

Latinidad 2/13: 10th Anniversary - Time

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1. Saludos

In continuation of my celebration of Latinidad's tenth anniversary, I am culling the best advice and advisors from back issues to help you get published.

Last month I discussed money. (If you didn't see that issue, here's a link: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/message/422>) This month's focus is on a commodity that is arguably more valuable than money—time. Writers tend to invest too little money and not enough time in their writing careers. While it is possible to make or save more money, it isn't possible to create more hours in a day. Before you can hone your craft, you first have to master your time. To that end, read this month's Q&A with Karin Stewart, author of *The 5-Minute Time Management Solution*.

Helping Latinos get published,
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2. Q&A

Karin Stewart, Ph.D., founder of Daily Mastery and author of *The 5-Minute Time Management Solution*, teaches busy people how to get more done, in less time, and most importantly without stress. From time management for the rest of us (those who don't have two days, or even two hours, to devote to setting up a time management system) to full life management, she teaches her clients simple, easy, yet highly effective solutions to their problems. Working by phone, she coaches individual clients, from stay-at-home mothers to busy executives, and frequently teaches seminars on the topic. Karin has spoken for multiple organizations, and has been quoted in media such as *Newsday*, *msnbc.com*, *abcnews.com*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *Associated Press*. To learn more, visit <http://www.dailymastery.com/>

Q: What are the three most common mistakes people make when managing

their time?

A: 1. Being slaves to their technology. It's something I unfortunately see too often. Mostly, it comes in the form of an addiction to e-mail and phone; the person absolutely has to check what came in as soon as the e-mail alert or phone ringer starts. The word addiction was first used in jest for such people, but it turns out that, from a brain perspective, doing this is genuinely addictive. It's extraordinarily disruptive to concentration, focus, productivity, you name it. Thankfully, it's a lot easier to stop than other drugs.

2. Pushing through when their energy tank is on empty. The brain, just like a car, needs energy to run properly. Contrary to a car, which will stop when the tank is empty, the human brain has the capacity to keep going for a while. But the price we pay for doing this is steep: loss of creativity, slowness, shallow thinking, and sometimes outright burnout.

3. Letting other people's priorities dominate the day. We live in a world of interactions, collaborations, and immediacy, which is great, but presents some dangers. In particular, under the pressure of others' needs, it is very easy to forget our own needs and priorities. For a writer, this can come in the form of pushing back the start of writing time because a friend wants to chat, and then regretting it because now you're too tired to work. The most frustrating part of it all is that, most often, what others present as priorities are anything but, such as in the case of this friend, who just wanted to share juicy gossip.

Q: Alternatively, what three steps can folks take today to improve their time management?

A: 1. The first step to reclaiming your mastery over your technology is to institute no-technology moments. In other words, at least once a day, turn all your electronics off (your cell phone, your landline, your e-mail client on your computer, etc.), and just get working for an hour or so. I think most writers already know to do this when they write, but do you know to do this when you're at your day job, too? It's amazing how much you can accomplish in an hour.

2. To avoid pushing your tank on empty, make sure that you always have "fuel" in your tank. The first step to doing this is to sleep enough. Did you know that sleeping for five hours the night before a day of work is the equivalent of drinking two margaritas before going to work? Or that, no matter how much or little you sleep every night, after two sixty-hour weeks,

you would have accomplished just as much, if not more, working regular forty-hour weeks? More is not always better in the realm of time management.

3. An easy and quick way that people can keep track of their priorities is to—drum roll—write them down. I know it sounds basic, but it's incredibly valuable to do so. First, it fixes it in your mind. Then, it gives you a benchmark to compare what's coming in with what your priorities are. When you do this, it's much easier to say, "No" or to say, "Later" to someone.

Q: The vast majority of writers—even published ones—have day jobs. How can they carve out time around their workweek in order to write?

A: That's an important question, and I've had to deal with this while writing *The 5-Minute Time Management Solution* myself. After all, I still had clients, marketing, and business administration to do while writing. The short answer to this question is: Be ruthless with your time. Learn how to be as productive as you can be so you can leave work on time; eliminate from your non-work schedule everything that isn't something you truly want or need to do, so you can free up some time to write; and, finally, make writing a top priority. Do you know how I ended up writing *The 5-Minute Time Management Solution*? By deciding that I'd write one section every day, no matter what. It is possible to write (at least non-fiction) in fifteen-minutes-a-day increments.

Q: Many freelance writers find that family and friends make demands on their time because they work at home. What is the best way to delicately handle this situation?

A: That's another one I know all too well as I work from home, too. The first thing to do is to establish clear boundaries in your head. When are you working, and when are you not? What are acceptable exceptions to this rule? Will you change your schedule around for someone or something else, or not? If yes, with what kind of notice? It's hard for other people to know how to deal with you if you're not clear yourself. Guess what? When in doubt, they'll do what is most convenient for them. Say, "No" whenever they cross your boundaries. It's a lot easier to say than you think. For instance, tell them that you are on a tight deadline—everyone understands that.

Q: Time management can be especially challenging for writers with young children. What lessons have you learned from your own experience as a mom who runs a consulting business yet managed to find the time to write an e-book?

