

Writer's Block

The idea that work must be difficult, and cause pain and agony to be worthwhile, is a myth. Many have ruined any task that they were trying to accomplish by trying too hard. For instance, consider creativity . . . So often your most creative ideas come in relaxed carefree moments, and when you decide to "be creative," it is like trying to "be spontaneous." Remember those inspirations, some call the "Aha" experience: Some scientists believe that information integrates in such a new and meaningful way that there is a physiological change in the structure of the brain, and this change produces that euphoric and joyous moment that many call creative thought. Because cells restructure in such a new way, new cell structure is "created," and many call this creative thought. Writing requires creative thought.

I knew a man told the most intriguing and interesting stories. He put words together in a way that would cause you to hang on to each word. His friends asked and then begged him to write his stories, analogies and metaphors so that they could publish his work and the whole world would benefit from his knowledge, presented in such a meaningful and interesting way. They all chipped in and bought him a word processor for a surprise, and they stayed away so that he could "be creative." "As he sat alone and lonely at the word processor day after day, he wondered two things: Why was he all alone, and why couldn't he think of anything to write down:

One day his friend Mark was walking by and noticed how quiet Peter's house was. He decided to visit and ask Peter if he had finished the book. He knocked on the door and Peter invited him in and explained that he couldn't think of anything to write about so there was plenty of time to visit. Soon Peter was entertaining Mark with story after story about

his past and his experiences, pleased that he didn't have to be all alone at the word processor. "I know what the problem is," Mark stated....."You need to pretend that you are telling me a story." With great excitement, Mark ran to the dining room table and sat down. "Get a good visual picture of me, and when I leave, pretend that I am still sitting here, and that you are talking to me." Peter agreed to the plan, and after Mark left, he imagined Mark sitting at the table. He began to talk and to write at the same time. With excitement, and amazement, Peter noticed how easily that first sentence appeared on the page. He smiled with delight, and then dismay as he noticed that it was not only punctuated incorrectly, but there were also spelling errors. He got out the dictionary and as he looked up the words, he noticed many other possible and better sounding words that he could use. As he began changing the wording of his sentence, he realized that there are many ways to say the same sentence... Was there a BETTER way?

When he finally could admit that all who read his sentence would agree that it was one of the finest and most grammatically, and anatomically, and even punctuallically (If there is such a word) correct sentence that had ever been created, she proceeded to the second sentence. But, because of the length of time it had taken Peter to create the perfect sentence, he has forgotten where he was going with his thoughts, or even the substance of the rest of the story. So day after day, week after week, he produced perfect "first" sentences. And finally, one cold winter day, Mark stopped by to see how Peter was progressing. Peter greeted him warmly and exclaimed, "I have been following your advice....it is good advice, and I pretend that I am talking to you. I can now write the first sentence, although only the first sentence.. . But it is a perfect and absolutely and beautifully correct sentence.

Mark said, " and that is the problem...Quit producing perfect first sentences. Write like you talk, with all your grammatical errors. Writing should never be corrected while it is

being created. Writing is like giving birth...the correcting follows the creation. Write expecting to correct, and redo and work later on the finished product. In fact, maybe you could plan on at least two mistakes in each first sentence that you write, just to take the pressure of perfection out of your endeavor. You might even plan on having many imperfect sentences, some of which you leave in the story because people don't like to read or hear "perfect writing."

The next day Peter sat at the word process trying to produce real, not perfect sentences. He quit thinking about spelling; he quit thinking about grammar; he didn't even care if there were better ways to say the same sentence (and he knew there were). He concentrated on writing like he talked, and his personality became evident in all his writing. His sentences weren't perfect but they were real and creative and intriguing. I've lost track of how many books and articles Peter has now published but I know that there have been many many writing triumphs, and not one article or book that he has published has been perfect. I have to really look carefully and for a long time to find the mistake.

And did you know that if you take a balloon and blown too hard or too forcefully, you will pop the balloon. And, if you eat too slowly and carefully, your food will get cold; and, driving a car too quickly or too slowly will alert the police to watch. Also, when you try too hard to remember, you are unable to recall but how many times has the answer come unexpectedly, later when you were least expecting it. Writing is like that....and writing is like talking. If you can talk, you can write, if you can write, you can talk, they are really the same activity. And I don't know when you will first experience joy as you write, ow when you will notice each writing assignment becoming more exciting. I don't know if it will be immediate, or if these feelings will develop slowly, they might even develop in a new and

creative way that I don't know about...However, I do know that you will find it easier and more fun to write, as you allow yourself the freedom to break all the punctuation, spelling and even grammatical rules. And as you sit and write a paper, you will notice that you no longer care about the rules of words, you only care about the pictures and meanings that the words convey to others. And slowly, but it may happen quickly, you notice that writing is fun and easy and something that you enjoy. And after each paper or article is effortlessly written the correcting becomes easier and easier because you know what the entire picture looks like. And just like an artist who paints a picture and then goes back and makes slight color changes, you will be able to recognize the slight changes that you need to make.

And you can, can you not, remember the many obstacles that you have overcome in your life. Remember how you felt when you won the weight lifting competition. Remember how you felt when you obtained your internship. Get in touch with those feelings, feelings of competence, confidence, and achievement. That is how you feel as you sit at your word processor with thoughts coming effortlessly and quickly. Your fingers race across the keys trying to keep up with your creative thinking.

See your fingers moving quickly across the keys as your papers are written with calm and relaxed feelings of competence and creativity. And you might even feel surprised to remember, ever experiencing anything except pleasure at the prospect of writing. With each ring of your beeper or of the telephone these suggestions will go deeper and deeper and become more and more automatic as you write more creatively and effortlessly

Now I am going to count from 1 to 10. At the count of 10, you will be completely awake, refreshed, and feeling good with a wonderful sense of deep contentment. Content, because you have made good decisions and you are successful,

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you feel confident of your abilities as a writer.

One Two all heaviness leaving

Three...Four waking up more and more

Five....Six... It feels so good to wake up

Seven....Eight Eyes open

Nine...Ten Eyes open, awake, alert with feelings of deep contentment.

And if you want to go to sleep, count from 10 to one and drift or float to sleep.