

ARE YOU WRITING FOR A CHANGE?

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By Mary Anne Hahn

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Whenever you reach one of those writer's roadblocks, it helps to take some time to reexamine what drives you to write in the first place.

I submit, however, that regardless of your reason(s) for being, or wanting to be, a writer, or what kinds of writing you do, there is only one, true underlying motivator that will consistently send you back to your keyboard, or prompt you to pick up a pen, day after day: through your writing, you must want to change something.

If you don't, I believe you'll remain stuck.

"No, I don't," you might say. "I write because I want to make money." That might very well be true. But think about it—*why* do you want to make money as a writer? To leave your unfulfilling day job? To supplement your income so that you can travel more, or redecorate your house? To enable you to support your children through college, or your parents during old age? Note that all of these purposes for making money provide you with the fiscal ability to make changes in your life, hopefully for the better. Change is the goal, not money.

"Well, I write fiction. I write solely to entertain." And what happens to your readers if you succeed in entertaining them? You make them feel—you get them to laugh, cry or wonder. You send spine-tingling shivers of fear through them with your thrillers, warm them with your romance stories, entice them with your mysteries, leave indelible imprints on their memories with your characters. You change your readers; how they think or feel after they have read something you've written differs from how they thought or felt before.

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Perhaps you write technical documents. In that case, you are looking to improve a process by clarifying it. This means change.

Or maybe you write articles that provide readers with information they did not previously possess. More change. Copywriters want to change lookers into buyers. Grantwriters want to persuade people or organizations to support an endeavor they may have never heard of before. Business proposals are written with the hope of fostering improvements within companies.

Do you confine your writing solely to your journal, or specialize in first-person essays? What are you looking for when you write about

yourself, your experiences, your observations? My guess is that you want to arrive at a more complete understanding of what you saw, lived through and felt. You want to grow from the experience, or you want your readers to think about something in a way they might never have done before. Change.

This applies even to this article. I want to help writers discover the real reason for writing, enable you to refocus your energies and perhaps become more prolific and successful by understanding why you do what you do. I hope I've succeeded in doing just that.

As a writer, you've got a talent that many do not possess, and many admire. So don't just sit there. Write for a change.

Mary Anne Hahn is editor and publisher of WriteSuccess, the free biweekly ezine of ideas, information and inspiration for writers. To subscribe, mail to

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how to market your writing services to businesses and professionals right in your own hometown. For more information, mail to

Writing fiction can be fun too!

By Gary R. Hess

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Writing fiction is something that all of us have trouble with at one time or another. The thought of coming up with a story which didn't even happy can sometimes even result in shock.

The best way is to approach this the same way as you would a non-fiction story. First, you want to

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brainstorm. You don't have to do this all at once, you might want to do your daily chores or watch some television... This always helps with the brainstorming. The ideas will come quickly so you might want to take a pencil and paper with you so you don't forget it.

Next, choose which idea you think is best not which is easiest. You want this story to be exciting and thrilling with lots of events.

After you have chosen which idea you want to use, begin creating your characters. Write out the main characters of your story with short descriptions of each. Describe what their personalities are like and what they look like as well. This will later prove to be very helpful in the story making process. You don't have to give "concrete" names to any of the characters as of yet. That can come later; this is just to give a hint at what your limitations will be for each character.

Now that you have done this, write out the setting of where the story will begin and perhaps where it will end. Again, this gives you a better understanding of what the character can and can not do. You don't want to go too far off course and end up doing something completely different than what you were first expecting.

The last step is what you have been waiting for, writing the story. Now that you have a main idea of what your story and characters will do you may begin. While you are writing you may change your characters a bit, but don't go too far out of place or it may change the entire story. If you come up with an idea of what you want to happen later on, be sure to write it down.

The best thing about writing fiction is that we don't have limitations on what can happen. We are our characters. If we want them to be a cowboy in the Midwest we can. If we want them to be a pro basketball player on hemorrhoids we can. This is what makes writing so great. We create our own world through our words... Isn't it wonderful?

Gary R. Hess is a writer for

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