

Writing Conferences - Attending One Day is Better than None

The decisions we make about how we spend our time will have direct effect on whether or not we fulfill our writing goals. Often people fall into the "all or nothing" trap, believing there is little to be gained by attending a single day of a conference. Planned appropriately, attending any one day or a conference will be better than not attending at all.

Start with searching for writing conferences as close to your home base as possible, to reduce travel expense and eliminate need to spend the night. Or, search for conferences near relatives or friends so you can drive the distance while not being concerned with overnight accommodations.

Once you've decided to attend the conference, do as much advance planning around family needs as possible including any child care after school arrangements, and planning and preparing meals in advance where necessary. When I found a conference, it was during a time I had already made a commitment to spend time with our grand children. My husband pitched in, offering to help with this family assignment so I could attend for one day. The next challenge may be having enough funds to cover registration costs. Before you "throw in the towel," investigate the conference site for any scholarship or payment options. Don't automatically assume the issue is closed. Be open to writing conference sponsors to determine whether there are any opportunities to attend at a reduced cost.

Preparing to Attend. When considering a writers' conference for only one day, remember these key points.

Preplanning

First, read the details of the conference itinerary carefully, so you can plot your course based on timelines and topics. Review the listing of faculty, presenters, agents, and publishers attending. Then use the Internet to investigate details about those of interest to you.

Prepare clippings of any materials you have published to leave with interested editors or agents.

Carefully plan your professional look. Dressing for success is a key phrase to remember when attending a writers' conference. If you are serious about promoting your work, always dress like you're ready for the book signing at any moment.

Bring business cards. Never attend a conference without them. There are Internet sources, like vistaprint.com, that will enable you to purchase cards inexpensively.

Plan to Arrive Early The early bird does catch the choice worms. Because you have only one day, it is important to arrive early enough to select convenient sign-up times,

so you can meet with as many presenters, editors, publishers, literary agents as possible.

Move Around Introduce yourself to as many fellow writers as you can. Expand your base of associations. Writers need writers for encouragement and support. So make it a goal to connect and exchange business cards with at least three to five new people.

It is better to have even one day of quality time at a conference that enables you to be among the experts, supporters, and peers than to think it's not enough. The next time the announcement arrives, eliminate the objections, stay in the press, and master the possibilities of attending at least one day. You won't be disappointed.

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