**4 How to Find the Time to Write**

If you’d love to write a book but feel you don’t have the time, this podcast will introduce you to some proven techniques for finding the time you don’t think you have.

I’m Pat Iyer, the author or editor of 48 of my own books. My first coauthored book came out in 1986. I love the process of writing and I want you to get the same sense of satisfaction.

I’ll show how to track your time, and I guarantee that you’ll find enough to write a book. You can use that time to best advantage by writing in timed segments. This will help train you to turn on your internal writing app when it’s time to produce.

What if you want a book but don’t want to physically write it? I’ll describe three ways you can do this. One is outsourcing, which means hiring someone else to do the actual writing. Another is repurposing. I’ve turned podcasts, blog posts, and other written materials into books. You can, too. If it’s the actual act of writing that stops you, you can dictate.

You *can* complete a book, and the techniques I share with you in this podcast will bring you that much closer to achieving your goal.

**Make Time for Writing**

The biggest reason I hear would-be writers give for why they don’t write is “I don’t have time.” The secret of time is that we *can* make it.

Ask yourself, “How do I spend my time?” Here’s a rough average I learned when I attended a conference put on by Women’s Prosperity Network.

Suppose you spend 40 hours a week working. You spend 56 hours a week sleeping. And you spend 35 hours a week showering, eating, and traveling. That leaves you with 37 hours a week to do other things. What do you do during that time?

**Keep a Record**

We all waste time, if we define waste as spending time on activities that don’t contribute to our goals. When we write down where our time goes, we can find large pockets of it we can turn into value.

If you look on the Internet, you can find a wide variety of apps that you can use to record your time. I know people who swear by the app method.

If you don’t like using apps or have too many already, you can also use the old-fashioned method of a notebook and a pen. I know this is primitive, but it works. Get a notebook you can carry with you. Always keep it near you.

If it works for you, you can supplement notebook activity with a record on your computer that uses a program like Excel. This is also a good way to record your activities at the end of the day.

**Make Categories**

Everyone’s day is different. Some common categories might include:

Exercise

Cooking and Eating

House Cleaning

Helping Kids with Homework

Family Time

Reading

Social Media

If you spend 8-10 hours a day commuting and working, break that time down into distinct activities. I’m not recommending that you steal work time to write, although you can use your lunch hour. Also, you may find it insightful to see what you do in the course of a workday.

Be honest about the time spent that you might prefer not to record, like Internet time, including social media, emailing, watching YouTube videos, gaming, or anything else you spend time on. Write it down. I know, for example, that I can easily get lost in Facebook reading posts and watching videos. I intend to be on the site for 10 minutes and suddenly 45 minutes are gone.

Some people recommend writing time down every 15 minutes, but I think that’s a good way to defeat the program. I suggest instead writing down time spent when you’re about to change activities. If you spent 30 minutes cleaning house, write that down before you start to cook dinner.

**The Review**

Record your time for a week. Make sure you choose a typical week. Add up your totals for each category. Look over the totals and ask yourself where you can save time.

Then ask yourself what you are willing to cut out of your schedule. This may be the measure of how much you want to write. Is it more important than Facebook or YouTube? Or watching TV?

Can you find half-an-hour a day? That’s enough for a beginning. Make that time as sacred as you make anything in your life.

If you have a family, tell them you won’t be available for that time. You won’t be answering the phone or doing anything but writing.

Then go into whatever room you’ve assigned as your writing space and write. Write anything, just to get yourself into the habit. If you write on your computer, do not take a Facebook break. Write.

Writing a book can be an intimidating task. Blank pages can stare at you mockingly for long hours that turn into days, weeks, and months before you make headway in your next chapter.

That’s less likely to happen if you work out a plan for making progress every day on your book. In fact, writing a book can help you manage your time more wisely and encourage productivity on multiple fronts. Here are a few things you can do to make more progress in a shorter time.

**Consider Using the Pomodoro Technique When Writing**

The Pomodoro technique is one in which you set a timer to promote short bursts of intense productivity. This method is effective because you operate in 25-minute increments. Set a timer for 25 minutes. During that period, focus on one single task. In this case, the task would be writing your book, whether you’re blocking out a chapter or simply writing an outline for the next chapter(s). You don’t stop for anything other than house-fire types of emergencies until the timer rings.

Take a five-minute break before moving on to the next part of your writing. After every four short breaks, take a longer break. This gives you time to clear your mind, charge your batteries, and refocus on the work ahead of you for the day. This is a key component in your efforts to stay focused on writing your book and stop splitting focus by multi-tasking and otherwise spinning your wheels all day long.

**Prioritize Your Tasks**

You have a lot on your agenda on any given day. How easy it is to get caught up in minute tasks and quickly lose time to write during your day! The longer this continues, the more time you accrue to lose the momentum of your book or abandon your book altogether.

