

“Early Mornings Provide Sweet Writing Times”

By Kim Seidel

The response from my in-laws to my early morning e-mail sounded dramatic: “Hope you weren’t up at 3:30 a.m. writing it. You should’ve been fast asleep. Please say that isn’t so!”

My reply to them was, “I am so happy to be working early like this. I know then that I have a chunk of quiet time to work, and my head is very clear.”

Since I chose to stay home with my daughter and pursue a freelance writing career, I give countless explanations for my early morning hours, which to most, is considered in the middle of the night.

Why even bother to tell others when I write, you may wonder. Our culture often values work more than it does family and defines people by their careers, rather than what they are inside. People constantly ask other, “What do you do?”

Some people genuinely care about me – like my in-laws. But usually when I respond to someone with—“I stay home with my daughter and I’m a writer”—I meet a variety of expressions, ranging from admiration and disbelief to puzzlement and amazement.

Despite the reactions of others, I need to follow my internal clock and work when I’m most productive. Along with my natural love of the predawn, my major motivation for writing from home and keeping the hours that I do is for Rachel,

my extremely active and spirited 2-year-old daughter.

Though I love to write, I want to spend my day with my daughter, reading to her, playing in the park, and just hanging out together, splashing in puddles or watching the clouds. These precious moments of her toddler years are speeding by too fast. Already her babyhood seems like a distant memory.

To stay in touch with my writing side of life, I keep a notebook on hand to jot down thoughts and story ideas as they come to me during the day. I’ve learned these inspirations usually won’t return to me later, if I ignore them. I give my daughter her own tablets and crayons so she doesn’t feel left out when I’m writing notes. I also may take time to return telephone calls and check my e-mail, but the bulk of my business is done before she wakes up.

I don’t pretend to be super human during these early mornings. Sometimes when my alarm goes off, I hit the snooze button—and then maybe again. I most easily spring out of bed when I have deadlines to meet and fun projects to work on. It’s critical for me to make a list the night before of goals I want to accomplish during my work hours.

Once I am out of the bedroom and into my basement office, framed pictures of a smiling Rachel on my desk help keep me focused. I

listen to my favorite CDs and drink a cup or two of strong black coffee. Lighting a scented candle near my computer area also sets the mood for my creative spirits.

The quiet during these early mornings is as rich and comforting as the cool chocolate pudding from my childhood. Like the sweet whip cream topping the dessert, my treat in the morning is that after several hours of uninterrupted work, I can return to bed for a while.

When my toddler wakes me up, asking for toast and juice, it’s almost as though my writing time was only a dream. I feel refreshed and ready to begin a new day with my daughter.