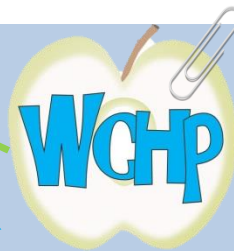


The Twelve Traits of the SUCCESSFUL WRITER

TIP SHEET



1. PLANNING AND VISION

[Successful writers are] *"Writers who have a vision beyond themselves and their success"* - **Jody Hedlund**.



Plan and Visualise – your writing life, not just a book. Successful writers know how to strategise, set long-term and short-term goals and targets, and stick to these to deliver something. Dream big, but make tangible plans.



JK Rowling planned the Harry Potter series for 5 years worldbuilding and planning before she picked up a pen to write the first.

2. PRODUCTIVITY SKILLS

Productivity Skills – the successful writer will possess, or learn to use the following –



- **organisational skills** for both the external surroundings of the writing life, and to organise the writing project and their own mind
- **time management skills** – uses time effectively both outside and inside the writing time, sets and meets deadlines, schedules and creates time for writing.



3. WRITE EVERYDAY (OR CONSISTENTLY AND REGULARLY)

Write Every Day – or schedule writing into a consistent and professional routine.



Jodi Picoult writes through school days because she has a stay-at-home husband who supports those pick-up duties, allowing her to write longer.

4. WORK HARD

Commercial bestsellers are full of tales of having to work their butts off with writing, deadlines, promotion commitments.

Janet Evanovich gets up to write at 5am every morning so she can get a full writing day in before answering emails and business commitments.



5. COMMITMENT TO GROWTH & IMPROVEMENT

"But refined talent—talent that has been honed by hard work and study—is even better. Talent is first on our wish list for the perfect writer/client." Quote from [Writer's Relief Staff](#) (an author's submission service)

Successful writers continue to cultivate their passion and love of writing, continue to learn.

- **Kaizen for life** – continuous small improvements – seek out learning opportunities and apply the learning.
- Form a voracious reading habit, and **read like a writer**.

6. PERSISTENCE WITH FASCINATION

"It is said that persistence outstrips all other virtues. I have a card propped up on my desk that says, 'Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go'. Almost every successful author I have studied has said that their success is due, at least in some part, to pure persistence and determination." [Archetype Writing](#)

Persistence and patience, those two things must be some of the most commonly espoused virtues when famous authors are asked for the secret of their success.

But the reality of the situation is that persistence is one thing, but if the idea has been flogged to death, or you have written the fiftieth-thousandth vampire novel, then eventually you'll get the message and possibly give up, unless there is something else driving your writing – fascination, or a pure need to write.

"Persistence is important, but it's not enough on its own. You can persist at a thing for twenty years and not get anywhere if what you're actually doing amounts to the same thing in the same way over and over. Behind persistence is, I think, the engine that drives the whole process: a fascination with story, with narrative, with the process itself, and not just the vision of the book in the front window with your name in huge letters on the cover." [Storytellers Unplugged](#)



<http://hunterswritings.wordpress.com>
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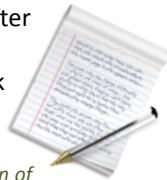


7. SELF-CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE & SELF-GRATIFICATION

"Knowledge brings confidence, every single time. The more skills you have, the less you stress." ~ James Chartrand from Men with Pens, at [Write To Done](#).

Having a certainty in yourself allows you to pull up after disappointments (like rejection). The ability to self-gratify is a long-term strategy – turn away from quick gratification and look for long-term success.

"Most other creative types get to enjoy the immediate gratification of their patrons' response and appreciation. Dancers, musicians, actors, even visual artists can perform their craft and reap the rewards fairly quickly. Writers must plod along, hammering ideas into words with no supportive fans standing behind them shouting, 'Well done, bravo!' As a writer, you must create your own motive and reward for doing the work. When inspiration fails you, when you are tired or bored with writing, what is your raison d'être? What keeps you going?" ~ From : **'The Nearly Ultimate Guide to Better Writing'**, available at [Write to Done](#).



8. PROFESSIONALISM

Successful writers maintain a professional image: keeping to deadlines, following up on promises, treating editors, readers and fellow writers with respect.



9. WORK INDEPENDANTLY & IN SOLITARY

Work Independently and in Solitary – successful writers don't need constant interaction. They understand that the creative process needs alone-time to prosper, and they can self-manage themselves.

- Whether an introvert who enjoys the solitary approach, or an extrovert who requires crowds and people for energy, the successful writer will recognise their personality needs and provide a writing environment that allows the best of alone-time without distractions.



10. ENTREPRENEURIAL & BUSINESS SKILLS

Even writers seeking traditional publishing nowadays are required to have author platforms, a social media presence, a growing readership, and some skills and willingness in promoting their work.

11. WORK WITH WHAT WORKS, AND CHANGE WHAT DOES NOT

A key to success is the ability to form core habits around the techniques and methods of writing which work for you – after you've warped them to meet your own creative process.

- There are no writing rules.
- Just Write.

But we live in a changing world also. The publishing industry is changing; opportunities are tightening, others opening. The successful writer understands and keeps informed of these changes, and accepts and becomes the change within their lives, following a transformational attitude throughout life.

According to **Bob Mayer**, from *'Write it Forward'* there are three steps of change –

1. You have a moment of enlightenment
2. You make a decision to take a different course of action from what you have been doing
3. Commitment to your decision leads to **sustained action**, which brings about permanent change

12. FOCUS ON THE NOW, BUT THEN LET GO

The key to writing and life happiness is found in focus and present-mindedness.

Don't allow your mind to wander to the past or future, chunk tasks into actions for the day, and focus on getting these done.

Focus on writing and completing one book at a time – once the article, book, poem or screenplay has been submitted for publication, or is published, the successful writer knows how to **let go**, and move onto the next project



Neil Gaiman's hand advice via [Shared Worlds](#)



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