

APRIL 2016 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY

PERSISTING DESPITE WHAT LIFE THROWS AT YOU

BY CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER PHILLIPS

March turned into a really hard month. One of those where you **can't** remember what day it is, whether you shampooed your hair or said the same thing three times in a row. Our family found itself in the middle of a medical crisis. The details **don't** matter here. Everyone gets life thrown at them in hard ways at some point.

It's okay—and probably very good—to pull in a bit during these periods. Take care of yourself. Change priorities. Ask for help. Some writers put projects on hold during disruptive times if they can. Some stress about doing this, while others **don't** if **they're** able to take the long view of things. Some writers **don't** want to break their groove, determined to keep projects alive during these phases. **I'm** one of those.

What is practical, of course, depends on the scope of the crisis and what **it's** taking out of you in time, energy and wellness. I can only share how I try to approach such blips, whether **it's** about writing or other life activities.

Be picky. Maybe you have multiple projects in the works, or even multiple tasks related to one project. Be willing to scale back without completing stopping.

Be flexible. Maybe you usually carve a certain amount of time on certain days to research and write. Suddenly **it's** turned on its head and **you've** lost your mojo. **Don't** throw your hands up. Experiment with less time, new times, new locations, longhand vs computer.

Be persistent. Or pick your favorite synonym, like tenacious, determined, obstinate, stubborn, tireless, steadfast. Go back to picky and flexible to help with this one.

You may have a concrete deadline driving the need to keep writing. **I've** been there before. But, often, **it's** really about retaining some level of control when parts of your life feel out of control. And retaining some creative activity can be so good for the soul. **It's** therapy, at a time when you really, really need it.

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