

TAYLOR'S TIPS for a more productive you...

Dear Friend,

Some of you may have seen this before, and if you have, bear with me. With summertime fast approaching, I thought it was a particularly good time to look at this again.

Picture this jar as your life:



Our lives aren't empty, in fact they're filled with many things, right? So let's talk about what we put into our jar.

The first thing that goes in are the priorities.



Let's call them the golf balls. They're the big things: the kids, the spouse, the job. And in our writing life, it's the big projects such as a novel or nonfiction book. How many golf balls you have in your jar is up to you, but for me, I can't have TOO many or I don't give each of them enough attention.

So you've put into your jar your priorities, now add in the secondary things.



These are the pebbles: the house, the yard, the bills, the extended family members, siblings, friends, dogs, cats. And in our writing life, it's the smaller projects such as a short personal experience story to an anthology like *Chicken Soup*, the newspaper article, the magazine piece, the query to a new source, attendance at conferences or writing events. You can fit in a lot of pebbles as long as they aren't too big.

So inside your jar sits your golf balls, and tumbling in around them are the pebbles of your life, now add in:



Sand. These are the small elements, the things you do every day: clean, cook, wipe noses, drive the kids to soccer practice and baseball games, wash clothes, help with homework, and a myriad of other things. In our writing life, the sand may include keeping track of submissions, revising and sending out again a query to an agent or editor, blogging, researching, drafting stories, looking up new markets, checking emails, posting on Facebook or Twitter, and a million other things that we do every day.

If you picture your jar now, it will be full. You've put in golf balls, then pebbles, and then sand. The sand trickled in around the golf balls and the pebbles. There's not an inch of room left.

Except for one thing:



Coffee. There's always room for coffee (or tea or juice or a glass of cold water). Pour the cup of coffee into the filled jar and you'll find there is indeed room as it trickles down through each layer. And what is the coffee in your life? It's moments of quietness and meditation and prayer, it's lunch with a friend, a shopping trip with your son or daughter, a phone call to mom who lives far away. In our writing life it might be a chat with a fellow writer met at a conference, or a critique of each other's work while sharing a hot brewed cup of your favorite beverage. Or even reading newsletters online that help you to grow as a writer. Make room in your busy, filled life for those moments of bliss that replenish and recharge the batteries.

Your jar of life will always be full, and that's a good thing. But be mindful of what you put into it, so you get the most out of it.

Happy writing and blessings on your work.

What's Happening...

Antelope Valley Christian Writers' Conference Whether you are an absolute beginner, a seasoned professional, or somewhere in between, this could be a great conference for you. Interact with professional writers and editors and attend workshops. Complimentary refreshments, continental breakfast, buffet lunch will be provided. May 14-15, 2010 in Lancaster, California. Look it up for more information. www.avwriters.com

Follow your dreams...

B.J.

Follow me on Facebook. I'm listed as B.j.Taylor (little j).

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