



Deadlines and Achievements

By Nancy Julien Kopp

Years ago, I told my five-year-old son he could not start kindergarten until he learned to tie his shoes. “The teacher is too busy to do it for every boy and girl,” I added for emphasis. For weeks, he struggled, gave up, and tried again and again. The day before school started, he achieved his goal. What happiness radiated from that little face when he demonstrated his new ability to me!

This little episode illustrates two universal truths. We push ourselves harder when there is a deadline and achievement is all the sweeter when we can share our success with others.

In our writers’ world, don’t we tend to work better when there is a specified deadline? Of course we do. Without a deadline, life tends to get in our way. We make vague promises to ourselves, thinking things like, Tomorrow, I’ll get to it. Tomorrow arrives, the phone rings and we’re off to another meeting or picking up a sick child or grandchild at school.

But if a story must be sent to an editor by Thursday, we’ll create time and get the job done. We move the assignment to the top of our To-Do list, knowing that the machine can answer the phone and pizza places deliver night and day. Few of us like to dust or vacuum anyway, so that’s not a problem. The library committee meeting can go on without us this time and a niece will appreciate a check for her birthday as much as a gift.



Achievement is accomplished by setting priorities and being firm in keeping them. An old cliché, Get your ducks in a row, is a good illustration. If we’re wishy-washy, our goals float farther and farther away. For this reason alone, we must block out everything but the writing project deadline. We don’t want to face failure or the humiliation of

telling the editor the piece is not ready.



Kirk (age 5) and younger sister Karen, approximately 1974

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When we receive good news from an editor, we've achieved a goal. We radiate joy sharing news of an acceptance from a publisher, especially with those who mean so much to us. Satisfaction of meeting a deadline and having an editor happy with our work settles over us like a warm comforter.

This one victory, however, is not the end. Success only inspires us to continue writing and submitting. If you receive 11 rejections and one acceptance, which one do you think you'll remember the longest?



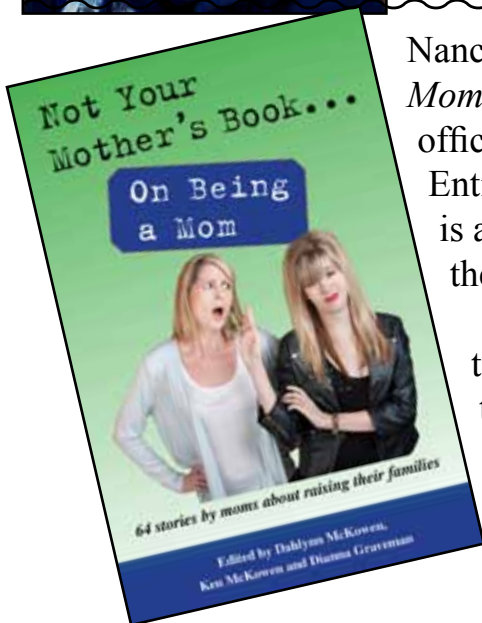
That small son of mine is now a successful businessman. He learned all about achievement before he went to kindergarten. Here's hoping you did, too. If not, it's never too late to learn.



Kirk today, with his wife Amy and their pups Charlie (left) and Tex (right)



Nancy Julien Kopp is a purveyor of the written word. Having been published in many *Not Your Mother's Books*, 17 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* titles, and other anthologies, newspapers, magazines and ezines, Nancy shares her wealth of writing knowledge on her successful blog "Writer Granny's World" (<http://writergrannysworld.blogspot.com>). A resident of Manhattan, Kansas, Nancy was named Prose Writer of the Year in 2013 by the Kansas Authors Club.



Nancy's story from *NYMB...On Being a Mom* is currently featured on NYMB's official blog "Laugh Until You Pee." Entitled "Off the Hook," Nancy's story is again about Kirk...and the birds and the bees! <http://bit.ly/1JvbMus>

This blog is written by YOU, the talented writers who have stories in the NYMB series! Promote yourself and the series.

Again, sign up at www.LaughUntilYouPee.com.



This book makes a great Mother's Day present!



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Deadline: August 3, 2015

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