

16 Ways to Take a Writers' Conference Home

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Nina Amir, Inspiration to Creation Coach, www.ninaamir.com
Author of *How to Blog a Book* and *The Author Training Manual*

If you have ever attended a writers' conference, you know how excited you get about the things you learn and the information you receive while at the event. At the time, you make plans to go home and put all that new knowledge to use. And then you don't. You get busy. You forget. You no longer feel energized because you aren't with other writers.

The same can happen if you attend a writers' retreat. While there, you get into the groove of writing every day, learning, and "being" a writer. Then you go home...to real life where you struggle to find time to write. You lose that "retreat feeling." You can't focus or create a writing practice.

I speak at a lot of conferences and retreats, and this problem is a common one. So how do you bring the conference or retreat home with you? How do you maintain the energy and focus you had while at the event? You have to make the conference or retreat part of your life.

To bring your writing event "home," adopt some of these tips and tools.

1. Go through your notes and highlight the main things you want to remember and all your ah-ha moments.
2. If you didn't write down your ah-ha moments, do so no later than the night you get home.
3. Reread your notes and revelations every day or every week.
4. Make a list of action steps you need to take when you get home.
5. Break your action steps down into smaller steps if necessary.
6. Put those actions steps on your to-do list—with deadlines.
7. Put those actions steps on your calendar.
8. Continue the writing practice you developed (if you went on retreat); make it part of your day or week. You can fit in 1-2-hour blocks of writing time each day by scheduling it.
9. You made the time sacrifice to be at the conference or retreat; remember that you can do that again (for an hour, a day, a weekend, or a week).
10. Commit. Writing and publishing a book is all about commitment.
11. Have no excuses. You are at choice about how and when you write your book and get published. Decide to take action. Stick to that decision.
12. Remember why you want to write your book and become an author. This focus will keep you inspired.
13. Take action on what you learned (physical action and mental action).
14. Find an accountability partner.
15. Create a retreat or ritual space in which to write, so you feel like you've gone on retreat each time you write.
16. Find a community of writers to help you keep your energy flowing.

Adopt any one or more of these suggested tips and tools, and you will feel like you've taken the writers' conference or retreat home with you. Make what you learn and how you felt and behaved during the event part of your life. Only then will the writers' conference or retreat become part of your life.