

Building Healthy Writing Habits

By Diana Barnum

Building Healthy Writing Habits

Diana Barnum
bdbarnum@copper.net

Moving Ahead Communications <http://movingaheadcommunications.com/class>

*Note: This article may be re-published as long as the attached resource box below is included. A copy of the publication is appreciated at <mailto:db@movingaheadcom.com> - - thanks!

Building Healthy Writing Habits

Do you have good writing habits? Are you meeting or exceeding your own expectations?

Consider this gentleman:

A 19th century British Postal clerk decided to start writing 3,000 words each day so that he could author his very own first novel. He placed his watch on the table and wrote before leaving the house every morning. This new habit paid off, and later Anthony Trollope published not one, but many novels; among them, *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* (1847), *Phineas Finn* and *He Knew He Was Right* (both 1869).

What do you think? Maybe it's time to think about changing or starting some of your own writing habits. If you want more out of your nonfiction plans, here are five tips, the FIVE A'S, to build healthier habits:

1. **ACCOUNT:** Make a written account of any habits you'd like to work on: get more organized, make more telephone calls to potential business clients for writing projects and assignments, quit checking your e-mail 10 times a day. There's no need to be grammatically correct, just write something down so you can see the habit you want to improve in front of you.
2. **ACQUIRE:** Gather information about the habit from several sources: marketing chat rooms on the Internet, library reference books about organization, online newsletters from motivational speakers like Zig Ziglar with improvement tips, etc. Check around for activities & groups in your area & sign up for workshops and speakers. The Small Business Administration also hosts workshops and offers free marketing materials and advice. Sign up. Take notes. Ask questions. Everyone has to start somewhere!
3. **ACTION:** Develop a course of action for working on each habit. Be as specific as possible. For instance, to increase phone calls to potential clients, maybe start with two calls per day. Then increase to three, gradually building up until you get the number you'd like. If you get sidetracked, or let a couple of weeks go by due to busy scheduling, late meetings, or too many commitments, catch up! Work overtime, ask someone to take notes at the next meeting for you, just say "no, maybe next time," but get caught up and keep calling.

4. ASSESS: Log your progress to follow ups and downs. A scientific assessment isn't necessary. Even one line jotted down each day or so on your calendar can let you track good days and bad, days you cheated and days you excelled, etc. Try placing a sticker on each day or some type of art to follow your progress. It's for your own self-improvement, so have fun and express yourself! Did you check your email only twice today? If you missed making some calls or organizing a portfolio one day, did you catch up the next? Why / why not?

5. APPEARANCE: Take time to relax and reflect on this change of habit. How do you appear now? Happier? Healthier? Feedback from friends can be helpful now, too. Are adjustments needed? Perhaps a little more time will be necessary; maybe a little less. If you have an already hectic workload, and three more calls per day on top of organizing your entire home and office space is stressing you and your family out, try cutting back to one or two calls, along with organizing only one room at a time. Maybe a self-help group or class is needed to learn time management skills?

Put these five A's to work. Make modifications in your own plans, then go back to tip number one. Old bad habits that took time to develop will take time to eliminate. But remember, none of us are perfect. Each one of us has something to work on for self-improvement. It's a process!

By:

Diana Barnum is president of Moving Ahead Communications, a company that offers marketing, public relations & freelance writing services. She teaches a 4-week course called, "Marketing and Public Relations Using Computers for Writers" at Word Museum at <http://movingaheadcommunications.com/class> .

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)