

**NaNoWriMo: When You Think You Have Nothing Left, Go WRITE!**  
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The end of November also brought about the conclusion of this year's NaNoWriMo. For those of you who have never heard of it, NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month which happens every November. The challenge is to complete a novel of fifty-thousand words in thirty days, but I've realized that the real goal of the contest is to write.

For the first time, this year I joined thousands of others and put myself to the test to see what I could accomplish. I'm happy to say that I was at forty-eight thousand, nine hundred and ninety-six words when I decided to take a break to write this article. Mind you, I have until midnight November 30th to add the final one thousand and four words to the manuscript. That's over twenty-four hours so it will be a piece of cake!

I wish I could say the same for the rest of the month. I never took a novel writer's life for granted, but I have learned a new appreciation for the craft. Not only do you have less time with family and friends, you are constantly thinking when you should be listening; jotting down notes when you should be working or relaxing; or staring blankly at your computer screen tapping out your thoughts when you should be cuddling with the one you love. (Sorry Honey, one more day and then I am all yours again!)

Don't get me wrong, I definitely have not written the next New York Times Bestseller. Half of my novel is so jumbled and convoluted that I will be in rewrites for the next thirty days and then some. Let's not even begin to think about the editing. Uggghhhh!!!! However, I completed the challenge and I am proud of my accomplishment.

I know now that the most important job of a writer is to WRITE. When it sounds wrong, WRITE. When it's illogical, WRITE. When you have writer's block, WRITE. When you have no new thoughts left, WRITE! Write your way through it and the words soon start to flow. Even though my entire manuscript is not a treasure, I know I dropped a few gems here and there and I now have the foundation necessary to take me to that next level.

My real motivation was the support of my family and fellow participants and most importantly, the thirty-day deadline. What can I say? I'm the last of the great procrastinators and I do my best work under the pressure of time constraints.

If you're already a writer, or you're looking to complete a novel, NaNoWriMo is for you. It's the one time you get to ignore editing, sentence structure, character development and all the other major components that make novel writing so

challenging. NaNoWriMo gives you the opportunity to let your imagination run wild and set your creativity free. If you have a novel inside you that is ready to come out, I hope you take the challenge next year, join NaNoWriMo and do what's WRITE for you!