

Top Ten Time Thieves that Attack Writers

By Jeanette Levellie,

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When someone stole our credit card information, we cancelled the card. But when time thieves break into my writing schedule and steal precious time, I shrug and say, “I’ll do that tomorrow.” Too many of these robberies lead to unfinished projects and blocked goals.

Your time stealers may vary, depending on your personality. But I imagine you can relate to at least some of these productivity robbers:

1. **Shallow chitchat.** Long conversations—whether in person, on the phone, or online—about meaningless topics rob my creative energies.
2. **Checking emails more twice a day.** Yes, I’m eager to see if that editor bought my article or offered me a book contract, but I’m not THAT important that I can’t wait a few hours to find out.
3. **Unrestrained time on social networking sites.** Because I’m a people person, Facebook and Pinterest can purloin huge chunks of my time. Before I know it, ten minutes has turned to thirty. Unless I’m using these sites to market my book or brand, I end up wasting time.
4. **Answering the phone during writing time.** If I don’t monitor calls, I lose my momentum, and then it takes awhile to get back into the muse.
5. **Arguing, fussing, and fighting.** Of course, we need to discuss why he thinks I shouldn’t quit my day job yet and why I think I should’ve quit yesterday. But when discussions lead to strife, it may take me hours to recover my composure enough to write a decent sentence.
6. **Distractions.** I walk into the kitchen to get a drink of water. I see cat bowls on the floor and pause to put them in the sink. I realize an eggshell left from breakfast needs to go down the disposal. While it’s grinding I look out the window and notice the glider, which needs to be put away before cold weather comes. I pop outside, etc, etc,

etc. Too many of these impulse activities, and I've lost a huge chunk of productive time.

7. **Taking care of clutter and possessions.** The more I have, the more maintenance my stuff requires. If I de-junk and de-clutter on a regular basis, I think clearer and create more.
8. **Saying “yes” when I should say “no”** to tasks and activities the Lord never called me to do. Again, my people-pleasing style comes into play here. I think I'll be making others happy if I say “yes.” I'm really spreading myself too thin, which leads to mediocre work.
9. **Not delegating.** If I try to do everything myself, I don't give others the opportunity to help. I also become crabby from overwork and stress, and my muse languishes.
10. **Negative emotions.** I waste more time than I care to admit on anger, frustration, and despair. When I yield to these thieves, they steal my joy and squelch my ideas. Thankfully, I'm learning to resist them in Jesus' name, and kick them out of my brain and my day!

Can you relate to any of the above time thieves? Do you have others not listed here that you wrestle with? Even if you're not a writer, what solutions have you discovered that help you stay on task and focused?

You can learn more about Jeanette Levellie here:

<http://christianauthorsnetwork.com/jeanette-levellie/>