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Writing from Home: It Can Be Great and Not–So–Great for Mothers

By Sarah Smiley

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by: **Sarah Smiley**

I went to school to be a teacher. In fact, I have a B.S. in Education, not journalism.

Due to the hours and holidays, teaching is traditionally thought to be the best work for a mother who wants to keep one foot in the mommy–door and one foot in the career–door. This thought, paired with my love for children and learning, led me to life inside the schoolhouse doors.

Soon though, writing, not teaching, became my real "full time job," and it's been years since I set foot behind a teacher's podium.

There are times I miss teaching and regret I haven't used my diploma more, but who am I kidding? — freelance writing has to be the best situation for a stay–at–home mother: I get paid, I do something I love, and I don't leave the kids. What's more? I can stay in my pajamas all morning!

Sometimes people ask if the lack of structure and absence of a physical "office" bother me and make it hard to concentrate. Sure, I get sidetracked watching a great episode of Rolie Polie Olie with my son every now and then, and I take long, leisurely breaks to chat on the phone or go to lunch, but this isn't because I "work at home," it's because I'm an artist.

I only write when inspired and when it "feels right." Even if I sat behind a desk all day, I'd still piddle around and get distracted — it's my nature to jump from project–to–project, then zero–in on a particular piece when the mood strikes me. This is the artist in me. Just as a painter cannot be told, "Paint, now!" a writer cannot sit in front of a blank screen and expect great things to flow.

My best pieces, in fact, are written while I do such things as stand in line at the grocery store and wait at a red light, or during a commercial break from Oprah.

As I'm sure any artist can relate, I usually get a "feeling" when I have a great story brewing in my mind. This is, I think, the blessing and curse of creativity, because sometimes that "feeling" comes in the middle of a dinner party or at two o'clock in the morning and I have to race to find paper and jot my thoughts down. My husband has grown accustomed to me running in the door, heading straight to the computer and yelling as I go, "Can't talk....got a story on my mind.....need to get it on paper!"

So, while I love this profession for its adaptability with the children and being a mother, sometimes the unpredictable nature of my creativity poses a few problems. For instance, if inspiration causes me to stay up until 3 a.m. writing a great column, I'm little use to my high–energy children a few hours later when they get up at the crack–of–dawn.

Yes, I have the luxury of lounging in my pajamas and not going to an "office," but I struggle with the spontaneous nature of this business and the chaotic schedule it sometimes poses for my children and me.

I guess though, even if things were different and my life was more structured, I'd still be a fly–by–the–seat–of–my–pants kind of girl...that's just the life of an artist.

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– Sarah

Smiley's syndicated column Shore Duty appears weekly in newspapers across the country.

Here's What to expect at a Baby Shower

By Mike Yeager

A baby shower is a great way to welcome a new child and congratulate the new mother. Many mothers appreciate the help in purchasing the items they will need for their new baby. Commonly, baby showers are given only to new mothers or mothers who have not had a child in a long while. This way, friends and family, can help give the family the things babies need.

Baby showers are a tradition, but what happens at a baby shower is less formal for sure. Sometimes, friends and family members will hold a baby shower for a new Mom as a surprise. Often times, new mothers will get several showers thrown for her first child from different groups, such as one from friends, one from the mothers side of the family, and maybe one from her friends at work. Regardless of how many, these get–togethers are a great way for people to welcome the new child.

Planning a baby shower can be a lot of fun. For baby shower ideas, try checking online at the many websites that offer new parent information. Another place to get some ideas is at craft supply stores

where there are aisles and aisles of ideas. Some things to consider for your baby shower are baby shower invitations and baby shower favors. Other things to think about are baby shower decorations! Baby shower games can make a boring party a lot of fun. Most of these can even be free baby shower games by using items from around your home. For example, you can take a roll of toilet paper with you to the party. Each guest has to guess how many individual sheets it will take to circle the mother to be. Giving away small gifts can make these games even more fun.

Planning a baby shower and attending them can be a lot of fun. Take a trip to the craft store and look around at all the baby shower decorations, games, and favors they have to offer. Pull together some friends and plan a few baby shower games and make your own decorations. Pinks and blues in streamers and tablecloths can fill a room with excitement. Either way you are sure to make the mother to be happy and feeling loved.

Mike Yeager
Publisher

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