

Overcome Writers Block with Snake Dancing

Judy Cullins, M.A. © 2003 All Rights Reserved

Writers block! Even columnist Dave Berry has it. He admits that at least 30 times a day when writing his humor column, he gets up from his computer to sip his Pepsi and to divert his attention when he can't think of what to write.

Recently, he reached for the cola and instead found a coiled snake. He tried barbecue tongs to carry it away, but when it landed in his pool, he kept the dance going trying to catch the thing.

As a writer you may think you are blocked because you think your book may not be significant enough, you don't know how to format it, or since you aren't famous, your book won't sell. Or, like Dave you can't think of something great to say.

Let the book coach encourage you beyond your doubts. Know that your book is unique and offers useful solutions to help your audience solve their challenge or problem. You don't have to write like others, and yes, you can write a saleable book.

What is Writer's Block? To me it's just that I'm distracted and don't seem organized enough with what's important to write for my particular audience. It's a signal that my brain won't focus temporarily. Like Dave Berry, I need a break. To some of you, it's like stepping off a cliff and plunging into the abyss. You don't have all the answers to start, so it becomes overwhelming to even put words to paper.

Why do we have Writer's Block?

1. We have too many ideas/ choices. We need to focus on one thing at a time. Write down 3-4 topics you are passionate about. Take some deep breaths, and let the #1 come forth. Write on one book primarily, and just put new ideas into the others' folder. Stay with your #1 book until you finish it. When we don't finish a project, we feel guilty--and hence more stuck!

2. Fear. Really, "False Evidence Appearing Real." Our performance anxiety keeps us from taking that next step. However, we can get direction and skills from a how-to book on writing or a qualified book coach if we are willing.

3. We don't have enough information to move forward to write a clear, compelling book. Perhaps we aren't sure of how to publish our book. Or, we don't know how to put a chapter together. Book writing information is easily available from the Internet. Do a search on "book coaching" and find helpful resources.

4. It seems an enormous task in time and money. What most emerging authors don't realize is that they don't have to write the "end all, be all" book. Just choose one focus such as solving one problem or writing for only one preferred audience per book. Targeted audiences are much easier to sell to.

How to Get Unstuck.

1. Warm up! Writers need to relax, get into alpha state each time before they write. So take deep belly breaths for 1-2 minutes first. Another way to set up your book writing success is to listen to relaxing music before you set out to write. You may even warm up by handwriting something before you commit it to your computer.
2. Got the blank page blues? Write a little the day before—then you have a partial page to hook new related, information onto. I wrote this article in two sittings because I didn't like my old introduction.
3. Switch tasks, but honor a time set aside for writing each day. If you are stuck in #1 book, add research stories, or how to's to the #2 book. If stuck on one chapter, start or work on another one.
4. Organize your book, both on your computer and in paper files. For your book, name it and save as the main folder. Add new files to this folder such as - the introduction - Chapter One and the rest - Table of Contents with Chapter Titles - The back cover, sales letter, or 30-60 Second Tell and Sell (sales message).
5. Start a promotion folder too. Name one folder "traditional" and another one "online." Start adding files of promotion information as it comes to you. Then, when your book is almost finished, you'll have your promotion foundation ready to hit the ground running for fast, continuous sales that keep your cash flow going.
6. Love your topic. When you have passion for your book, you won't have many blocks. You'll be excited to sit down and spend special time each week on it. You may want to work daily like I do. When you do one "high level" activity a day on your book, you will finish before you know it and you will feel exhilarated and satisfied at your results. Remember a page a day yields 365 pages a year. Think about a shorter book of only 25- 50 pages you can deliver as an eBook or print book. You can finish one in less than a month!

Judy Cullins: 20-year author, publisher, book coach . Helps entrepreneurs manifest their book and web dreams .

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