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MASTER WRITING COACH

No Time is No Excuse

How to Edit When You're Pressed for Time

By Dawn Josephson, The Master Writing Coach™

Despite your best planning, at some point you'll be under the gun to edit your own work quickly and effectively. For example, that meeting planner might call and say the board is deciding on a keynote speaker for the annual convention, and they need your proposal in the next fifteen minutes. Or your editor may call you and ask that you get that article to him today, not next week as you had originally agreed. These things happen, and they are simply a part of life. But just because you're pressed for time does not mean you are allowed to turn in sloppy writing. You can still self-edit successfully, no matter what the time constraints.

Following are some Ground Rules that can help.

Ground Rule #1: Forget about the clock.

Yes, that's easier said than done; however, if you focus on the time when you're editing in a crunch, you'll only make yourself nervous and more apt to miss errors. The more you can relax, the more attuned you'll be to spot your errors. So rather than glance at the clock every two minutes to see how much time you have left, turn away from the clock and don't look at it. If your deadline really is that time critical, someone will be watching the clock for you and will interrupt you when the time is up.

Ground Rule #2: Breathe deeply.

Rather than jump into self-editing your work in a frenzied pace, stop, take a deep breath, and then begin to edit. Again, the goal is to get your mind and body to relax. Additionally, filling your lungs with oxygen stimulates you and puts you in a better mood. The last thing you want is to edit while you're cranky.

Ground Rule #3: Read your text out loud, never to yourself.

When you have time to self-edit properly, you have the luxury of reading the piece to yourself several times. When you're short on time, however, you must skip this step and do all your read throughs out loud. Why? Because you want to

activate both your sense of sight and hearing right away. Additionally, do as many read through as possible on a printed copy, not on your computer screen. That's the best way to catch the most errors.

Ground Rule #4: Make peace with your piece.

No written work will ever be perfect, especially if it's one you're writing when you're pressed for time. So accept this fact and move on. Anguishing over it and repeatedly telling yourself, "If I only had more time..." won't change anything. So do the best you can in the short amount of time you have, and be satisfied with your efforts.

About the Author

Dawn Josephson, the Master Writing Coach, has been helping professional speakers and business leaders write better to earn more since 1998. As the author of *Write It Right: The Ground Rules for Self-Editing Like the Pros* and *Putting It On Paper: The Ground Rules for Creating Promotional Pieces that Sell Books*, she empowers leaders to master the printed word for enhanced credibility, positioning, and profits. Contact her at dawn@masterwritingcoach.com.