

I've Been Planning to Write

Dennis Knight

I've read the time management literature, studied the habits of classic authors, and recognize the importance of planning ahead. I know as an essayist I must allot time efficiently in order to execute the spontaneous act of writing. In other words, spontaneity takes careful planning. You may be interested to know how my first week went as an adherent to this principle.

Monday. This week's writing topic, Planning Ahead, is pertinent. While I shall rise to the challenge, rising to challenges is not done haphazardly. It takes forethought, which I happen to excel at, and I plan to spend the rest of the day doing just that.

Tuesday. Yesterday's immersion in forethought brought me to the conclusion that good planning requires good materials. Graph paper, eight by eight squares to the inch, is the tableau of great engineers, and it should be available nearby. I'll pick some up today.

Wednesday. I took another step, toured the office product chains, and secured the planning and plotting product I need, a quadrille pad of heavyweight graph paper. I didn't think to acquire a sharp pencil for the task, but I can go back after lunch.

Thursday. Now I have what I need to meet my deadline, and four ample days to do it. My desk is taken by computer, monitor, keyboard and mouse. I'll compose my piece there, but this is the day I'm planning to plan, and for that purpose I need less cluttered space. A turret for instance.

Friday. I combed the real estate section today and drove around the neighborhood. We do happen to have a turret on a corner of our community center, but, it is occupied by a winding staircase and not functional for anything else. We happen to have something better at our clubhouse, a structural appendage resembling a watch tower, with windows for light, frosted against visual distractions such as dogs being walked and spouses being shepherded about the grounds.

Saturday. It seems the watch tower will not work after all. It's merely an ornamental shell with no apparent entrance, and so now I go back to the drawing board. Or that is what I would say if I had a drawing board. I think I saw one on my shopping trip Wednesday.

Sunday, Morning. I spent much of Saturday evening assembling my drawing board. While the deadline is looming, overall it has been a productive week. I strategized a process for developing my writing plan, acquired some necessary materials, and now I sit at my new tempered glass drafting table, complete with shelf and chair. Graph paper at the ready, I lick my pencil, test the point, try the eraser, and adjust my bifocals. Finally, I am planning.

Sunday, Midnight. A football game and four hours of sports talk interrupted my day, but I have finally made my plan and reviewed each step. I am poised and ready to write.

"It was a dark and stormy night...."