



PART 7 - OVERCOMING WRITERS BLOCK

What is Writers Block?

Writers block was first defined as an explanation for stuck writers relatively recently, less than 100 years ago. (What did writers blame for their lack of production before that?) Writer's block has been defined as the temporary loss of ability to continue writing, commonly due to a lack of inspiration or creativity. However, the concept of writer's block has rapidly grown to include quite a number of ideas. Some of the wide range of meanings that tend to be included under this one umbrella of "writers block" include any delay in the "process" of writing, a lack of inspiration, and/ or a lack of motivation. Since almost all writers go through stages and or encounters with these elements, it's been said that all writers have suffered from writer's blocks.

Causes of Writers Block

Poor health, depression, debilitating lack of confidence, or fear of failure, can cause a creative block. Sylvia Plath once wrote, "the worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." Many other writers have echoed this sentiment. Fear will cause writers to sabotage themselves, to not write a book or an article even when an editor is waiting for it. Poor sales, harsh critics, or reader indifference will convince even the most courageous writer that no one cares about their work. Others will persuade themselves that nothing they write will ever be as interesting or as accomplished as what has already been written. We convince ourselves that we have nothing of any importance to say, that everything we write is mundane and trivial.

If you are feeling blocked don't be so down on yourself. Here is a list of some famous authors who have contracted this mind boggling ailment.

F. John Fitzgerald
John Fowles
Leo Tolstoy
Virginia Woolf
Ernest Hemingway
Joseph Conrad

"I believe that the so-called 'writing block' is a product of some kind of disproportion between your standards and your performance. I can imagine a person beginning to feel that he's not able to write up to that standard he imagines the world has set for him. But to me that's surrealistic. The only standard I can rationally have is the standard I'm meeting right now. Of course I can write. Anybody can write. People might think that their product is not worthy of the person they assume they are. But it is." (William Stafford, *Writing the Australian Crawl*. Univ. of Michigan Press, 1978)

Being surrounded by what inspires you.

A great way to inspire you to write is to refer to the authors and books that you have read and loved.

When I run dry on motivation I simply pick up a book I adore, flip through some pages and



read a few paragraphs. This always gets the juices flowing. Never be intimidated by the writers you admire and never think that you cannot achieve the same level of quality as they have. Remember at one time they would have thought the same. When being inspired by your favorite writer you only need to take what works for you whether it be the style or just the feel of it. This does not mean you are imitating them but are merely drawing inspiration. It is handy to have a few copies of your favorite books by your side when you sit down to write.

Task: Write down your five favorite authors

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- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

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- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Conquering boredom.

Boredom is a creative killer, which is based on the irrational fear a writer has when he or she thinks that they have nothing of note to impart to the reader. This is actually a myth.

A writer's story only becomes boring when the scribe stops inquiring earnestly about him or herself and their imminent surroundings. Observing daily reality and combining it with the imagination makes for perfect bedfellows when endeavoring to write a story—be it fiction or non fiction.

What you wish to express not only counts, but is also unique.

We are all a unique part of the chain of humanity and this enables us to express our own perspective upon the world. Sure there are parallel experiences and reflections but they are also a crucial part of the overall connection a writer wants to make with the reader.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were



born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others. - [Marianne Williamson]

Task: To prove to you that you have something of interest to express, write about a crucial incident that changed the course of your life. Then write down the insight you gained from the experience.

Incident

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Insight Gained

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Use a synopsis as way to keep on track.

Writing a synopsis is an effective way to bring your book into actualization even if you haven't written a word yet. When writing you should keep it somewhere where you can see it in order to keep the creative fires burning and on course.



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The hook

Another useful way to keep you on track is to write the opening hook to your book. A good book title will arouse interest in a prospective reader, but the opening few lines or paragraph will ultimately sell it. Writing an effective hook will also help set the overall tone of your story.

Here is an example of some great opening lines.

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

Alice In Wonderland - Lewis Carroll

Once upon a time, there was a woman who discovered she had turned into the wrong person.

Anne Tyler - Back When We Were Grownups

It was a pleasure to burn.

Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury

The man in black fled across the desert, and the Gunslinger followed.

The Gunslinger - Steven King

Lolita. Light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.

Lolita - Vladimir Nabokov

They’re out there. Black boys in white suits up before me to commit sex acts in the hall and



get it mopped up before I can catch them.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest - Ken Kesey

I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day in January of 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan, in August of 1974.

Middlesex- Jeffrey Eugenides

You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly.

The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn- Mark Twain

It began as a mistake.

Post Office - Charles Bukowski

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.

1984 - George Orwell

We started dying before the snow, and like the snow, we continued to fall.

