

## Top 10 Signs You're Near the End of Your Novel by D.V. Berkom

1. You don't go into cardiac arrest and frantically hit 'save' every time your laptop screen blips
2. The cat won't even bother to come into the office because of the stench
3. There aren't any dishes in the kitchen—they're embedded in your desk and the floor in your office and have dried, crusty green things growing on them that you consider having for lunch because you don't want to take the time to cook
4. You realize you no longer have a cat because you forgot to feed him and he's decided to live at the neighbors
5. You wonder when your spouse grew a beard and realize your protagonist has to have one because it's a metaphor and will make the story richer whereupon you comb through your manuscript searching for places to insert the new description which changes the story so much you have to re-read the damned thing again and you're sick sick sick to death of it and then decide to scrap the idea half way through
6. You've forgotten your sister's name and call her Max
7. Your spouse opens the door and peeks their head in and asks you an innocent question, like where's the kitty litter, and you jump down their throat because you were in the zone in the middle of a scene and they freaking have no idea how hard it is to get there and now you'll never *ever* find that flow again and don't they know they just *ruined* the whole entire book because of that one simple question and then they storm out of the house and don't come back for a week and you can't remember why they left because you're back in the zone and writing again
8. On Monday morning you think you've written THE Great American Novel, and PBS, Netflix, HBO, and Amazon will be falling over themselves to secure the rights to make it into a movie/series/extravaganza/orgy-of-fantasticness
9. Twenty minutes later you *know* it's the worst dross that has ever been devised by anyone, living or dead, and doesn't deserve to breathe the same air as an ISIL terrorist and seriously, you call yourself a writer? You're sure your career is over and your readers will think you've gone off the deep end and will tell you to just quit, quit now while you still have your dignity—and you consider it.
10. You've been writing in someone else's point of view for so long you're surprised to see yourself in the mirror
11. You go to the bathroom and devise a brilliant way to get your protagonist out of the corner you've written them into and try to take notes on toilet paper with a half-empty

tube of toothpaste because there's nothing to write with and you're sure you'll forget. Then, when you get back to your desk, you realize the idea won't work and throw the painstakingly written notes in the trash and realize that now you have no more toothpaste but that it doesn't really matter because you haven't brushed your teeth in weeks

12. You can no longer find your couch because of the dust
13. You think Personal Hygiene is a suburb of Cincinnati
14. You can't remember where the 'on' button is for your vacuum, and wonder where the USB port is
15. You get to the end of your Top Ten list and realize you've forgotten how to count