

# Top Ten Writing Tips To Help You To Write More

## **Tip One: Pay attention to images**

Your right brain thinks in images, and when you write, you translate images from your right brain into words. Usually this process happens so quickly that you're unaware of it. If you can make this process conscious, you can goose up your own creativity. Stephen King calls this process "writing with the third eye --- the eye of imagination and memory."

To get the hang of this, try [Jean Houston's process](#), adapted from her book, \*The Possible Human\*.

## **Tip Two: Making mud/ laying track**

Your first draft of any piece of work is "mud" --- raw material. Julia Cameron refers to your first draft as "laying track", another term I like.

If the first draft's awful, great! It's meant to be. It's only raw material. However, if you don't create the first draft, or you wait until you have a really great idea that's worth a first draft, you won't write anything. Write. Make mud.

## **Tip Three: Just write --- think on the page, or on the screen, NOT in your head**

Thinking too much while you write is treacherous, because you can spend two hours "writing" and end up with half a page of work. Write-think. That is, think on the page, not in your head.

## **Tip Four: Grow your writing with lists**

Listing is a form of brainstorming. It grows your writing, and it's fun.

Listing is an excellent technique to use when you get stuck in your writing, and it doesn't matter what kind of writing you're doing, whether it's fiction or nonfiction. Listing also helps you in the revision process, to add texture to your work.

Here's an excellent FREE software program to help you to [produce lists](#), and to save them.

## **Tip Five: Use your magical thesaurus**

Your most useful listing tool is ---- a thesaurus. Keep one on your desk to kickstart your brain.

Your thesaurus and dictionary are perfect kickstarters. They're also vital tools whenever you're revising.

## **Tip Six: Make writing the FIRST thing you do each day**

If you write at least page, by hand, as soon as you get up, you'll find that writing comes more easily to you for the rest of the day. You're also more focused and relaxed for the rest of the day.

## **Tip Seven: Set WIG goals --- the best goals are always unrealistic**

Writer Martha Beck calls unrealistic goals WIGs: Wildly Improbable Goals. In the September 2002 issue of Oprah magazine she says: "... learning to invite and accept your own WIG can awaken you to a kind of ubiquitous, benevolent magic, a river of enchantment that perpetually flows to your destiny."

A WIG is exciting. Just thinking about a WIG will get your heart pounding. Working toward your WIG (writing a book, writing a screenplay, getting signed on as a contributor at a mass-market magazine) takes hard work. Lots of hard work.

And at the end of that hard work, as Beck points out, you achieve your goal, but there's a twist. You never achieve it exactly as you envisioned it - you achieve something even better, something you could never have imagined.

I'm a great believer in writing ABOUT your goals. This is because when you write, you're using both sides of your brain, and are accessing your unconscious mind as well. You live in your left brain, which you regard as "you", but you have a silent partner, your right brain, which is also you, and which communicates via images and feelings.

## **Tip Eight: Separate writing and editing**

Writing comes first, then editing. If you try to combine the two, you will block.

Writing should come as easily to you as chatting to a friend. If it doesn't, you're trying to edit in your head before you get the words on paper, or on the computer screen. If you're not aware of the danger of combining writing and editing, you'll make writing hard for yourself, when it should be easy. If you don't have trouble talking, how can you have trouble writing?

## **Tip Nine: It's good to struggle with your writing**

In his book *The Breakout Principle*, Dr Herbert Benson (who also wrote *The Relaxation Response*) describes a struggle/ release process that leads to a new level of awareness. When you struggle, and then completely give up the struggle --- just give up --- there's a chance that you can achieve a peak experience which leads you to a new level of functioning.

How does this work in your writing? Let's say that you're writing a novel. This work is hard for you. However, you keep at it faithfully, working on your novel each day. You struggle with it for weeks. Then you give up. Although you keep writing, you say to yourself: "I don't care any more what garbage I write. I'm just going to do it. I'm just going to write."

This release leads to writing magic. Suddenly you're inspired, and you finish the book in a rush. Although you will still occasionally struggle with your writing (because struggle is a part of life), you've broken through to a new level of functioning in your work.

This new level would not, and could not, have happened without the struggle.

## **Tip Ten: Good writing = truthful writing**

Writing truthfully can feel like undressing in public, so many beginning writers worry about sharing their writing.

Be compassionate. Firstly, to yourself. Write. Write for yourself. All writing takes courage.

When you finally show your writing to others, you discover the amazing truth that no one cares. In her book *"Writing To Save Your Life"*, Michele Weldon advises: "Get over yourself". No one is judging what you write. So write.