A Writer's Time: Making the Time to Write

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This book, based on his writing seminars, research into dreams and creativity, and film development, is, as the *New York Times* states, "crammed with the sort of useful advice that it seems to take some people years to learn."

A Writer's Time: Making the Time to Write Details

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Dee Arr says

Near the end of "Write Time," author Kenneth Atchity includes a list of "rules" to help with creativity. These rules include a mixture of writing tips and basic thoughts on successful living. I found it insightful that he included as his final rule (concerning everything he had written in the book) to "Ignore all rules that don't prove useful." He then explains that everything he has offered are suggestions, and that we should take what we find useful and discard the rest, simplify anything that appears too complicated, and to remember that what we have read are merely what has worked for himself and other writers. After reading various books by authors who consider their advice the "be-all-and-end-all," it was refreshing to be told it's okay to ingest Mr. Atchity's book with a grain of salt.

Even though the author shares these parting words, there are more ideas contained within "Write Time" than any person could assimilate within a few weeks, let alone over the course of a year. Serious writers understand that their chosen path is not an instantaneous road to success, and thus should have no qualms about incorporating Mr. Atchity's suggestions into their routines.

The book begins with some of the normal challenges writers face. Contrary to other authors who offer methods to bull your way through whatever wall has appeared in front of you, Mr. Atchity suggests deliberate and scheduled time away from your project. His concept on how your mind works is entertaining as well as informative, and helps present a writer's challenges as normal and part of the creative process rather than as demons that must be wrestled in order to be defeated.

One chapter dealt with publishing, including the two paths available today, the traditional route versus self-publication. Other chapters address the mechanics of writing, and explain the basics that would develop into books that grab the attention of readers and leave them wanting more. The author delves into the different markets open to writers, such as television and movies, and if you are a person who has trouble with structure, there is even a section on how to set up your writing area and what tools would be most advantageous to have at hand.

Finally, the book ends with quotes from various authors concerning their thoughts on different aspects of writing. One included quote is from Auguste Rodin: "For an artist, the thing is not dreaming, or talking, but work." If you seek a path to successful productivity, there is no way you can go wrong by spending a few hours reading and incorporating some of Kenneth Atchity's suggestions into your writing. Five stars.

Hilary says

Very informative, although a bit dated (he talks about word processors like they're new, hip technology, as indeed, in '95, they were). He has very clear outlines to set writing goals and set up a time-management system that prioritizes writing. He goes over fiction, non-fiction, and screenwriting, but overlooks freelancing (if you want a book on freelancing, anything by Robert/Bob Bly will serve you excellently). Overall, this book was very helpful, and now I have a clear --and not overly ambitious-- agenda for getting my next piece conceived, planned, written and revised on a deadline. I would recommend this for anyone

who should be writing but can't seem to find the time and therefore feels the need to beat themselves up about it.

Denise Wallace says

As a writer I found this book to be very inspirational! The author's wealth of experience in the film industry also provides an experience for the reader that money can't buy!

A.M. Bochnak says

Parts of this book were great and other parts (most actually) were seriously outdated. I also found the authors analogies a bit confusing and weird. If you've never read a book on time management or book structure, you might find this book helpful. But I am of the opinion there are much better books out there. It was a lot less about time management and much more about book structure and the writing/publishing.

Giving it 3 stars because it wasn't bad, just not what I was expecting at all.

Miki Marshall says

I can't really say when I finished reading this book, because I keep reading it over and over again. If you're looking for a book that gets you in touch with how your mind works and how to apply that effectively to a writing project--and getting it done!--then this is a book to read ... over and over again.

You've probably already read from other reviews how he goes about it, but I found his analogies very productive tools to working with, rather than against how my creative mind works. His time management techniques also just make sense.

It's a nice-sized book, too: A rich read of ideas concisely presented and easily digested. If they could boil out all the fluff and grandeur from other helpful but heavier books, you'd end up with ones this size. I'd love that.

Wes Locher says

Kenneth Atchity has released a good reference book for would-be writers. I can best sum up the goal of this book with the following sentence: "For people who want to write, but have too many excuses as to why they can't."

Not being one of those people, I didn't take a lot from the motivational side of things, however, the author has good suggestions for time management that will help people prioritize and get started on that novel that they've been dreaming about writing. In the end, Atchity just wants to help you succeed and that's always a good bottom line for any self-help book.

The book is a bit dated in some of it's information, for instance, the computer (word processor) is a new tool

to the author, and he recommends filing systems for papers and manuscripts where nowadays we tend to keep and file things electronically.

He outlines a beginner's process to writing fiction and non-fiction novels and good ways to collect and prepare information. There is also a helpful section for those particularly interested in screenplays.

My favorite sections were the first - in which he explains the thought process behind writing and how different parts of your brain work together to come up with ideas and how the best ideas are chosen and applied to the current work. I'd always realized these processes existed, but he was able to provide terms for these processes that make describing and understanding them much easier. I also took a lot from the section regarding publishing and how to submit manuscripts and what editors may be looking for, though I'm not sure how much of this information is still relevant seeing as how we are in an age of new information.

