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Facts of a Writer's Life

By Mridu Khullar

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So, you dream of becoming a famous writer? You want to get that article on paper as soon as possible and see it published. You've got great ideas for a book that you'll be starting any day now.

But do you know what it's really like to lead a writer's life? Read on to find out.

1. Rejection is a part of life.

Face it. You will be rejected. No matter how good you are, how well versed with the techniques, how intricately detailed. One fine day, you'll wake up and find a rejection in the mail. Don't get disheartened. It happens to all of us.

2. Rewriting will have to be done

No matter how good your vocabulary, or how well-written your material, there will come a time, when one editor will ask you to rewrite your work. Take this as an encouraging sign. It just means that the editor likes your work, but needs you to work out a few details to suit his needs.

3. Deadlines have to be met

Meeting deadlines is an important part of your career. Miss one deadline, and you can be sure you'll never be writing for that publication again. Be careful not to take on so much that you cannot complete in time. It will ruin your reputation and make you seem unprofessional.

4. Writer's block is not a myth

Regardless of what you may have heard, writer's block is a reality. You will wake up one day to find that somehow you can't seem to write any more. Relax. It's just a phase. Keep your motivation high, and you'll be back in no time.

5. Distractions, Distractions, Distractions

If you work at home, you're even more prone to these distractions. Your child needs food, clothes need washing, you need a cup of coffee. And when all that is taken care of, the phone will ring. It'll be your hubby calling just in time, to remind you of an errand that you almost forgot to do.

6. Can't do without a thesaurus

No matter how good your vocabulary or how witty your writing style, the fact of life is that you will need a thesaurus. There will be times when you can do without an overused word, or a better expression. It's times like these when you absolutely must make use of a thesaurus.

7. You can't please everyone

Everyone is different. Where there'll be dozens of people to appreciate your work, there will be many others who will tear it apart with their criticism. You have to learn to take the good with the bad.

8. Have extraordinary patience

Editors are a strange lot. They need their time, and we need our patience. Don't go checking your mail

the day after you've sent your query. Chances are you'll be waiting a long time, before word comes in on that one.

9. Money doesn't come easy

In the writing world, money doesn't come as easily as it appears to from the outside. You may write dozens of articles each week, and expect lots of cash to come in from their sale. Or you may expect your book to outdo the target that you'd set for it. You never know – it just might, but every one cannot be Stephen King. And you'll probably have to learn to live with the fact that no movie will be made from your first novel.

10. The road is long and hard

The road is bumpy, and there'll be times when you'll want to give up. But the destination is just as rewarding. Don't let the long road ahead, deter you from your dreams. And don't ever give up.

Mridu Khullar is the editor-in-chief of www.WritersCrossing.com, a free online magazine for writers. Sign up for the free weekly newsletter to get a complimentary e-book with 400+ paying markets. Also check out her e-book, "Knock Their Socks Off! A Freelance Writer's Guide to Query Letters That Sell," available at <http://www.writerscrossing.com/queries.html>

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

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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