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## Writing Rituals--Or Not

Posted by laurasalas

Hi! I'll introduce myself more in a future post, but I'm Laura Purdie Salas, a temporary Teaching Author. I'm so happy to be here!

Rituals. Hmm...I was treadmilling the other night, listening to a [lovely episode of NPR's Backseat Book Club featuring Lucy Dahl, Roald's daughter](#). Start at 3:40 for a fascinating glimpse into Roald's writing setting and rituals. I wish I had such definite, comforting rituals. But I don't.

I do have a few elements I return to, though: light, movement, and time.



Photo: Ikea

1) **Light** – Sometimes I light a little candle before writing. A flickering light sets my mind at rest, somehow. I have a lantern given to me by a dear writer friend that I love to write by.

When I'm lazy but still want that flicker, I light my little febreze fake candle:>) Excuse me: Febreze Flameless Luminary.

And when I'm super-busy, I just write by a window, with the blinds slatted upward so I get glimpses of trees and sky, but not distracting cute bunnies in the yard.

2) **Movement**: When I'm frustrated with my writing, I move. Can't

think of the right word? I'll pace around the kitchen/dining room circle, or go walk Capt. Jack (when it's not 20 below zero), or even just stand up and do 30 squats.

3) **Time:** Deadline-setting is really my only consistent ritual. I learned to be a writer in tiny bursts while blocking out life stresses. I still write best in small, intense chunks. No matter what kind of project I'm working on, I start the same way. I look at the clock. I look at the project. Panic shoots through me at my day's to-do list. Then I breathe and set a timer. "Rough draft of this poem. 20 minutes. Go." Even if I have 3 straight hours of writing time, I probably work on 3-5 different projects during that time, each with its own deadline.

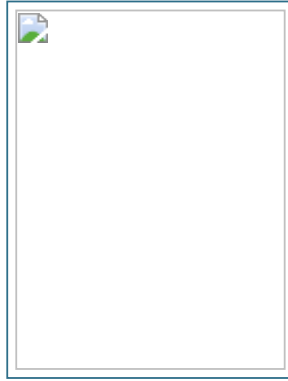


Photo: DuBoix,  
courtesy of Morguefile

So, there you have it. Three sort-of routines. It would probably be simpler if I just started with a mug of cinnamon tea every day or something:>)

--Laura Purdie Salas

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