



Ready to Write that Book, But Can't Get Started?

Why Your Top Ten Reasons for Being Stuck Are all Wrong

By Gail Richards, Founder of AuthorSmart.com

Excuse #1: I don't have a place to write.

Really? No desk? No chair? No coffee shop nearby?

Or could it be that not finding "the spot" is an easy way to put off or avoid all together working on your book? You don't need a PhD in psychology to see where this is going.

Publishing a book is a big deal. It can be exhilarating and overwhelming at the same time---especially if you aren't familiar with the process. It's no wonder you're a bit hesitant to dive in.

Stop waiting to find the perfect place to write. Not going to happen. Now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's talk about how to identify where you *can* write.

A writing space should provide you with: minimum potential for interruption, comfortable place to sit, writing surface and adequate lighting. Beyond that, it's important that you are inspired in some way by the environs. Could be the library, a park bench, a coffee shop or a hidden corner of your basement.

Once you've found that, start working. You can enhance the experience of the space over with special trinkets, writing tools etc. You can even wear your bunny slippers. Whatever makes the time and space draw you in.

Excuse #2: I don't feel inspired.

You've been watching way too many movies. In the beginning, it's not about inspiration. It's about permission and persuasion—persuading yourself to show up at a designated spot at a designated time and do what you can.

In the beginning the process of creating your book is more about pushing. You will need to push yourself to keep at it. Some days that will be a gentle nudge, others a full force shove. Then, as the book moves from being random pieces of material to more of a cohesive whole, you'll be pulled to work on it. Once the book compels you to work on it, you won't be able to imagine ever having been stuck.

Excuse #3: Everyone tells me I won't get published anyway

Prone to exaggeration are you? Everyone? Now, for the remaining people in your sphere of influence who actually have the nerve to say that to your face...

- What makes them the experts?
- Did they try and fail to publish?
- What qualifies them to be your yardstick?

Excuse #4: I don't have time.

Like mom used to say, where there's a will, there's a way.

Renowned turn of the century author Kate Chopin wrote very rapidly and without much revision. She usually worked in her home surrounded by her six children.

Whatever obstacles to time management you're facing, Kate's got you beat. Deal with it.

Excuse #5: I don't have anything new to say.

It's not what you say, it's how you say it. Visit a bookstore and spend some time looking at sections of books on one of your favorite subjects. Take note of the different approaches authors have taken. Then, look on the shelf where *your* book would be and do the same thing.

Excuse #6: I'm afraid I will say everything in a book and then people won't need me to provide a service, or my competitors will take all my ideas.

Either you are comfortable putting your ideas out into the world, or not. That's something you need to decide. However, at the risk of oversimplifying, may I say: paranoia just never ends well.

Theft of proprietary ideas is another thing. However, if someone uses or adapts your great ideas, well, you've just raised the bar for everyone. Your competition may or may not execute those ideas as well as you do. They may do it better and *raise the bar for you*. That's life. Get over it.

As far as making yourself obsolete? Not likely. A book can layout the basics, it can't connect the dots. Most of your clients love you and continue to pay you because you help them connect the dots.

Excuse #7: I'm too scared to start.

What's the worst thing that could happen if you start? In my world view, that would be something on the order of causing the earth to fly off its axis of

rotation. So, unless something of that caliber is likely to be set in motion by putting your toe in the water, go for it.

Excuse #8: I have so many ideas and I don't know which one is the best. I don't want to start work on any of them until I do.

There's a distinct difference between creating your book and writing your manuscript. The creative endeavor doesn't have limitations and how much you can explore. Catalog all of your ideas, then create outlines and concept maps. You'll begin to see which ideas are most viable and compelling to you. You're going to spend a lot of time on this material; it helps if there's chemistry between the two of you.

Excuse #9: I don't know if I have enough to say to make a whole book.

Maybe you really don't have enough material for a book. Maybe what you've got is an essay, an article, or a class. Until you start writing the manuscript it's all intellectual capital there for you to shape into the appropriate form and structure.

And once that idea is out of your head, who knows what will take its place?

Excuse #10: I want to write a book but my husband / wife / mother / father / kids / sister / brother / friends / co-workers says it's a waste of time.

Of course they think it's a waste of your time; it's time that won't be spent with them; time that won't be spent doing things they value; and time that won't be spent on something they even have a context for. Jealous. Jealous. Jealous.

Take it as a (backward) complement, not a discouragement, thank them for their input and move on.