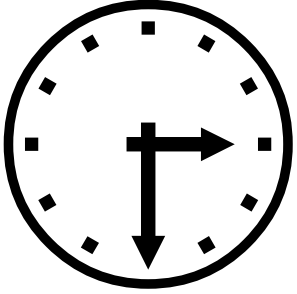


# CONGENIAL TELEGRAM NUMBER 07



February isn't fair. I'm writing this on the 28th, and even if I don't finish and publish before the clock ticks over to midnight, I'm still calling this the February issue. It's only a matter of luck and calendars that tomorrow is March 1st, and not February 29th.

Time is made up anyway.

If it feels like there isn't enough time in this month to make a zine, the days are more than kind to a daily writing habit. I started Morning Pages again in October, and four months later, I'm still writing most every day.

## SET A SCHEDULE!

From another writing teacher, Natalie Goldberg, I learned the secret of "most days." We all start out with enthusiasm and motivation, but you will miss a day. I promise.

So when you make your writing schedule, make sure there's time set aside for inevitable failure.

"I will write most days next week" means that when you write 7, 6, 5, or 4 days, you win. Help yourself win.

by Jess Driscoll on February 28, 2021

There's an important word in that last sentence. Did you miss it? "I'm still writing *most* every day."

I used to believe the ubiquitous advice that writers must write every day. I used to try to keep this schedule, force this habit, then I would berate myself when I didn't write. These days, I promise I'll write *most* days, and when I don't, I know there's always tomorrow.

People who pass on this advice have good intentions. They want to help new writers. But we're not meant for daily habits.

Morning Pages aren't meant to be published. You shouldn't edit them. Every once in a long while, I'll find a surprise of a sentence, something worth plucking out and writing around, but that's not the purpose of the habit.

The purpose is to clear the way for the good stuff.

The words I write most days are the dust motes which need to be swept out of my brain. It's the same reason I need to wash my dishes most days. Leave them to pile up too long, and you'll regret it.

If the year between March 2020 and March 2021, has taught you nothing, I hope it taught you this: we are not meant for daily habits. The longer this pandemic continues, I'm not sure we're meant for weekly, or even monthly, habits either.

When those well-intentioned teachers tell you to write every day, what they're actually telling you is set a schedule to write. Put that writing time down on a calendar. Make the project a priority because priorities get appointments and deadlines.

Morning people are enviable creatures, but I'm not one of them. It's not that I need caffeine immediately after waking or that I don't have time and space of my own. I'll probably keep trying most of my life to make Morning Pages happen in the morning.

But the important word isn't *Morning*; it's *Pages*. Did you write some pages? That's it.

Nobody will read these pages; they don't have to be good or even legible. If this habit is new for you, I don't even recommend you go back and read them.

My priority is a few pages by hand—Morning Pages, the invention of Julia Cameron, from her classic book, *The Artist's Way*. She prescribes three pages, written longhand, first thing in the morning. I write two facing pages in whatever notebook I have on the go; longhand, yes; but almost never first thing.

(If you've been following me for any length of time, you've certainly read me extol this process before, but I didn't find reference in the CT series, so a short introduction is necessary.)