A: The first and most important lesson I've learned is to get babysitting a few hours a week. No matter your resources, you can do that, and there is no substitute to working in peace for a few hours a week. I personally had no family to help me, and very limited means when my son was young, so I had to be creative to get that alone time. One thing I did was befriend another mother and exchange babysitting times together. I would take both our children for a couple of hours twice a week, and then she would do the same for me. It was well worth it.

Another important thing to do is to determine which work simply cannot be done while the kids are in the house (creative writing, for instance), and what can be done with them in the house. I personally find that e-mailing and editing are activities that I can do with the kids around.

Finally, divide the work that you can do with the children around in ten to fifteen minute increments (paragraph by paragraph, keyword by keyword, whatever unit works for you). Whenever one of your children is asking for something, they will be able to wait for the few minutes until you're done, and they will be very willing to do so once they know that, once Mommy is done, Mommy will give them full attention. I've done many things by working for fifteen minutes, and then playing with my son for five. I'll be honest, Nick Jr. is also a great tool to have in your toolbox.

Q: Aside from your e-book, *The 5-Minute Time Management Solution*, what resources would you recommend to writers who want to learn more about time management?

A: The best books I've read on the topic are *The Power of Full Engagement* by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz, *The Secret Pulse of Time* by Stefan Klein, and *Brain Rules* by John Medina. All three base everything they write on science, from psychology to neuroscience and sometimes even to physics, so they give advice that actually works, and give the framework that allows the people who want to, to figure out their own solutions. Of course, if you don't want to, or don't have the time to do that work, my e-book just gives you what to do step-by-step, in five-minute increments.

Q: Do you have upcoming projects that my readers should have on their radar?

A: I am always coming up with new ways to help my clients. Most recently, I created the *Moving Mastery* teleclass to teach people how to have a

smooth and easy move (yes, it's possible). The recording and supporting material are available on my site. I also regularly run a live version of The 5-Minute Time Management Solution for those who prefer more hands-on help than a book.

3. Resources

HOW EDITORS THINK

"I read How Editors Think in one sitting and was engaged from beginning to end. It is well written, highly informative, and humorous—I found myself laughing out-loud in a few spots! Thanks for sharing the secrets of the trade."
—Mayra Lazara Dole, author of Down to the Bone

Inspired by my experience as a former Simon & Schuster editor, How Editors Think: The Real Reason They Rejected You reveals what it really takes to get published. For more information, visit:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/E-book.html>

SCHOLARLY BOOK PRIZE

Deadline: March 1

The Committee on Honors and Awards of the Modern Language Association invites authors to compete for the James Russell Lowell Prize, which will be awarded for a scholarly book published in 2012 by a current member of the association. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/a2ymu37>

ROSE RED REVIEW

Deadline March 10

Rose Red Review seeks to publish art, photography, fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry that best reflects the magic in the every day—work that honors the past, the moment, and the uncertain future. For more information, visit <http://roseredreview.org/>

\$2000 SHORT STORY PRIZE

Deadline: March 14

The Nelligan Prize offers \$2000 and publication in the Colorado Review for a short story. All entries are considered for publication. For more information, visit <http://coloradoreview.colostate.edu/nelligan-prize/>

\$1000 POEM PRIZE

Deadline: March 15

The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation offers \$1,000 for a previously unpublished poem. For more information, visit <http://www.torhouse.org>

\$20,000 NONFICTION FELLOWSHIP

Deadline: March 15

Washington College offers the Hodson-Brown Fellowship, which includes a stipend of \$20,000, to a writer of nonfiction (including creative nonfiction) working on a book relating to the literature, history, culture, or art of the Americas before 1830. For more information, visit <http://www.washcoll.edu/centers/starr/fellows.php>

\$10,000 FICTION/NONFICTION PRIZE

Deadline: March 31

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize offers two prizes of \$10,000 each for a work of fiction and a work of nonfiction, including creative nonfiction, that fosters peace, social justice, and global understanding. For more information, visit <http://daytonliterarypeaceprize.org/>

TEEN WRITING RESIDENCY

Deadline: April 3

The Atlantic Center for the Arts' your word Teen Writing Residency is for teens ages 14-18 and offers a wonderful opportunity to study with top notch master writers while exploring creativity in a nurturing environment. For more information, visit <http://www.atlanticcenterforthearts.org/>

SEEKING IMMIGRANT POETS

Deadline: April 15

Black Lawrence Press seeks submissions of essays by immigrant poets for an anthology entitled Others Will Enter the Gates: Immigrant Poets on Poetry, Influences, and Writing in America. For more information, visit <https://blacklawrencepress.submittable.com/submit>

WOMEN IN REDZINE

Women in REDzine is the first multicultural women's literature and art magazine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. About 75% of the writers featured per issue are debut authors. For more information, visit <https://womeninredzine.submittable.com/submit>

JUST PUBLISHED: UM . . . MOMMY, I THINK I FLUSHED MY BROTHER DOWN THE TOILET

Falisha Whiskers didn't mean to flush Jesse down the toilet—not entirely at least! Now she needs to find him and take him back home before her daddy gets back or they're both going to be in heaps of trouble. For ages 4-8. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/agyeoy9>

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

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“Until you value yourself, you will not value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.”

--M. Scott Peck

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