



## How I Write

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**F**INDING YOUR OWN WAY of writing is all about trust. It may seem trite, but to me, a recent purchase shows how far I've come in trusting myself as a writer...

It all started with my desk, my beautiful, smooth, large and extremely heavy solid oak desk with its gorgeous, different-sized drawers — and a cupboard! I'd bought it as a commitment to myself as a writer about four years ago. It was a financial stretch (I'm a single mother of three and we were on a tight budget) but that added to the significance of it. I aspired to be the writer *who wrote at a beautiful desk*...and it was definitely going to make me more professional and productive. No more working in bed or on the sofa in the sitting room.

I watched my new desk from my bed as its surface got covered with more and more piles of paper and books, and of course, I found myself using it almost...never.

Eventually, I ditched the fantasy that the desk would make me more professional and successful, and I created a really structured twelve-month plan for my writing (and broke it further down into four quarters and then months and weeks). A fellow children's author and I became accountability partners where we skyped weekly to check on each other. Unlike the desk, it worked brilliantly and I had my best writing year ever. I was becoming more professional — but I was *still* working in bed a lot, or on our family sofa...



I went away to write with a prolific author friend for a few days. She told me how she puts on eighties ballads and sits in a really comfy seat at home to trick herself into thinking she's not actually *working* — and *then* she writes.

When I got home, I spent ages looking at my desk but thinking about my friend's comfy chair...and decided that I needed to swap my desk for a sofa in my room. There wasn't room for both.

I asked to put the desk in the only other room it would fit in, my daughter's. She reluctantly agreed. (I was offended on my beautiful desk's behalf — how could anyone prefer a cheap flimsy table-desk to this beautiful thing that I *loved*, even if from a distance?) It was extremely hard to get upstairs. At one point, my very strong friend who helped me move it, had to do a kung-fu roll over the banister when it got stuck near the top of the stairs and I was losing my grip on it. But I had banished it out of sight.

The desk was for the writer I wanted to be. My small cosy sofa, which I bought a week later (using my favourite old yellow duvet cover as a throw), is for the writer I *am*.

It took a long time to accept that it really is ok to do it your own way – but I'm writing loads now – on my sofa. And when I want the fantasy, I just need to go upstairs to my daughter's bedroom. Turns out she is the person I thought I was. She loves the desk in practice how I loved it in theory — and that's great.