

Picking up the Courage to Write During Challenging Times

I don't always have the courage to write all the time, but I got through it regardless

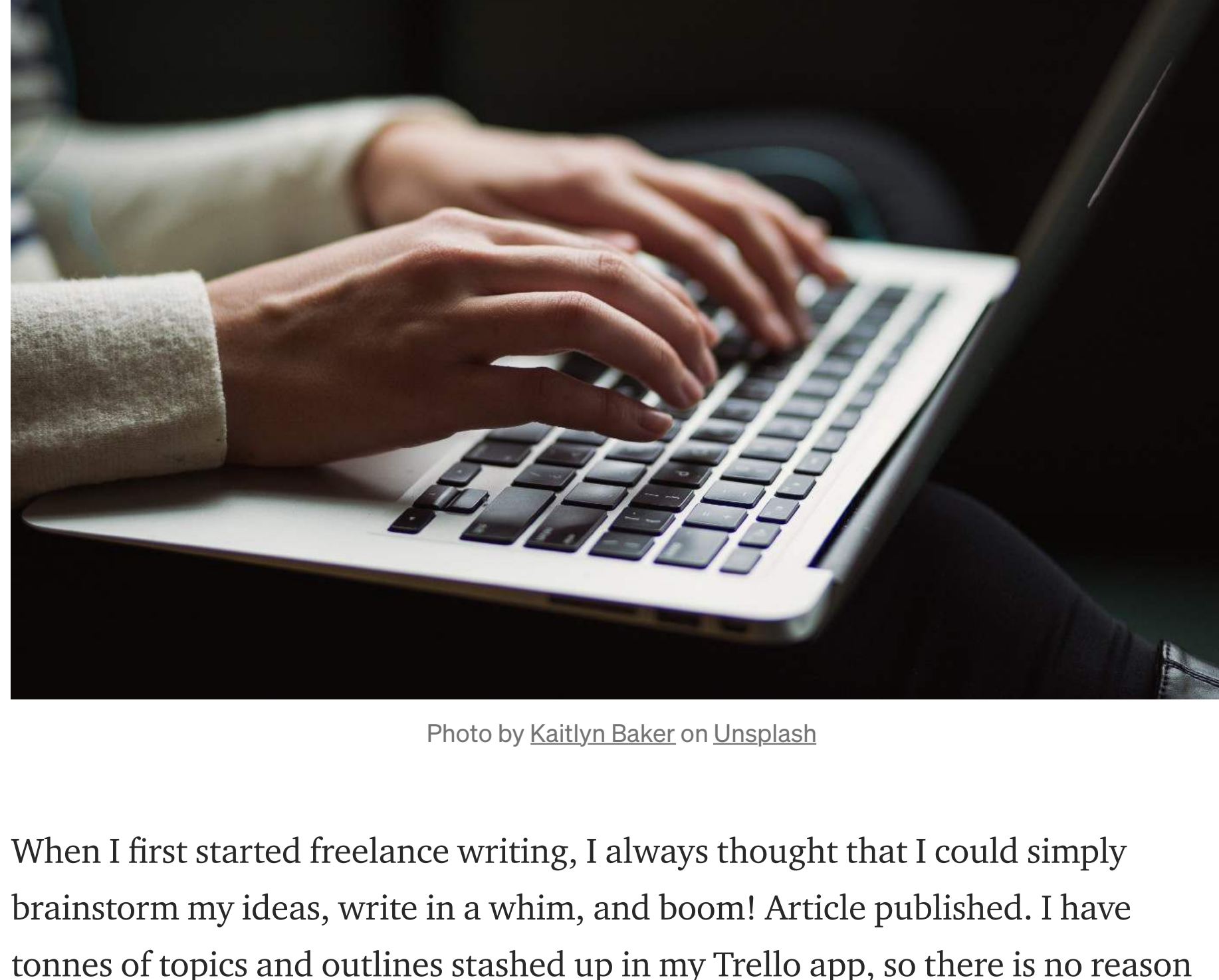


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When I first started freelance writing, I always thought that I could simply brainstorm my ideas, write in a whim, and boom! Article published. I have tonnes of topics and outlines stashed up in my Trello app, so there is no reason not to write articles more often, right? I mean, why not? I have already planned what to write in advance, so I should have been writing already. Am I right?

Not exactly.