Tracks - Louise Erdrich,

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

The Hobbit - J.R.R. Tolkien

The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.

Neuromancer - William Gibson

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

The Catcher in the Rye - J.D. Salinger



It was the day my grandmother exploded.

The Crow Road - Iain Banks

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

A Tale of Two Cities - Charles Dickens

Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-eight million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams

I am a sick man... I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I think my liver is diseased.

Notes from the Underground - Fyodor Dostoevsky

We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas - Hunter S. Thompson

I had the story, bit by bit, from various people, and, as generally happens in such cases, each time it was a different story.

Ethan Frome - Edith Wharton

Task: Write a hook for your book.

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Meditate – If you are open to it meditation can be a great source for connecting with your muse before you write. Taking five to ten minutes to clear your mind and meditate can be



invaluable, to help fuel your literary inspiration. A good way to meditate is to repeat a positive affirmation or mantra by either speaking it out loud or quietly in your mind.

Positive Affirmations

Positive affirmations are much more than statements that are simply repeated and “believed in.” When you use affirmations in the right way, they can literally transform your life. If you’ve heard of affirmations and thought they were cheesy, hokey or down right dumb you’ve probably been exposed to pop culture’s take on this important practice. Positive affirmations are simply a way of taking control of the process that has been happening since you were born. Any time you repeat a statement with feeling and conviction it becomes part of the way you understand the world. Up until this point, you haven’t had control of this process. Applying this method to your writing can be an invaluable tool to use when feeling creatively blocked.

How to write an affirmation.

1. Keep your affirmations in the positive at all times!
2. Phrase your affirmations as if they are already occurring in your life. You want to activate thoughts that will lead to your desires being manifested right now...not in the future.
3. If you have trouble staying positive, make a list of things that you don’t want and then start from there. You definitely know what you don’t want! So just use that list as a jumping off point.
4. Don’t try to cram too many things into one affirmation. Keep each one focused on one idea.

Here are some examples of affirmations.

Every day, in every way, I’m getting better and better.
I easily anticipate and experience events in my imagination before they actually happen.
I am my own expert, and I am not affected by the negative attitudes and opinions of others.
I easily balance the needs of my family with my own need to write.
Creativity flows through me easily and effortlessly.
I am a talented writer.

Task: Write an affirmation.

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Using your intuition.

The serendipitous events are proof positive that you’re hearing and following your intuition. When we receive this direct knowledge we’ve tapped into the source that keeps the planets in their orbit, and the earth spinning on its axis. This infinite intelligence doesn’t



make mistakes. By plugging into it and using these intuitive insights our lives flow and all the details come together seamlessly.

Most people don't recognize or trust their intuition

The biggest hurdles most people face in putting intuition to use are in recognizing the voice of intuition and differentiating it from their own thoughts, and trusting what they get.

Intuitive thoughts stream through the mind more rapidly than our own thoughts. Not only that, but when they do appear they're usually complete ideas. In many cases they feel as if they were downloaded whole into the brain. As far as trust goes, only jumping in with both feet and following hunches enough times to know that it's real will build that trust.

Here are 5 easy tips to help you hone your intuition and put it to work for you in your creativity:

1. Create the intention to begin noticing your intuition. Tell yourself that you want to become aware of your intuitive insights and that you will become aware of them.
2. Keep a small notebook with you at all times where you can jot down any thoughts that appear to have been downloaded whole into your mind without you generating them.
3. Give yourself many opportunities to practice. Before answering the phone ask yourself who it might be. When meeting with friends see if you get any impressions about what they will be wearing.
4. Make it a habit to meditate every day. [Meditation](#) is the most powerful way to boost your intuition.
5. When you're faced with a decision close your eyes and clear your mind. Ask yourself what you should do – then stop thinking. See what comes to mind no matter how silly it might be. It could be an image, a word, or a thought. Examine this closely. It's usually your answer.

Work on incorporating these tips into your life and I guarantee you'll see a huge rise in your intuitive insights and the number of seemingly miraculous coincidences that occur not only in your life but also in your writing.

Some other tips

Exercising: Simply walking or playing a sport creates endorphins in the body that can energize your mind into action. Another great way to blast through a block is boxing.

Sleep: Turn off the mind and regenerate your batteries with a cat nap.

Music: Listening to your favorite music as you write can truly emote and rouse your creative juices.

Stop: Simply walk away and write again another day.

Hypnosis: A reputable practitioner in the field can do wonders.

NLP: Neuro-linguistic programming is a technique that reprograms negative thought patterns.



EFT: Emotional Freedom Technique is closely related to NLP and can be easily learned and performed on oneself. Check it out on the NET and see for yourself.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

— **Marianne Williamson**