn the new steps, count them off in your mind so that you won't miss a single beat, but if you don't add your own personality to the dance, you will look like a stiff body counting off steps without really dancing.

The same goes with blogging. You can have the greatest information in the world but if you write it in a fashion that would make the Encyclopedia Britannica seem like a romance novel, you will lose your readers. Bring what makes you you to your blog. Let your personality shine through.



If humor is your bag, use it. If you're known to be sarcastic, throw a little into your blog. If you're a pompous know it all (and people like you), share it with your readers. That's what will make the difference between someone reading your blog and someone reading a different blog a few clicks down the street.

In Moderation

Having said that, don't create a diatribe all about you. Remember, your readers come to your site to gain information and to be able to apply it to their own lives. Don't turn them off. Your blog should be a good blend between information and personality.

To wrap it up

The one thing that I have that the most successful bloggers don't have is me. I have to bring my life's experiences, my age, and my authenticity to my blog and I suggest you do the same with your blog.

One last word of advice: Not everybody will like you, so don't try to please everyone.

Here's an interesting book put out by the extremely successful blogger, Darren Rowse over at ProBlogger: [31 Days to Build a Better Blog](#)

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR BLOG TO BE FAMOUS FOR?

August 5, 2008

Do you ever stop to think about your blog's legacy? As silly as it may sound, think about it for a minute. More than just a great way to make money, why do you blog?

The other day I was flipping through the channels (yes, when you work from home sometimes you catch a few more TV shows than you'd like to admit to), I saw Maria Shriver on Oprah. I happened to flip at the time when Maria Shriver asked the question, "What do you want to be famous for?"

A little soul searching

Maria Shriver's question coupled with the very recent and unfortunate passing of a loved one brought the whole legacy and fame issue to the forefront of my mind. I won't bore you with my personal epiphanies and revelations, but I do want to pose the question to you, on a much less personal note. What do you want your blog to be famous for?

Did you create a blog just for the sake of making money or did you create it because you are passionate about your topic? Did you create your blog to help others or to right a social wrong?

Why I created this blog

Personally, my reason for starting this blog is the realization of a dream that began a little over 17 years ago. Way back then, in the stone ages, before the internet was so commonplace, I wanted to find a way to make money from in a way that would enable me to stay home with my children.

I was able to make a little extra money from home using my typing skills, but not enough to replace the income I was making from my full-time job. My dream way back then was to come up with some type of business whereby parents could earn money from home and not have to worry about putting their children in childcare.

Not being the salesperson type, Tupperware, Avon and all of the "Home Party" type businesses just were not for me. I tried several projects, but they just didn't seem to work out as I had hoped. Now, several years later, I get a chance to share information and lessons I've learned along the way to help other parents become successful in their quest to work from home.

No other option

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Now that I've rendered myself unemployable, my money making source of choice is through self-employment, of which the Internet plays a major role.

Back to the original question...What do I want this blog to be famous for? I'd like it to be known as a down to earth blog that shoots from the hip to provide information, insight and encouragement for anyone looking for ways to earn money from home.

Only time will tell if I was successful in achieving that legacy.

WHEN BLOGGING GETS TOUGH, PRESS ON

August 8, 2008

It's no secret that a parent working from home has an additional challenge during the summer months. Keeping up with the regular writing, editing and posting routine is a lot easier when the children are in school. Unfortunately, they do get a rather extensive summer break and your blogging is affected by it.

There are times when I wonder if I have what it takes to maintain a blog during the summer months. Between parties, vacation, chauffeuring the children to their activities, sleepovers, etc., it becomes a little more difficult to maintain and stick to a blogging schedule. I wonder if I have what it takes to press on through the rough times.

Self Discipline

I do my best to blog six days a week and not miss a day because once I miss a day it's easier for me to make an excuse to miss a second day, then a third. The trick is to press on. Anything worth having is worth working for. Being able to be around the children in the summertime is great. It beats completing a vacation requisition sheet and handing it to my boss hoping that my co-workers with more seniority don't want to take the exact same days off.

Find Your Pick Me Up

When things really start to get to me and I feel overwhelmed and am about to make an excuse not to blog, I think of one of my favorite Bible verses Galatians 6:9 *"And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."* Galatians 6:9 has given me the **kick in the butt** that I needed on several occasions. Whenever I think that the kids' summer schedule and my blogging schedule is too much for me to handle, I think about "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." The hard work I put in now, will reward my family and me in the future. Therefore, I press on.

Remember Your Vision

I say this only to encourage other blogger parents and folks with many obligations and responsibilities who want to earn money through blogging. Anything worth having is worth pressing on for. Sometimes I mentally fast forward a year or two from now when my Google AdSense account is growing by leaps and bounds, my affiliate programs are electronically depositing money into my PayPal account and my blog's traffic has surpassed my greatest imagination. At that



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time, I'll look back and be thankful that I pressed on.