Don't get me wrong. In this challenging time right now, I see it as a blessing in disguise to focus more on writing and publish more articles online, especially when I am doing my work from home for the time being. But then, there are too many variables that caused me to be like:

"Maybe I should write later." "I'm not in the mood of writing right now. I still have tomorrow." "Oh, I have something else to do. I'm going to put off my writing for now."

And this goes on and on and on. When turning on the next day, the same phrases and statements nag my mind endlessly. I must admit, this situation happens to me for a few days now, and it severely cripples my productivity and time that I could have been used to write instead! Heck, I did read a lot of articles on productivity hacks on how not to procrastinate.

I have attempted to implement the **Pomodoro technique**, as well as blocking potentially-distracting sites so that I can truly focus on what I supposed to do: writing. Unfortunately, both methods didn't seem to work on my end as I ended up doing something else that has nothing to do with writing! Well, you can say that it is my fault for not adhering to the methods strictly-speaking.

But the inside me tells that forcing me not to do anything else other than writing caused me to feel mentally-draining and will only discourage myself from writing further. Sounds counter-intuitive, isn't it? Even I could have shut myself off from the outside world for a specific time so that I can start to write. But the same thing happened, another kind of distraction kicked in.

Eventually, I have been in a way that, rather than punishing myself for not writing or suppressing myself for focusing on other stuff, I should have acknowledged it that it is a problem. Or should I say, is it not really a problem? I am just being me, after all. Getting distracted is pretty much part of me, and here is my unpopular opinion: distraction is a good thing in some ways. The same can be said for writing. The moment I want to start writing, I may end up not writing at all, and I don't see it as a bad thing anymore.

With that said, I found out that some things did improve my writing along the way. Yes, procrastination remains in the grip of my soul, but the stuff that I did during the time, which I supposed to do the writing, actually encourages me to write even more at a later time.

