Conquer Big Creative Projects Using Past, Present, and Future Focus

In the past 25 days, I have written five chapters for my first book, which currently stands at 35,554 words of text. This writing has happened around also taking three out-of-town trips, working with clients, writing my newsletter, completing guest posts, giving virtual training courses, keeping in touch with family and friends, and still sleeping an average of 6.5 hours a night (the amount I need to be at my prime). At first, I feared that I might lose my typically peaceful approach to work because of the enormity of the project and the tight publisher's deadline. But by using the techniques described below, I've found it **possible to manage a huge increase in my workload without becoming frantic**. Here are my secrets to using past, present, and future focus to tackle a large creative project with a fixed deadline:

Past Focus: When to Look Back

Big Picture: Looking backward plays a critical role in making your overall project plan. Before you begin, take some time to review any similar creative work. For example, if you were an illustrator taking on a new commission to illustrate a brochure, you might think back to a previous project in which you had to generate a similar volume of work. Then, based on the hard numbers from this past experience, you can estimate about how long you think it will take you to complete your current project and block out the time accordingly.

Day-to-Day: Once you have your overall plan in place, assess your actual versus estimated progress on a daily or weekly basis and adjust the plan accordingly. For instance, you could make a goal of finishing 1 of 10 illustrations this week and set aside 8 hours to do so based on your previous experience. If you get to the end of the week and haven't gotten the work done even though you put in 8 hours, you can decide how to allocate your hours the following week to finish the first drawing and keep on schedule for the other 9.

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Read the rest about present and future focus from Elizabeth here.