MAKE BLOGGING EASIER – BLOG YOUR LIFE

Every so often, I get the question from would-be bloggers “What Should I Blog About?” My response, depending on whether or not I'm in an inquisitive mode or not is usually either “Blog what you're passionate about,” or I ask, “What do you like to do?”

Some time ago, I decided I wanted to write my life. No, not in the sense of a biography, but in a fashion where I could write about my daily routine in one way or another and earn money from it. Sounds a little narcissistic, but it's not.

Blog about what you do

All you have to do is look at what you like and what you do and you'll find a host of writing material. For instance, I love eating out so I decided to write a review for each restaurant I dined at and placed the review on one of my websites.

I monetized the reviews with a few ads and generated a couple of bucks. Not to mention that I keep my receipts and use them as a tax write off since writing reviews is one of the ways in which I earn income.

The other day I had to take my car to the shop. I wrote a review on the repair shop, monetized it and earned a few shekels. The interesting thing about the reviews is that for some reason they generated a bit of traffic.

Share what you do

I pretty much do the same thing here on No Job for Mom. I blog about my freelance writing money making experiences (good and bad). When I'm excited about a new discovery, whether it's a freelance opportunity, a new tool or a neat website, I blog about it and share it with my readers. Similarly, if I find something that my readers should stay away from, I share that too.

Keep it simple

It may sound rather simple, but with my advancing years, I tend not to remember a whole lot of complicated formulas. If I write about what I do, it's a lot easier for me to come up with blogging material. The only pitfall about writing about my life is staying focused. I've got to remain true to the blog's subject matter. After all, who wants to hear about how Fido got a little nervous on his last long road trip and couldn't wait until



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we pulled the car over and...

REMOVE SELF-LIMITING BLOGGING EXPECTATIONS

August 18, 2008

The mere fact that I have a blog about working from home doesn't make me an expert on the subject. There are some things I know, and a whole lot that I don't know.



I've found that I started to impose an unrealistic level of expectation. I thought that I had to be an "expert" in certain fields in order to have a noteworthy blog. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Shoot from the hip

I find that when I attempt to target a certain audience of a certain experience level, I fall flat on my face. I've learned that there's nothing too basic or complicated to blog about when it comes to working from home, because there are work at homers (and wanna be work at homers) at all different levels and stages.

I've learned from my readers, and I hope they've learned from me. If I tried to overestimate my level of experience, my readers would see right through me. Similarly, I can't pretend that I know less than I know to talk down to my readers either.

The self-imposed, self-limiting, pre-set level of expectation created a type of writers block. Once I removed the restrictions, I became authentic and I found it so much easier to blog.

Why did I write this post?

Honestly, I wrote it for two reasons. The first is that it's Monday and I had quite a few writing deadlines due today and I didn't have time to finish researching what I really wanted to blog about. The second reason is to help struggling bloggers. If you're struggling, maybe you've placed a few unrealistic expectations upon yourself that could be choking your creativity.

No Job for Mom's 100th Blog Post – 10 Things I've Learned

August 21, 2008

Knowing that my 100th blog post was coming up soon I started to think, "What is an appropriate post for my 100th entry?" I wanted to make a big splash. Something I could remember for years to come.

Drawing a mental blank, I decided to write about 10 things I learned from my first 100 blog posts. Ready? Here they are:



1. **You can never get rid of spammers.** Even though the WordPress plugin Akismet is installed on this blog, I still get a few errant entries that must be deleted.
2. **You won't always agree with your readers comments, but approve them anyway.** My initial reaction was to hit the 'delete' button to send them into the cyber trash can, but I thought better of it. Instead, I welcome varying opinions. I say that with the caveat that if the comments are rude, disrespectful, ranting and just plain mean, they get deleted.
3. **Google AdSense doesn't always work well for blogs.** My regular readers might remember my post about converting No Job for Mom from a website to a blog. After I converted it I noticed my AdSense income from this blog all but stopped. Initially I was shocked, but I realize it's all good. There's a larger plan in the works.
4. **Blogging is a commitment (no duh).** I've committed to adding 6 posts a week. I take Sunday off to honor God, spend time with my family and replenish myself.
5. **You meet nice people blogging.** Although my blog is new, I've met quite a few nice people here. The relationships are still young (like the blog), but I fully expect them to grow.
6. **My family doesn't read my blog.** They know I spend a lot of time on the computer writing, but they only read a small fraction of what I write. No hard feelings.
7. **I'd be lost without my digital voice recorder.** In my advancing years, my ideas play a game of hide and seek (they hide well and I'm always seeking to retrieve them). With my digital voice recorder, I can always find and capture them. I strongly recommend a digital voice recorder for anyone serious about writing.

