

Where is Your Inner Writer?

By Lindsay Price

We all write every day. It's impossible to avoid: there are emails, tests, project proposals, letters, reports. Pen to paper, keyboard to computer – every individual knows how to write. To that end it makes sense to assume that there is a writer inside every person. Some folks just don't know where to look to find their inner writer, and some get confused by the term 'writer.'

But what most people imagine when they think of being a 'writer' is the creative aspect. Creativity is what causes the average individual to freeze up because they feel creativity is inherent as opposed to a learned skill.

How do you access your creativity? How do you become a 'writer?'

Start Small

There's no need to attempt a project the size of 'War and Peace' as your first foray into writing. You'll only get discouraged. Start small. Write a poem. Keep a journal. Write a paragraph. Start a blog and post regularly. Write out daily observations, write letters.

Start connecting and communicating. That is what is at the heart of all writing: the desire to connect and communicate. As you write, focus on writing full sentences with capitals at the beginning and punctuation at the end (that goes out especially to you texters!).

Define Your Genre

The term 'writer' covers a wide variety of genres. Decide and define what specific type of writing you'd like to explore: poetry, screen-writing, plays, novels, short stories. Not sure which is your genre of choice? What type of writing do you enjoy most as an audience member? Do you love the one to one experience of a novel? The cyclical experience of the theatre? The imagery of poetry?

Once you've defined your genre, immerse yourself. Read, read and read some more. Become familiar with the different styles associated with your genre. Eliminate styles that don't speak to you and make a list of those that do.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Writers write a lot and so should you. Get in the habit of regular writing. Again this is not the time to write the next massive novel. Write one letter a day. Write a personal email. Write one blog post. Write 300 words. Write one page. Give yourself a daily time limit. Maybe it's an hour, maybe it's five minutes. The more you practice, the more comfortable the act of writing will become.

Writing Exercises

The bookstores are filled with 'How to Write' books. The web is filled with writing exercises. So go do them! Writing exercises will help you overcome the fear of not being creative. Of thinking that you don't have what it takes to be a 'writer.' Instead of worrying about your creativity or lack thereof in a specific project, use exercises to practice the craft. Keep it small and manageable. For example, practice writing using the five senses.

Keep this writing routine up for six months before starting work on a specific project. This length of time will let you know if writing is something you want to pursue. If you keep bursting with ideas during the six month trial that's fine; write them down in a notebook and leave them be. They're not going anywhere and when you're ready to start a project you'll have a number of ideas to choose from.

Start small. Define the genre. Practice the craft.

Everyone can find the writer within.