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Seeking Inspiration

By Vic Peters

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I remember times where I would just sit and stare at my blank computer screen, trying to come up with some kind of inspiration. I wanted to be the author of the Great American Novel. Those were the days before I was published, before I had learned how to finish a manuscript, before I knew what it "took."

"Write about what you know!" screeched that old tired voice inside my head. "Yeah, right," I retorted. "I don't know nuthin'. Who wants to read about that?" It was over. I had to face it. The book would never be finished. I would never be published, and Oprah, well, she wasn't gonna call me either. Damn.

I was going to have to get a real job, and, worse than that, all my friends were going to say, "I told you so." I was a loser, and that thought made me sick to my stomach. Looking outside through the bedroom window, I was struck with a brilliant idea. "Of course! That's it!" I was going to jump, except that the fall was only about twelve inches. "Okay," I told myself, "I'm going to have to jump a lot!"

Nine jumps later, more depression set in; now I was a failed jumper as well. This wasn't the way it was suppose to happen. But that ninth splat in the dirt must have shaken something loose in my pea brain, because that was when I figured it out: Writing isn't about what you know, it's about what you feel and the way in which you share those feelings with your reader.

For instance, a man came over to the house a while back. He was the friend of a young mother in our town who had lost her ten-year-old son just days before. The boy and his best friend had fallen through the ice just before dark and had drowned. No one knew for sure what had happened; they had gone out to play and never came home. In the darkness, volunteers searched through wet snow and dense brush, looking for any clue to their whereabouts. By morning hundreds had joined the cause. We wanted to believe that the boys had run away, or were hiding, or anything other than what we feared. But our calls for angels went unanswered, as the reality of an underwater camera testified. It was a terrible experience for all of us.

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The mother had asked my friend, "If God said to you that he was going to give you a beautiful gift—a perfect little boy who carried the sun in his smile, the stars in his eyes and..." she stuttered as her face pulled together and tears slid down soft pink cheeks, "and more love in his heart than you could ever know, would you still want him, even if you knew that He would take him back in ten years?" My friend had no words to comfort the woman, so while shaking, she cried the answer for him. "Yes, yes...I would," she said, nodding her head up and down. "I miss him so much."

The point here is to convey a feeling; it doesn't matter if the story is real. This example, as much as it breaks my heart to tell you, was real. Many of the things that I write about are. Not all of them are personal experiences. A large number of them are not—they are real experiences that somebody else has shared with me.

I dare not compare myself with another person, for that is surely a sin. I am who I am, no better or worse than my brother. We are at different places in our experience. Instead, I choose to share emotions with my readers. My task is not to listen with my ears, but with my soul, and then simply to share the emotions. For me to be able to find meaningful words, I have to become the person I am writing about. Just as the mother cried while she spoke, so did I when I became her.

Some say that you can never feel another person's pain; That is a lie. Empathy is the most basic human quality that we possess. The crime is that most of us refuse to empathize, because somehow we believe that we are above or immune to what happens to our friends and neighbors. Acknowledgement opens the door to fear. But to deny that the sky rains or the cold winter wind blows through the passage of time within our lives deadens the senses. What is life, if not experience?

Never will a single word convey a feeling unless you believe it first. Consider yourself blessed when other human beings open themselves up to you in their most private moments. If you can, take the way you feel then and put it into words. Sometimes you will laugh and sometimes you will cry, but it will be the truth. Embellish the locations and conceal the characters, but hold true to the emotion.

The technique that I favor is what I call "the swing." The readers get a gentle push going forward, rising above the ground and picking up speed, until that instant when they are weightless. As they come back to a place they cannot see, they trust me to catch them and send them off again, this time higher. Going backward is as much a part of the ride as going forward. Readers don't want to fall or crash into a tree or get sick; they want to have fun. That is my job: to let them have fun. A reader wants an experience, an honest alternative. If in writing I can convey to them a word of truth that will help them to live their life in a fuller manner, so much the better.

If I lie about what I write, they will know. I cannot hide behind any word or page that is untrue. Believe in what you write. Believe in yourself. Write for yourself. Share with your readers what you feel and you won't have to worry about completing the story. It will finish itself.

Vic Peters is the author of *Mary's Field*, a new Christian novel from Millennial Mind Publishing. More information is available at www.marysfield.com

Regain Your Motivation

By Wendy Hearn

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Do you feel your motivation has diminished recently? Or do you feel at the moment that it's gone completely? Do you wonder how you'll ever get it back?

It often happens that many people find their motivation decreasing or disappearing altogether. When this happens you tend to feel stuck and you're not really moving forward. You may feel frustrated because you're not making any progress. Seeing yourself making progress is one way to be motivated. But if that's not there, it becomes a vicious circle, because when you're not making progress, you don't feel motivated and vice versa.

When you want to increase your motivation, it's worth remembering that there's a difference between it and inspiration. Motivation is an external source which encourages you and gives you ideas. Inspiration comes from within and the encouragement and ideas are your own. When it comes from within, you own it and will feel inspired. When you feel inspired you'll take action and taking action is the key to achieving what you want, whether it's increasing your business, making changes in your life or progressing towards your dreams.

So, we're really looking to increase your inspiration here and not necessarily just to motivate you. I've found that people's inspiration drops when they've been doing the same thing over and over again for some time. You may feel you're stuck in a rut; it's become a bit of a drag. If you're feeling this way, it's no wonder your inspiration has decided to 'wander off'.

Sometimes you just need to take a break or have a rest from what you're doing and your inspiration may well come back. This break also allows you to re-assess what you've been doing and not doing. Perhaps then you'll see there are some changes you want to make, perhaps deciding to implement a different strategy or action plan.

Taking a break will mean different things to different

people and you need to determine for yourself what this

break will be. Perhaps, you'll decide take a day or a week off work, to play and have fun. Or you may decide to go for a brisk walk. I'm even inclined to suggest to you that, while taking this break, you tell yourself that you're not allowed to do or think about anything related to work or whatever it is that you're taking a break from. It's surprising how much most of us react to being told we can't do or have something. The rebellious part of us often surfaces and wants to fight it.

Taking a break from whatever it is you've been doing will probably make you feel apprehensive. All your fears about how much you have to get done, you're wasting time, what if I don't want to go back to doing this, are likely to surface. It's a natural reaction, but the fear is usually much worse than the reality. You need to trust yourself, face up to the fears and know that you can handle any situation.

After a break, you'll feel refreshed and when you feel refreshed, your enthusiasm and inspiration will return. Then, you'll be ready to start moving forward again.

What I want for you is to take a break and allow your inspiration and desire for life and business to return to you naturally.

Wendy Hearn Personal and Professional Coach She works with business owners, professionals, executives and managers who are ready to enrich their lives. . . finding more success, fun, balance, joy and time. She coaches one-to-one with individuals and groups by telephone and email. <http://www.Business-Personal-Coaching.com>



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