

Affirmations, Confirmations, and Suggestions:

A Year of Tips from the WSIP Online Writing Room (2024)

In no particular order

- ❖ Friend-of-WSIP, James Sheldon, says: Sometimes the message in your head can feel so clear, but it's a struggle to get it onto the page. You can work with a coach, tutor, or instructor, but also, ***trust in the value of your message***--this will help sustain you through the process and the message will come!
- ❖ It can feel fresh to start a new year and a new semester but closing the door between the old and new might not be conducive to building on your progress. So, in this new beginning, ***consider what has been going well and how to build on that, in addition to or instead of the usual new year's resolutions***. Happy writing!
- ❖ One student's first-year philosophy professor told them, "Write like your audience is angry and drunk"! This reminded students to ***be clear, concise, and respectful*** in the ways they presented their ideas and arguments. Could this advice work in your discipline too? Might it lead to tone policing?
- ❖ How do you feel when you are writing? One reason we sometimes avoid writing is that it brings up hard feelings: fear of failure, imposter syndrome, overwhelm at how much there is to do. ***Think about how you would like to feel while you write***. Confident? Energized? Focused? Smart? Consider setting an intention before you sit down to write, giving yourself permission to feel how you want to feel while you write. ***Your writing session is for you***.
- ❖ In today's mindfulness exercise, we reminded ourselves that ***it's okay to seek out support in our writing, from our mentors, colleagues, or writing centers***. We can also think about what kind of support we can offer ourselves. Maybe put writing time on your calendar and refuse other meetings then, take care of your body, and offer yourself compassion when you hit snags. ***How else do you support yourself in your writing?***
- ❖ Today's tip from the Online Writing Room comes from a researcher and grant writing specialist, Sarah Dobson: DO LESS. In moments of overwhelm, we often try to be more productive--keep doing more and more in less time. Instead, do less. It sounds impossible at first, but really consider, even in the smallest daily tasks, doing less, and consider saying no to some opportunities and challenges. ***It's okay to prioritize and focus on what is most important to you right now, including your writing***. What could you say no to today, big or small?

- ❖ One aspect of self-compassion (Neff, 2003) is to recognize your struggles, including your writing struggles, as part of a shared human experience. ***Give yourself the same patience and understanding you would offer to a friend, and don't hesitate to seek support from others in your writing community.***
- ❖ Are you a super planner-- with lists, files, maybe even an Excel sheet keeping you on track? Or are you a "write by the seat of your pants" kind of writer? Both are okay!! ***Find a system that WORKS for you, that keeps you as organized as you need to be, comfortably and easily.*** Equally, be flexible and willing to experiment with different planning strategies. Remember that your goal is to make your writing process manageable for you!
- ❖ Some fundamental writing advice is still true: ***your draft doesn't have to be perfect, or even "good".*** Keep your momentum in the second half of the semester by drafting freely and editing after!
- ❖ Read "in conversation" with other authors. Many of us struggle to remember ideas or decide which ideas to include in our writing. ***Imagine yourself in conversation with authors and take notes to fill in "your half of the dialogue" as you read. If the author were there with you, you might ask how their ideas connect to your research interest, or why they chose this methodology or framework over another.*** Your notes will help you engage while you read and have a quick reference to review later.
- ❖ Friend of WSIP Simone Williams shared a Jamaican proverb: ***one one cocoa full basket.*** It's a reminder of incremental work and patience--one step at a time, one small piece at a time can lead you to your desired result. Your writing gets done this way too--one word at a time, one sentence at a time, one reference check at a time. ***Progress is progress and progress takes time.***
- ❖ Let it go. ***Write, revise, proofread, and then submit***--let reviewers do their job, since you have already done yours.
- ❖ Use all the linguistic resources you have available--***brainstorm and draft in any combo of languages (or levels of formality) and gradually modify to arrive at the language and style you're aiming for.***
- ❖ Feeling frustrated when your writing isn't coming together as you planned? You might be looking for techniques to minimize this frustration and optimize your process. It's always good to have a "toolkit" to

draw from, but also, frustration and feeling stuck sometimes is normal. ***Writing is a creative and cognitively demanding process, and sometimes it's hard -- it doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong.***

- ❖ You can ***try gamifying your writing with sites like 4thewords or Any Good Thing Writing Challenge***, or you can make your own game of it with writing buddies, checking in regularly to see how your writing is going!
- ❖ Not sure which part of your document an idea belongs in? That's okay! You can ***draft some ideas and organize them later if you want to keep momentum.***
- ❖ Experiment with listening to video game soundtracks while writing. ***Music balances novelty and repetition and can help you focus.*** Current favorites in Karen's household include Genshin Impact, Reverse 1999, and good old-fashioned Wii.
- ❖ Are reviewers sending you in all directions on your revisions? You don't have to make all the changes suggested! ***Consider all feedback but prioritize the revisions to create or maintain cohesiveness of your argument.*** In your letter to the editor, use clear and respectful language to address the logical reasons you did not follow certain reviewer suggestions.
- ❖ ***Writing can be hard, but you don't have to do it alone.*** Share your struggles--other writers understand! And come see us at WSIP for the next step after "omg".
- ❖ ***A little planning before you write can simplify your process.*** Put final due dates for the semester in your calendar and work backwards to plan smaller milestones that will lead you to a finished product.
- ❖ ***Author Stacy Sivinski recommends finding a cozy spot to write, just making the space feel special, so you enjoy being where you write.*** Where do you like to write?
- ❖ It's good to think of your audience, but your needs as a writer are important too. ***Seeking balance allows you to maintain your voice as an author while you convey your message.***
- ❖ Sometimes we have the idea that if we can't express an idea clearly and eloquently, we might need new ideas. However, there is also great value in thoughts that we're unable to articulate with words. Allow yourself both to sit with those and to express them imperfectly. ***There is no perfect product, but there is beauty and utility in sharing ideas.***



- ❖ Take a break to engage gratitude and creativity: grab your markers and make someone a thank you card, or just journal for yourself with all the fun colors. ***What's something about your writing practice that you're grateful for?***
- ❖ Writers and academics often think they should always be working, but ***it's important to take time away from your writing and experience life too.*** Honor your traditions, both fun and fundamental, and return to your writing a little bit more yourself each time.
- ❖ Write like the wind! ***Leave yourself short comments to remember ideas you aren't ready to fully flesh out yet and keep going on with your draft!***
- ❖ With holiday time off approaching, make a plan now about whether you will try to write or not. ***Deliberate planning can help you make the most of your time either writing or resting.***
- ❖ Non-evaluative feedback helps writers increase audience awareness and agency. ***Try telling your peers what you understand and ask questions to clarify their intended message when giving feedback on their writing -- no judgment necessary!***
- ❖ ***It's great to get advice on your writing and writing process, but it's also okay to ask for what you need when you know what that is, like more time to process feedback, re-reading a source, or drafting instead of outlining to develop ideas.***