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7 Easy Ways to Ease Ezine Writer's Block

By Alicia Forest

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If you publish an ezine regularly, inevitably there are times when you get stuck and can't quite come up with the perfect article for your issue. Sometimes just taking a break and coming back later will give you a fresh start. But other times you need more of a "writing prompt" to get you going. The following 7 ways should help you get unstuck and get writing:

1. Write a Tip Sheet

Sometimes it's easier to get started by creating a list of tips. How to _____, The 5 Ways to _____, Top Ten Tips to _____. Write a couple of sentences for each tip, and before you know it, you have a completed article full of practical information for your readers.

2. Answer Your Most Frequently Asked Questions

As your clients interact with you, you'll likely get the same kinds of questions over and over. Take one or two of your most frequently asked questions and answer it in an article.

3. Use a Client's Scenario

Protecting your client's privacy (or not, if they give you permission), use their scenario as a case study. Explain the client's situation and what recommendations you gave, as well as what the results were. This will help build your credibility in your prospect's eyes as well, as this gives them the chance to see you "at work."

4. Comb Through Your Reading Box

Do you have a Reading Box (or tray, file, pile)? If you're like me, I get a ton of info via email everyday that I really do want to read, so I have a box where I toss all the stuff I print into (actually, it's now two

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boxes!). Go through your own pile, and see what ideas pop up for you from there. (I do this often when I'm trying to switch from mommy-mode to businesswoman-mode.)

5. Learn Something New and Pass It Along

Did you learn something new recently that you can share with others? Or is there something you want to learn more about? Go and do some preliminary research and share your findings with your readers.

6. Interview an Expert

I love this one, but don't overdo it. Your readers want to hear from you, which is why they are reading YOUR ezine. But once in awhile, having an interview as an article, as long as it provides valuable content for your readers, can be a nice change and even fun. Send your expert 3–5 questions to

answer, and turn the interview into an article by adding an introductory and concluding paragraph. (I enjoy giving these kinds of interviews myself, so if you'd like to interview me for your ezine, shoot me an email at

alicia@clientabundance.com

and let me know.)

7. Get Back to Basics

Think back to when you were just starting out in your business. What were the things you found most challenging? Choose one or two and offer your advice on how to get beyond those stumbling blocks.

Any of these ideas should get you started, and then the words will start to flow. I know when I'm writing sometimes, I'm thinking "ugh – not in the writing groove today at all" but once I get going, I'm usually pretty happy with the end result (but I do LOVE to revise, and revise, and revise... :)).

Alicia M Forest, MBA, Multiple Streams Queen & Coach™, & Founder of

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Thawing Your Writer's Block

By Mary Anne Hahn

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When I go through bouts of writer's block, my fingers stiffen, and my brain goes as blank as the snowy screen of a television on the fritz.

I don't know about you, but I picture writer's block as something cold—like the frozen engine of a car in the dead of winter, or the way your PC sometimes "freezes up" on you when your system gets too busy.

Looking at it that way actually helps to overcome it. Rather than feeling like you are grasping at fog, visualizing writer's block as something three-dimensional can provide you with both the strength to confront it, and the weapons to conquer it.

How can you thaw your writer's block of ice? Try any or all of the following:

1. Chip away at it. No need to write "War and Peace" in one sitting; Tolstoy certainly didn't. Fifteen minutes a day are all you need to give your writing dream some life and structure. Use them to write anything, anything at all—as many article ideas as you can think of, a synopsis of a story idea, a climactic scene in your novel, a limerick, a character sketch, step by step instructions for making the perfect omelet or what you would do if you won the lottery.

Have some fun with these 15-minute exercises, and you'll probably rediscover the truth in the adage that "time flies" when you do.

2. Light a match to it. By this I mean, don't think about the fact that you are not currently writing; rather, think about why you ever wanted to be a writer in the first place. Better yet, *write* about why you want to be a writer. Do you have stories burning inside you that need to be told? Or do you see writing as your key to personal fulfillment or freedom? Melt away writer's block by reigniting your passion for writing—the old daydreams, the past feelings of triumph or accomplishment when you finished a piece of work.

3. Carve a sculpture out of it. If you simply can't break it down or melt it away, make something from your writer's block of ice. As I did above, write about how you feel when you experience writer's

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block, or what you think writer's block looks like. Maybe look for humor in it ("What did one writer's block say to the other?" "Nothing—it couldn't find the right words!" Okay, that's a bit lame, but you get the idea).

Whenever writer's block tries to come between you and your writing aspirations, don't try to avoid it. Instead, face it head on. Play with it, laugh at it, scoff at it, or befriend it. Make it something that you can take into your hands and deal with.

Turn it into one more tool that you can use to achieve your writing success.

Mary Anne Hahn is editor and publisher of "WriteSuccess," THE biweekly ezine of ideas, information and inspiration for writers. To subscribe, <mailto:writesuccess-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>



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