First thing first, the word processing program

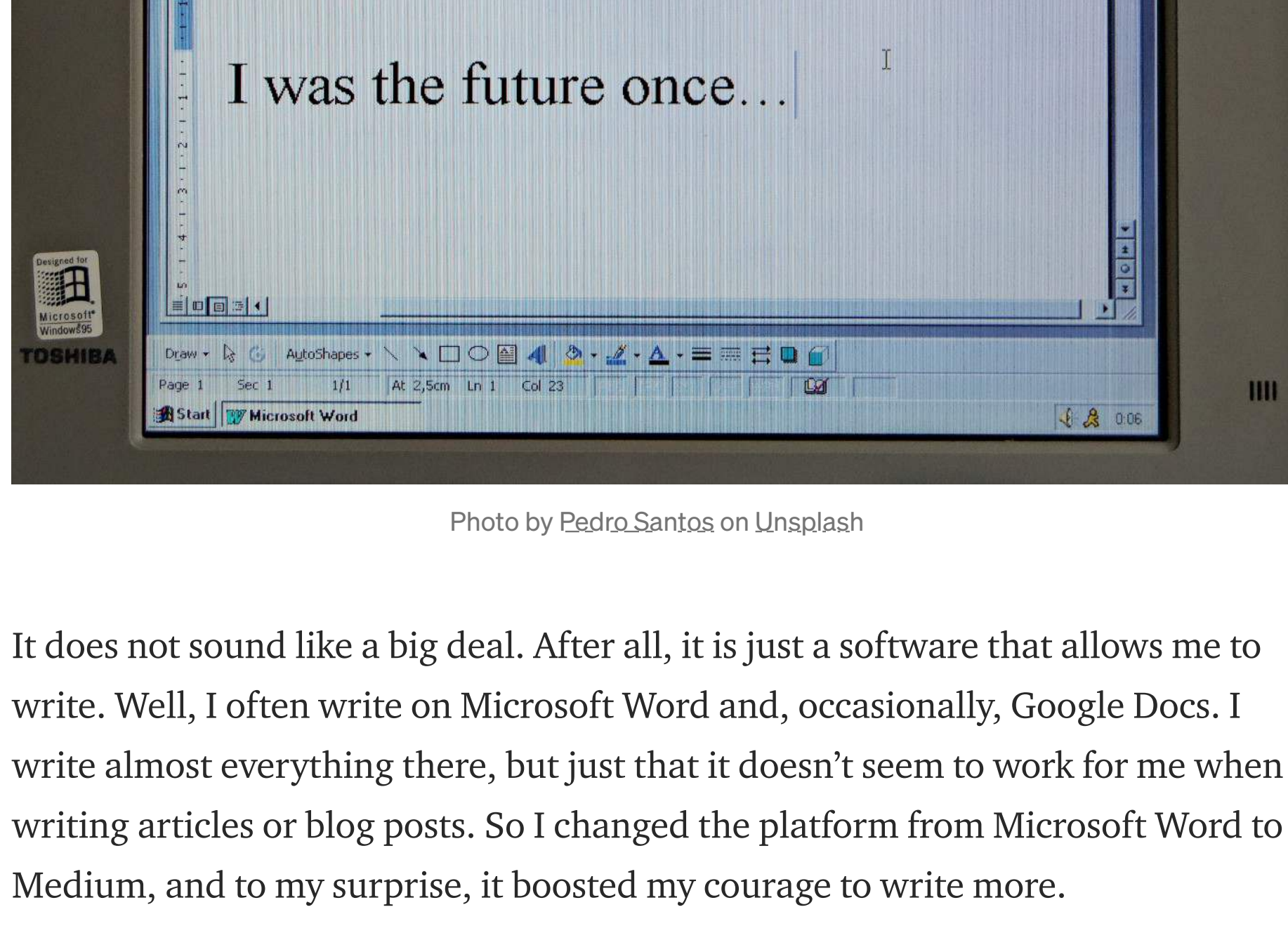


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It does not sound like a big deal. After all, it is just a software that allows me to write. Well, I often write on Microsoft Word and, occasionally, Google Docs. I write almost everything there, but just that it doesn't seem to work for me when writing articles or blog posts. So I changed the platform from Microsoft Word to Medium, and to my surprise, it boosted my courage to write more.

Why I prefer Medium over other platforms and software? Sure, Microsoft Word and Google Docs have tons of features and settings that I can dabble. But in the end, I am more fascinated with the Medium's writing platform. Very minimalistic, just the white color up, down, left, and right, except, of course, the top bar with the green publish button, which is not distracting at all. Apparently, the minimalistic writing platform is what I need.

Plan ahead before writing

Despite my procrastinating and lack of courageous attitude, I tend to plan my writing in advance. I search for more topics and headlines on what to write and draft outlines for such topics. At least I won't be clueless about how to structure my writing later on. I also review the existing drafts that I wrote and see whether it fits with the audience or what I intend to convey. If not, I would redo the drafts again, or ditch the headline altogether.

Read, read, and read!