I would definitely recommend this book to new writers who can easily get frustrated when dealing with writer's block as Atchity's tips will help them understand the human mind and overcome the mental blocks they put in place for themselves.

Though not all sections included pertained to my methods or genres of writing, there's a lot of good insight and information from someone who has spent years and years in the writing industry and we should never stop learning and always be willing to take the advice of others. Especially those who are more experienced and successful than ourselves.

Marsha says

This version was published in the 1980's and while it still has some valid information - but it is not geared for the computer age.

Kara says

He stresses the importance of organizing and planning – physically and mentally.

The best piece of advice, I found, was how he expounded on the idea that writing time should be for *writing* – not for *thinking* of what to write. You can *think* anywhere – in the shower, on the train, eating, etc. – but when you have butt in seat, fingers to keyboards, you should already know what you are going to be writing about, not sitting there dazing off into space trying to decide where to start.

Lise says

This book is a mix of both attitude and craft. I'm still not sure how I feel about it yet. Atchity talks a lot about managing how you think about writing; how to avoid negative emotions about writing, or how to turn anxiety into what he calls "productive elation." This sounds like so much frou-frou when I describe it, but it's important to understand that almost every single writer I have ever met is just a bundle of nerves, and so

much of writing is winning the mental game of "sitting down in front of a page (almost) every day and creating something from nothing." So how you think about writing is at least as important as how you do writing, and this, i think, is where Atchity's book is most valuable.

But Atchity also talks about his method of outlining, which I would call... odd and archaic, at best. I'm sure it works for him. I'm not sure it would work for me.

The chapter on breaking into show business was also not terribly useful to me, as a writer of fiction.

RJay says

Since I've decided to write a book, I'm reading several books about "how to write" as well as taking classes. The first 5 chapters of this book were "recommended reading" by the instructor of my current class. Honestly, I was bored to death! If you want to know how not to write, try reading this book! There's something to be said for K.I.S.S. and unfortunately, Achity doesn't follow this school of thought. His style is so full of convoluted, academia-laden crapola that to make sense of most of it, you'll need to read the same paragraph about 10 times and make notes and diagrams while you're at it. He may be right in the way he imagines a writer's brain working - bouncing from creative to analytical with an internal 'editor' making sense of both sides and the tension created which can be harnessed as a form of writing energy but the style of presenting the materials is incredibly cumbersome. There are many more books out there on "writing" that unless you're a masochist, you might want to give this one a pass.

Janet says

I received a DIGITAL Advance Reader Copy of this book from #NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. From the publisher

REVISED & UPDATED
In this foundational guide to the writer's mind and productivity used by thousands of writers worldwide since its original publication...called by the New York Times "the best...book on writing," Dr. Atchity shows how the detailed steps of the creative process interface with the writer's greatest asset, time, to provide both creative success and peace of mind.
For nearly a decade, thousands of writers?aspiring and professional?have relied on this book, the first to apply time-management principles to the specific needs of writers of fiction, nonfiction, and drama.

Expanding his focus now, Kenneth Atchity adds a substantial new chapter, "Breaking into Show Business," and new material about recapturing the "high" of creativity and maintaining confidence despite setbacks. He shows you how to transform anxiety into "productive elation," how to separate vision from revision, and how to develop your own writing agenda. This book, based on his writing seminars, research into dreams and creativity, and film development, is, as the New York Times states, "crammed with the sort of useful advice that it seems to take some people years to learn."
Advance Praise
...Atchity covers everything from how a writer's mind works to how to gather and process a mass of information, from making use of your dreams to dealing with agents and publishers.

The fact that I have owned this book for over 20 years and use it in the kid's / ESL outreach/reading and writing workshops make this a delight to have a chance to review. The descriptions sounds difficult and wordy but the lessons in the book will get you or anyone you know to start writing (or start writing again!) Fabulous book!

Elizabeth says

from page 82 of *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*:

The author was helped to understand the value of writing to quality and effective preaching upon reading *A Writers' Time: A Guide to the Creative Process, from Vision through Revision*. Though the book is written from the perspective of helping people write to publish, the insights about persuasive and effective writing, and the setting forth of methodology that leads to persuasive and effective writing, are an invaluable and immediate help for any preacher who desires to preach well. In the future, homileticians must give much more attention to the discipline of writing to help increase the effectiveness of sermons.

Rachel Pollock says

I enjoyed the insight this gave me into techniques for structuring books which writers used prior to the advent of digital tools like Microsoft Word, scrivener, and other literary programs and applications. The author's philosophy about how the creative mind works was less useful, a bit goofy and self-indulgent, but perhaps that's just my own disinterest in how he chose to approach describing and discussing the creative process.

Neocortext says

Much to my surprise, I realized I'd never read a single book on writing fiction--just criticism and theory. I came upon this in Cool Tools (now there's a toy box in book form) and the description of the author's card system intrigued me. While I'm not impressed with the actual writing--the prose or the organization--I was very interested in the perspective and intend to explore more in this genre.

Jess Schira says

Despite starting this book several times, I couldn't get into it. Something about the writer's style and voice irritated me.

DNF