

## **Daily Routine – Ten Habits that Make a Good Writer** (excerpted from *A Writer's Book of Days*, by Judy Reeves)

### **1. Eat Healthfully**

Give your body what it really wants so it can support you. You may think it wants caffeine, sugar or alcohol, but it really wants broccoli and spinach. Eat healthfully for stamina, good health, and the sensory experience of it. (Notice your carrots when you eat them, their color and crunch. Smell that onion; look closely at its layers and textures.) Eat several small meals throughout the day; begin with a good breakfast.

### **2. Be Physical**

Remember when your mother warned you about making faces: “your face could freeze that way.” If you’re sitting at your desk all hours of the day and night, your whole body could petrify that way. Move it; stretch, exercise, work out. Breathe. It roils the blood and feeds the brain. When you walk, run, bicycle, or swim, you’re in touch with the earth (unless you do it in a gym and in that case, GET OUTSIDE.) Do it alone so you can pay attention to your body and notice your environment as you glide along.

### **3. Laugh Out Loud**

You take big breaths when you laugh out loud. Laughing helps rid the body of toxins. So lighten up. Take a break from work and play with your puppy or your child or your neighbor’s child. Look at cartoons; tell a joke, share with friends. Find something funny in the world and let loose belly laughs. Create a playground for the Muse.

### **4. Read**

Read as much as you can of the best writers. Read on two levels: one as a reader and one as a writer. Study how other writers use language, how they construct a piece. Notice what you love about certain writers. Try reading aloud (especially poetry) before you write.

### **5. Cross-Fertilize**

Experience another art form -- music, photography, dance, painting, sculpture, film, theater. Keep open books of art in your writing space, a basketful of postcard art to leaf through. If music distracts you while you write, listen at other times when you can absorb the music and it’s not just a background sound. Visit a museum; walk in a sculpture garden. Let other art evoke your own.

### **6. Practice Spirituality**

Take time every day (or several times a day) to consciously go to that place you name Sacred — through prayer, meditation, or simply being mindful and present in the present. Make time for what ever you do that keeps you in touch with your spiritual self.

### **7. Pay Attention**

Notice the quality of light, the heft of air, color of sky, faces, clouds, flowers, garbage, graffiti — all of it. Slow down and pay attention. Stop during your walks and examine a leaf. Read the writing in shop windows. Observe people getting on a bus, the bus driver, the stink of the bus exhaust.

### **8. Give Back**

Do something good or kind for someone or the planet. Speak to someone you don’t know, smile, help a friend (or a stranger), plant a flower, reuse a paper bag, walk instead of driving. Be generous with whatever you have to give.

### **9. Connect With Another Writer**

Meet a writing friend for coffee, write a letter to a writer whose work you admire, make a phone call to a writer/friend. Attend a poetry reading, a book signing; take part in a workshop. Write with someone. Go online to a writers’ chat room, email a poem to a friend.

### **10. Write**

Sometime, someplace, every day, honor your writer self and spend some time writing.