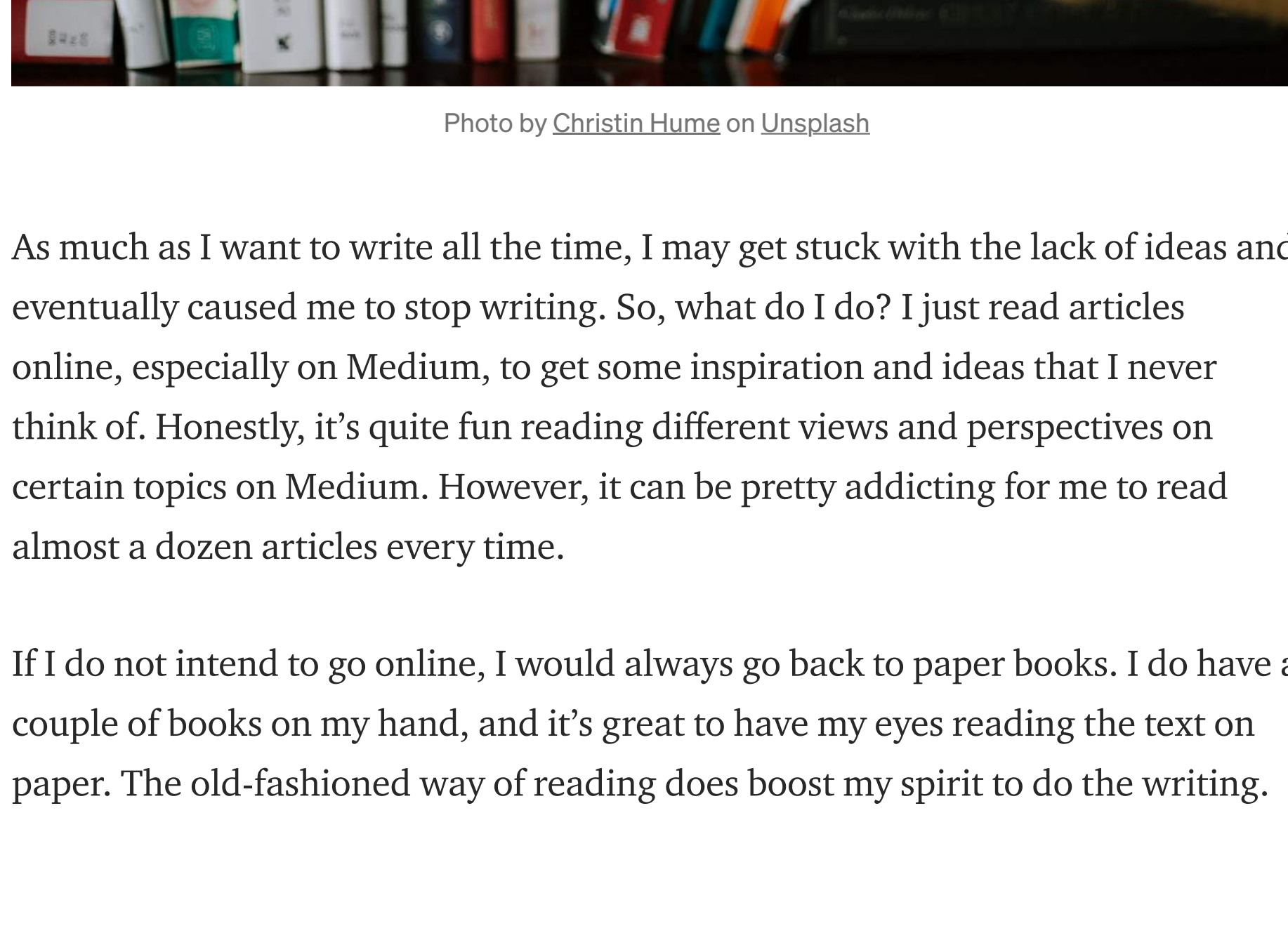


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As much as I want to write all the time, I may get stuck with the lack of ideas and eventually caused me to stop writing. So, what do I do? I just read articles online, especially on Medium, to get some inspiration and ideas that I never think of. Honestly, it's quite fun reading different views and perspectives on certain topics on Medium. However, it can be pretty addicting for me to read almost a dozen articles every time.

If I do not intend to go online, I would always go back to paper books. I do have a couple of books on my hand, and it's great to have my eyes reading the text on paper. The old-fashioned way of reading does boost my spirit to do the writing.

