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A Writer's Inner Battle

By Grace V. Planas

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by: **Grace V. Planas**

There is a psychological nuisance so powerful that can deflate the drive, self-esteem, and human spirit of many aspiring Writers of any age. These Writers are faced with an obstacle that make them stop, think twice and question their right to be a part of a respected community. This even leads them to doubt their ambition of pursuing their literary or journalistic calling.

It is that inner voice echoing: Huh! Who do you think you are, a J. K. Rowling in the making? or Oh my God, stop pretending you have a literary mind! and more similar lines of thinking. Some may call it a fiend while others may describe it as the self-defeating aspect of a person.

If you have been afflicted as I have been, do not worry, the voice speaks only in behalf of detractors, real or imagined. It is not the embodiment of the authentic gift of creativity you and I were born with.

When you know you have a great idea brewing in your head that you could almost see it completed in your mind, strike the keys; When the voice blows its cacophony horn, resist the urge to stop.

Mind and Behavior

How your thinking becomes your staunch enemy at times has reasons of its own.

While confidence takes a respite, this occupational hazard of qualm attacks during your journey as a blossoming writer haunts even the best of Writers.

I have written practically nothing yet, and now again the time is getting short. There is nothing done. I am no nearer my achievement than I was two months ago, and I keep half doubting my will to perform anything. Each time I make a move my demon says at almost the same moment: Oh, yes, weve heard that before! Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), British short story Writer.

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Just as how old manipulative thinking habits have repeatedly, slowly, and unconsciously crept into your subconscious, so shall you replace them with new ones consciously.

Whatever action we take is first of all determined by our thoughts, so if we change our thoughts, we can change the way we behave. Cherith Powell and Greg Forde

Decision is your first step. Redeem your faith in your ability to write by making up your mind of wanting to do so. Ignore unwanted mental murmurs right away. Refuse to dwell on them.

Anytime you can be aware of and witness your own thoughts, instead of becoming lost or absorbed in them, you're in a position to grow from your experience rather than being immobilized by it, Richard Carlson, Ph.D., famous author and Expert on happiness and stress.

Act on this decision by writing always until the habit has been embedded in your system. Stick to it.

The discipline will condition your mind to an I can attitude and will provide you with proofs of your writing skill, slowly but surely.

Search for the inner voice responsible for getting you on board this vessel of courage to have ever wanted to write or written a few pieces in the first place. Relive it. Delight in it.

However, more than positive self-talk, you will need something tangible to corroborate your long buried positive belief. Produce the written piece. It will bear out the reality of your skill as a writer and will sustain the writers spirit running in your vein.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. Aristotle.

In addition, submitting your work often and getting published even in small publications (print or online) immerse you more in the world of writing and defines further what you really want, what you can achieve and what you will ultimately become. It validates you further as a writer in your eyes and in the eyes of others.

A published work further nullifies that damaging inner voice and even the real detractors (in contrast to professional, constructive and objective Literary Critics) existing beyond your writing comfort zone.

Do you want to know who you are? Dont ask Act. Action will delineate and define you. You will find out from your actions. Witold Gombrowicz (1904–1969), Polish Novelist, Playwright, Essayist.

Beating the Beast Within

Make it a habit to study the lives of people who started out with wobbling knees in careers totally different from the degree they have earned in college, dreaming dreams that no one thought they could reach. Count the number of times they were told they were misfits but went on to succeed in fields seemingly incompatible to their personality and intellect.

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Read Writers biographies and unearth their struggles, look around you and be inspired. Shift your focus from the mockery of your thoughts to real quiet people who never bragged but wrote nonetheless with profundity.

As a late blooming writer myself I employ these pointers. In my own pace, I have learned to fight back. The automatic reaction casts out the ugly feeling of inefficiency and helps me to proceed.

It may not guarantee a life free of backslidings to negative self-talks but these mental approaches serve as buffers that strengthen the mental defenses overtime until the bad voices are subdued.

The advice of other writers that says write, write, and write is a gold mine. It sharpens and stimulates your writing mind. Best of all it brings you closer to your vision and away from your psychological beasts.

So unless you do exactly the opposite of what your demon says you cannot do, your inner battle will not be silenced.

Pursue your dream. Write!

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Sources: The Writers Life as edited by Carol Edgarian and Tom Jenks
Shortcut Through Therapy by Richard Carlson Ph.D.
Self Hypnosis by Cherith Powell and Greg Forde

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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.

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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

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

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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.

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