



Do You Have a Burning Desire to Be a Writer?

By Norm Huffnagle

The craft of expressive story writing has been described by various practitioners as "An Art", "A trainable skill", "A mystical journey", "A singular experience", and a plethora of other descriptions. While it is true that sitting down and writing is a deeply personal event, many authors have tried to enlighten the would-be writer with detailed and extensive direction and almost incomprehensible and mostly contradictory rules of conduct.

In booksellers, blogs, and forums around the world, there are no end of suggestions, directions, or pointed manifestos that purport to reveal exactly how to "Do Writing Right".

I suggest a heretical observation.

First, instead of a single "Right and Perfect Writing Style", there is a continuum of writing styles. These styles range from "stream of consciousness" on one end of the scale where a story pours unimpeded from the writer's mind onto paper (examples include Stephen King, Kurt Vonnegut), to the extreme opposite end of the scale, where writing becomes an agonized word by word discovery process not unlike sculpting stone with barely adequate tools.



Second, all of these "Do-Good" and "Self-Help" books and articles are manifestations of the various authors' beliefs in what they did to be successful. These books and articles are, in reality, only a "This is how I did it!" exposé. The techniques espoused by these authors did indeed work, but only for them.

Third, none of these methods and techniques may work for you. Some of these methods and techniques may actually be harmful to or impede your success. I believe that there is a very sophisticated way to tell if a technique will work for you. Simply put, try it. If it works for you, it's right for you.

But before you can do this, you must first become aware of your own mind. You must be "Awakened". Let me explain.

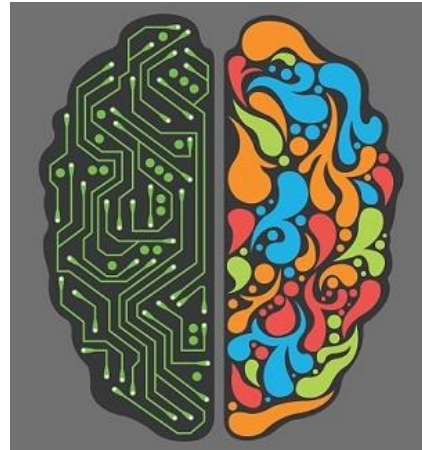
You are a valued member of a species of fantastic story tellers. Your mind has an innate ability to do what it needs to do without any external help. Your mind holds the keys to your writing success. Your inner self knows exactly what it takes to create compelling and fascinating stories. It's built in to your DNA. Your Right Brain can do this subconsciously.

You are also a survivor. Your intensely logical Left Brain analyzes everything you do and weighs it in the balance of "Is this action pro-survival for ME?" Your Left Brain is extremely successful in keeping you alive.

The act of writing stories, directed and controlled by your creative Right Brain, does not need a "survival" precursor to create.

Unfortunately, if any hint of what your Right Brain is creating is at odds to your Left Brain's understanding of survival, you suppress it unconditionally without a second thought.

To be successful in the act of writing, or, indeed in any creative endeavor, you must become aware of your logical Left Brain's survival predilection, to awaken yourselves to the possibility that creative writing, effective storytelling should not, in fact, must not be judged by your knee-jerk, survival-programmed Left Brain.



You must find a way to help the Left Brain suspend judgment on what the Right Brain is creating.

The Good News is that this is both possible and achievable.

Tom Bird, in his seminal book, "The Call of the Writer's Craft", reveals a subtle technique to unleash your "Writer Within". I will not repeat his words here, but I suggest that you find a copy, read it thoroughly and do his suggested exercises.

Fast forward...

You have read the book, you actually did the exercises and...

Now that you have written your first creative work, and have made a conscious decision to continue writing, what's next?

Answer: The Rest of Your Life!!!!

Your newly minted self-actualized goal is how to hone your newly recognized skill.

You can explore as many of the myriad approaches to that ephemeral goal called "Successful Writing" that time or desire allows.

However, and this is a critical point, the Creative Being inside of you will, without fail, extract from your explorations only what it thinks it needs. You can help.



Good writers get better by becoming better writers. This is not a tautology. While the "Writer Within" understands how to write, it needs to learn what to write. That learning can only come from being exposed to good writing, either by reading what is considered "good prose", or having its writings subjected to the opinions of critics, or both.

Recognize that the "Writer Within" cannot be forced to accept everything to which it is exposed. Suffice it to say that your new job is to expose the "Writer Within" to various examples of writing techniques. The "Writer Within" will extract and learn what it needs to incorporate to be successful in the manner it decides is "Success".

If, for example, that creative part of you decides that eliminating words that end in "ly" makes sense in creating tight, readable and enjoyable prose, then it will adopt the suggestion and adapt its creative abilities.

In summary, then, after you have achieved a satisfactory working arrangement between your Left Brain and your Right Brain, then it's imperative that you do three things:

First, read widely.

Second, write voraciously.

Third, seek out the opinions of as many critics of your writing as you can.

Have a fantastic journey!

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