Of course, more importantly

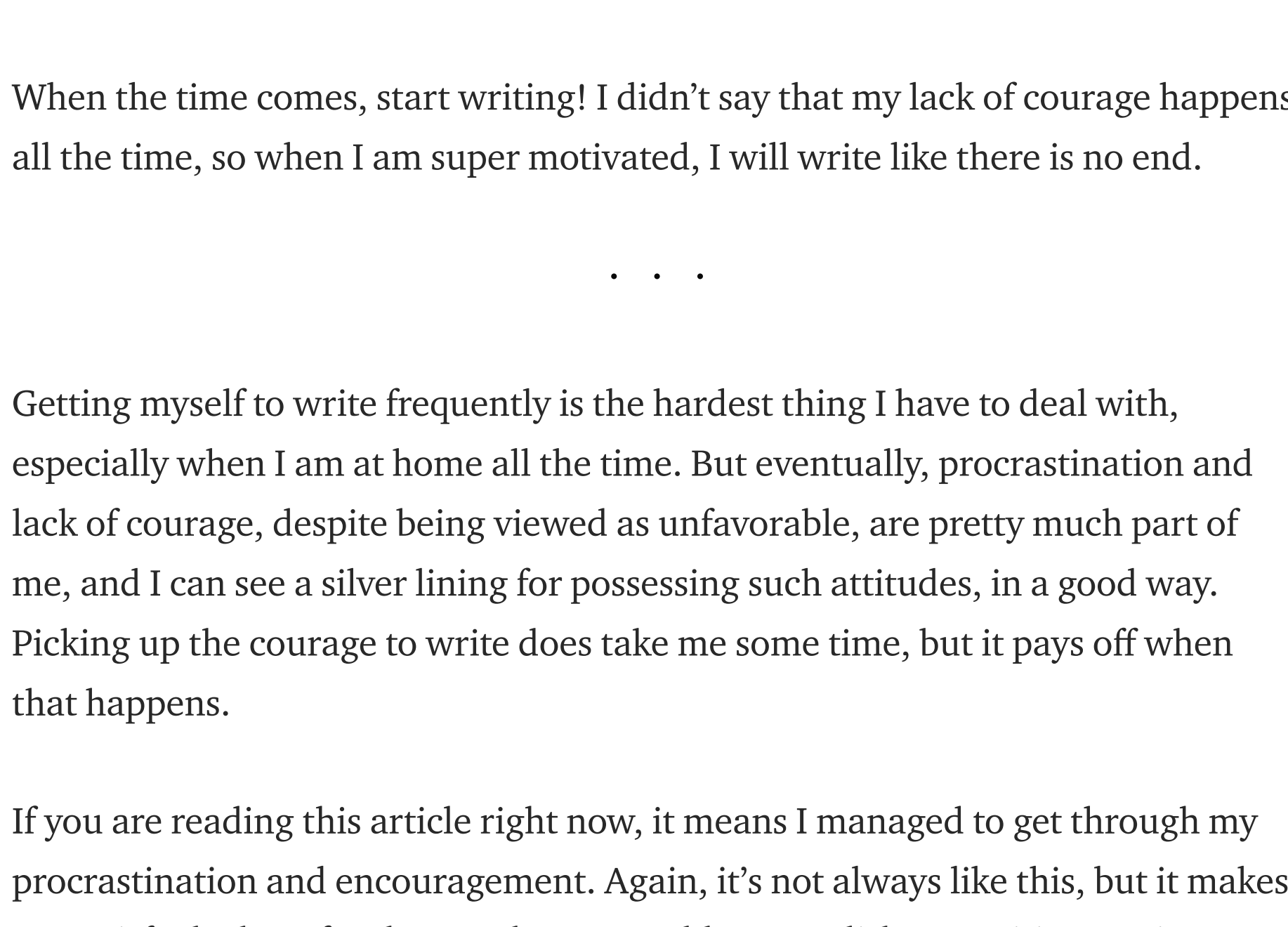


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When the time comes, start writing! I didn't say that my lack of courage happens all the time, so when I am super motivated, I will write like there is no end.

Getting myself to write frequently is the hardest thing I have to deal with, especially when I am at home all the time. But eventually, procrastination and lack of courage, despite being viewed as unfavorable, in a much good way. Picking up the courage to write does take me some time, but it pays off when that happens.

If you are reading this article right now, it means I managed to get through my procrastination and encouragement. Again, it's not always like this, but it makes me satisfied when, for the very least, I could accomplish my writing on time. Congratulations to me!

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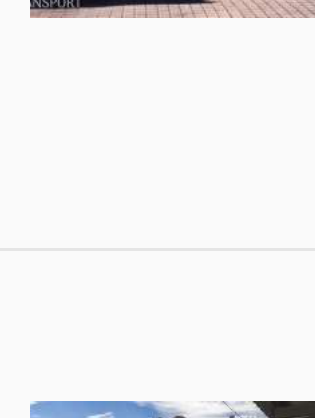
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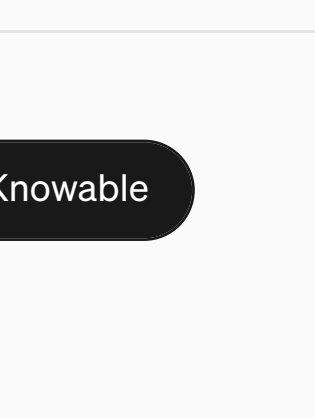
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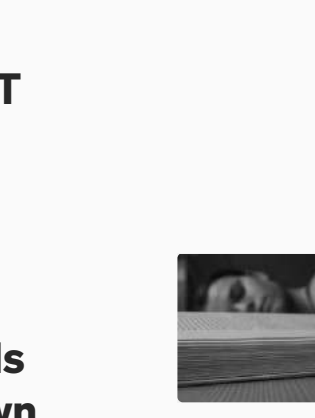
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