

A Writing Space of Your Own

By Beth Mende Conny

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When we talk about creating a writing space, we're really talking about two kinds—a physical space and a mental space. You need both in which to work.

Sure it would be great to have a fantastic office with a great view, but if you can't keep others out of it or get yourself into it, it won't do you much good.

Let's start then with mental space. You lay claim to it through declaration: "I am a writer."

Sounds simple, but it's not, for you have to speak with conviction. If you don't, you won't take yourself seriously Š and neither will others. They'll keep crossing the boundaries you've never set.

To write, you must let others know where you begin and end, and how you need a place to call your own, be it a room, corner or desk. They may not like what they hear, but most will grudgingly acquiesce with time.

Next up, physical space.

As much as you would like, you don't need a room of your own. For example, when I first launched my writing career, I shared my first "office" with a washer and dryer. My second office was a corner of my dining room; my third, a desk in my infant's bedroom. Within each I wrote scores of articles and books, amid dirty laundry, place settings and baby toys.

Today, I have a great office with two windows and a door that locks. I've earned it. But it's only one my work spaces. I also have my favorite tables at Borders and Starbucks, an isolated carrel at the local community college library and a sunny bench at the city park. To each I bring my pens and pads, reference books and, occasionally, my laptop.

My most productive space, however, is my bed. Propped up on pillows, often at 2 a.m., I've written some of the absolute best work of my career.

Sometimes the bedroom is filled with traffic-kids, hubbie, dog. I've trained them all, however, to not interrupt me, to respect the boundaries I've set down. Do they do so all the time? Heavens no. But that's okay. Interruptions are okay Š at least occasionally.

Interruptions, after all, are the crack through which everyday life slips, the very life that allows me to

transform thoughts, experiences and emotions into words. These words also form a space Š for my creativity.

Know then that you need-and can have-any number of places in which to work. Look around, look within, then write. The very act of writing creates its own space.

Beth Mende Conny is the founder and co-president of WriteDirections.com. She has published more than four dozen books and collections, and helps individuals and businesses bring their projects to publication.

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