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8. **Don't get intimidated.** When I first started this blog I was easily intimidated because of the tons of good blogs out there on similar topics. I became paralyzed by fear and feelings of inadequacy. Other blogs had a large readership, they had a better blog design, they were around longer, they had newsletters and were earning tons of money. I focused on their success to my detriment. Now I look at those blogs, appreciate them and learn from them. They are a resource and not a competitor. It's all about how you look at it.
9. **Build a Blog Bank.** Because stuff happens, I found there were times when I couldn't blog about the topic I intended to. Therefore, I would reach into my 'blog bank' and pull out one of my almost complete blog post, complete it and then post it. It saves time and allows for continuity. Setting up pre-written entries to be published at a scheduled time works even better. I haven't evolved to that level quite yet.
10. **Be myself.** Although this is the last item, it is by no means the least important. I've found the one thing that follows me everywhere I go is me and my personality. So, who else can I be but myself, and my blog is a reflection of that.

Blogging Goals for the Next 100 Posts?

Get 5% better. Sounds like a rather tame goal, but if I can complete 100 posts in 95% of the time it took me to accomplish the first 100 posts. That's an improvement. If each month I increase my readership and my income by 5%, I'm headed in the right direction. If I get 5% more backlinks each month, that's a plus.

As with the game of basketball, a team wins the game 1, 2 and 3 points at a time. There's no 20-point shot in basketball. I'm willing to plod along increasing my success 5% at a time. I'm a patient woman (most of the time).

There are a few more things I learned from my first 100 posts, but judging by the snoring emanating from my computer, I'll stop here.

TIME OF REFLECTION

Wow, the New Year is right around the corner. This is the time where I look back at my 2008 goals to see how close or far I've come to achieving them. I also begin to chart my goals and come up with my plans for 2009.

On the freelance writing front it has been a profitable year. It's easy to make a profit freelance writing online because the startup costs are either low or non-existent. Therefore, anything I earn is profit.

Better than Last Year

My earnings have increased over 200% from last year. A little over two thirds of that was residual income while one third was active income. No matter which way you look at it, 2008 was a successful year for me.

Where Do I Want to Be?

While the numbers are definitely trending in the right direction, my financial goals are far from being met. Most of you know that when I started full-time freelance writing I left a part time job because I believed I could earn more writing than the part time job was paying. I ended up doubling my part time job salary through writing (Don't get too impressed, I wasn't making very much working part-time in a bank).

My goal is to be able to give my husband options. He laughs when I say this, but he gets up daily and goes to work. I'd like my freelance writing income to be able to give him the option of deciding whether or not he wants to keep his job, or find something more rewarding to do with his time (as long as he stays out of the kitchen when I'm cooking).

Keep on Truckin'

I've got a while to go before we reach that day, but as long as I keep the carrot dangling in front of me, I'm going to keep on truckin' until I reach it. After all, I doubled my part time job salary in the period of a year, didn't I?



Take Time to Set Goals

Between now and the New Year is a great time to set goals. The more time you take in planning your goals, the less double work you'll have to do. I learned the hard way that it's better to take a little extra time in the planning phase to make the implementation easier and run more efficiently.

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I believe we all have a bright writing future ahead of us. Lets set the goals, make the plans and reach for the carrot!

SOMETIMES YA HAVE TO LIGHTEN UP

October 10, 2008

I've been working real hard lately trying to build up my article count on the various sites I write for. My inspiration is three-fold.

1. The current state of the economy.
2. Writers like Maria O'Brien who are earning an ever growing residual income through eHow and
3. My son's uncanny ability to create an unexpected large financial need every time we think we're getting a little ahead.

My dogged determination and focus to build my foundation of articles pulled me away from my daily blogging here. You know how it goes; sometimes you've got to take from Peter in order to pay Paul. Well, today I'm doing my part to give a little back to Peter.

Honestly speaking, I think I'm taking myself a little too seriously. I've set lofty goals and intend to accomplish them, but I do have to take a little time to lighten up. I need a little smell the roses time. To that end, I want to share a little water cooler humor with you. After all, it is Friday.

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A new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. Therefore, he took out a business card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message, "Genesis 3:10."

Reaching for his Bible to check out the citation, he broke up in gales of laughter. Revelation 3:20 begins "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Genesis 3:10 reads, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked."

"A cheerful heart is good medicine" (Prov. 17:22)

I guess we all need to lighten up every once in a while.

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Hope you enjoyed the ebook!

THE END

If you enjoyed this book, please share it with someone.