Steady progress is much more effective. Accomplish this by doing the following:

* Give up television time to write.
* Cut out unnecessary social media socializing. While some is necessary to maintain relevance with your audience, give yourself time limits for your favorite social media platforms each day. And I really mean time limits.
* Get up early or stay up late to make time for writing.
* Go away for a weekend, close yourself in a hotel room, and write.
* Set deadlines for getting specific writing done; then adhere to them. This can include deadlines for chapter outlines and chapter delivery. Editing deadlines. First draft. Second draft. Publishing. You get the picture.

Decide how important your book is to your professional future and consider prioritizing your writing over some work functions by delegating or bringing on another team member to help take care of tasks that take you away from writing.

The reward for all this time management and productivity-enhancing effort is that you will discover you can write a book. How do you know? Because you just did.

Now, it’s your turn to examine your patterns and see how you can fit in writing.

As with any change in routine, it may take you time to get used to doing this, but if you persist, you’ll be glad you did. Who knows what else might result from you keeping a promise to yourself to write?**Three Writing Shortcuts for the Busy Writer**

Although I’ve experienced the effectiveness of the writing productivity methods I’ve already described, they will only work if you actually want to write. I encourage those who want to write, and I enjoy working with them as a book coach. I also recognize that people sometimes want their names on books but don’t want to actually write them. You may be one of them.

You know being the author of a book will increase your authority and credibility. You’d love to see your name on the cover of a book. And you wonder what writing shortcuts you can use to make the project easier.

A book is a powerful tool for building a brand. It not only helps to establish your expertise in your market, but it can also exponentially expand your audience.

There’s virtually no downside to writing a book—except the time needed to write it.

If you don’t consider yourself a writer, you may think the benefits are out of your reach, but even self-avowed non-authors have options or shortcuts.

Here are 3 easy writing shortcuts.

**Outsource**

Do you want a book that’s in your voice without having to do the work? Hire a ghostwriter. A ghostwriter is a writer whom you pay to write for you. These professionals will work with you to create a book that is uniquely yours, and in the end, you’ll have a well-written book with your name on it, often without typing a word.

A ghostwriter typically interviews the author and creates the chapters from the transcripts. The ghostwriter puts in all the time to eliminate the dialogue and make the content organized and coherent.

A ghostwriter is the ideal person to work with when you are busy or lack the writing skills to create well-written content.

The best time to use a ghostwriter is when you recognize you should be producing more content, but you’ve been putting it off. You’re not sure how to fit one more thing into your life. Working with a ghostwriter will take time but far less than if you wrote the content from scratch.

A ghostwriter also helps you expand your ideas, offering a fresh perspective on your topic. If working with a ghostwriter appeals to you, contact me through my website at patiyer.com, and let’s have a chat about your project. I ghostwrite nonfiction books.

**Repurpose**

Repurposing as a writing shortcut is an easy and popular option that makes use of the hundreds or even thousands of pages of content you’ve already written. You will still need to create an outline, organize the content, and group it into chapters to create a smooth flow. In the process of doing so, you will see gaps in the material that you’ll need to write.

Blogs, white papers, podcast and webinar transcripts, and articles are all material that you can repurpose. I completed 7 books in 2 years that were solely drawn from podcast transcripts and blogs. After my assistant edited out the transcript dialogue, it took me 1-2 days to assemble and edit each book.

**Dictate**

If you are one of the people who finds it easier to talk than write, dictating content may be the right writing shortcut for you. After organizing your thoughts, record your content, get it transcribed, and then start rearranging and filling in gaps.

Having a published book can work wonders for your business growth. It will bring you clients, expand your audience reach, and even attract some press. Be sure to listen to my second podcast, Benefits of Being Published, if you haven’t done so. I cover those benefits.

But you won’t get the benefits if you don’t write the book in the first place. Take one of these ideas and get your book written. You won’t regret it.

**Let me summarize for you:**

1. By keeping track of your time, you’ll see where your time goes.
2. This time record will show you activities that you can safely delete from your daily schedule and can instead be used for writing.
3. The Pomodoro technique advocates writing in 25-minute chunks of time, followed by a break. After you’ve spent 4 twenty-five-minute intervals, you take a longer break.
4. Three alternatives to creating a book are to outsource to a ghostwriter, repurpose content you’ve prepared, or dictate the content.

In my fifth podcast, you’ll get the big picture about another of the barriers people cite that slows down the writing process: it is hard work. Yes, writing takes work. I’ve give you some practical tips and strategies to reduce the work so you achieve success.

This podcast and my weekly writing tips videos and tips are available on my mobile app called Biz Edu. Be sure to go to [www.patiyer.com](http://www.patiyer.com) forward slash biz-edu to get your free copy of this app. Ramp up your writing skills when you listen to our podcasts, watch our videos and read our articles – all in the palm of your hand.