

Write Night

by Tammy Schubert

September 2008

Writing is a lonely endeavor. Most of us sit in front of a computer for hours at a time lost in the world of our current manuscript, also commonly referred to as work in process (WIP). We need the connection of others who share our interests. Many of us also need a place to disconnect from the distractions of home and other demands made on us. Thus, the concept of Write Night was born.

What is Write Night?

Write Night is a standing appointment you keep with a group of writer friends for the sole purpose of feeding off each other's energy to whip out those pages. During this time, all you do is write. Of course, socializing is acceptable, but put a limit on it. The rule is you come to write—sit down, get out your materials and hit the page. Use the clacking of fingers hitting keyboards as inspiration to push you forward.

It is not a contest of who can write the most, although you could make it into one. For some, that is just too much pressure. This is a group decision that can be made during the first meeting, but do not lose site of the main purpose. The goal is to unleash your creative side and focus on your WIP.

Why Write Night?

Write Night exists because pages just do not get written at home. There is always one more thing that needs attention. Moving into another environment solves this problem. Some great places to go are local restaurants like Atlanta Bread Company, Paneras, Starbucks or similar establishments that allow people to stick around for a few hours. If all else fails, go to the local library.

One of the key pieces to making this night work is to disconnect. Many of the places mentioned offer free Internet service. Think about what you are doing before you connect. Email and surfing the Web are outside the scope of work. You are on a mission—it is all about you and your WIP for the next few hours. Get to work. There are no excuses to not produce during this sacred time.

How many people should be in a group?

The number of people involved in Write Night is up to the group. This is not a forum for critiquing manuscripts, so it does not create extra work for individual writers. Because life happens and everyone may not be able to make each appointment, consider including more than three or four writers. An excessive number of people in the group may prove distracting though. The best way to find out what works for you and the group is to experiment. Maybe start small and build up as you get comfortable with the current size of the group. Some people drop out when they realize Write Night is not in line with their writing style.

Each group of writers decides how to run their group. For those writing full time, consider meeting

more than once a week. The group may even decide to meet during the day. The concept is flexible enough to meet the needs of most writers.

What about scheduling?

We all have busy schedules with deadlines and all kinds of other commitments. An agreed upon standard time should be set up for Write Night. Take yourself and your writing seriously. Treat this time like any other important commitments. Make it a standing appointment.

To help make the group work, one person should take the lead on confirming schedules and so forth. This tends to help everyone get on board and assure them they will not be alone. If, for some reason, you find yourself alone on Write Night, follow through with it anyway. Just having other people around helps keep the focus on the WIP. Do hold each other accountable. When life happens and a person cannot make it that is fine. However, not feeling like writing is no excuse.

Benefits

We are in a society that questions, "What's in it for me?" If the point is not clear, here are several benefits you may experience if you take Write Night seriously. They include:

- A sense of accomplishment
- Social connections
- New pages
- Motivation
- Self-respect

For those who are still a little skeptical, give it a serious try for about four weeks. Evaluate your progress after the time has passed and then decide if it is right for you.

Summary

Published and unpublished writers can benefit from Write Night. It is simply another way to help spark those creative juices and get those new pages written. The time away from home with writer friends provides us with many benefits that help increase page counts. So find some like-minded friends and go write on Write Night.

Tammy Schubert crafts romantic stories about women who dare to take action and the men who love them. She also authors a technical column for writers that bridges the gap between the writing process and key software applications, empowering writers to achieve their goals more efficiently and to manage their businesses more effectively.