

**“Full-time writer? Really?”**

I get this comment a lot after I tell people what I do for a living. Eyebrows shoot up quizzically, mockingly or unbelievably, depending on how well the eyebrow owner knows me. Regardless of our relationship, however, most people don't think writing can be a full-time job. So I thought I'd do a post on this topic to tell everyone out there what it really means to have writing as your profession.

It's true, people – writing is, and can be, a full-time job. Of course, it can also be a part-time, not-so-serious, I-write-because-I-love-to-type sort of hobby, but for me, it is the former. It pays some of my bills, and I ain't gonna make fun of something like that. You need to be earnest and sincere in your profession as a writer, or else, no one will take you seriously.



Not that many do take you seriously, even after. One of my friends told me he sees me online on messenger all day long – surely, I couldn't be working then! Oh, but I am. Even as a full-time writer, I may not have constant projects. However, in those lean periods, I still need to stay ahead. So, I work on my article bank (a repository of articles that I write to send to various publications), update my blog, get involved on social networking forums, indulge in self-promotion, attend online writer meets, read magazines and newspapers to write letters about current topics to the editors, and research trends and tools in writing. I am online all day because I have clients pinging me for work, conference calls and meetings online, and research to be done on some new article I'm working on. I would call this work. Wouldn't you?



Am I trying to say it's all work and no play? No way, José! Just like in a *regular* job, I take a day off when there are no pressing projects and no shameless self-promotion to be done. At such times, on the odd occasion that I am online, I'm there just to chat up with friends. I take vacations – long ones – when I feel like it, or when H comes visiting. These are the pros of owning your own business – in my case, being a full-time writer.

So, what does it really mean to be a full-time writer? It means you need to be disciplined, professional and committed to your profession. You need to constantly challenge yourself and push your limits, without the promise of an impending promotion or a better KRA. Technically, you are working all the time as a writer – observing and learning from your environment, and storing that information for use later in an article or a blog. Like, taking a cue from someone's raised eyebrows when they hear you are a full-time writer and blogging about it!