Your Foolproof Guide
To Free Yourself
From Writer's Block
FOREVER
By Nancy Boyd

This is for
all the creators ~
may you prosper
in the magic
of the Muse

Your Foolproof Guide To Free Yourself From Writers Block Forever

by Nancy Boyd

Writing is a solitary activity; when there's trouble, you can only point fingers at one person. So how do you deal with all the obstacles that confound and stall your best projects?

In this book, we will cover:

✔ Learn the 5 steps in the creative process, and how to identify where to look for solutions to YOUR block

✔ Which energy style are you? Depressed, or anxious? The answer will determine your action plan for relief

✔Turning down the volume on your Inner Critic -- level the playing field with conscious contracts

✔ Bonuses, tools and special offers for those who want more

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INTRODUCTION

I've been writing since I was 8 years old, and I'm quite a few decades older now. That's a long time! Along the way, I've handled thousands of writing projects and deadlines in that time, many of them on behalf of others. I'm friends and partners with many other writers and creatives, and one thing I can tell you is this:

We ALL encounter creative blocks.

That used to be my story, too, until I had one of those moments that changes your life forever. Quite by accident, I found the cure. Here's how it went down.

One of my editor friends had attended a writing conference, where several speakers captured her attention. She was bubbling over with enthusiasm and couldn't wait to tell me all about it.

Midway through her tale something stopped me cold and I had to interrupt her.

"Wait a second there. What did you just say? Could you repeat that please?"

What she had shared with me was the outline of a talk by writing expert Ann Wylie (and I'll tell you right now, if you don't know about or follow Anne Wylie, you're missing something wonderful. I'll share a link soon.)

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The talk was about how to make sure your readers get your message clearly, but the gem I grabbed was something entirely different: ***the way she deals with staying on track with her writing projects.***

The hair on the back of my neck literally stood up. THIS was the breakthrough I'd been seeking my whole writing life.

That breakthrough (and what it means) is what I'm about to share with you now. It's so logical, simple, and doable you'll wonder why you didn't think of it yourself.

Up to this point, I've only shared this process with my private coaching clients. Now I'm making it available to everyone. It's time.

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What Is Writer's Block and What Can I Do About It?

Let's talk about what writer's block is, what causes it, and some effective strategies for getting through it.

First of all, if you write (or make art or music) you will certainly have encountered a moment (or a much longer length of time) when no matter what you do, words do not pour forth.

You have ideas, you have plans, you may have an outline, you have intentions, but is anything happening? Nope. It just is not flowing. You aren't writing. **That's writer's block.**

Or perhaps you fall into the procrastination category:

Every time you head toward the computer or your desk to write, you suddenly remember that the dishes aren't done; there's dust on all the books in the bookcase and it's distracting you so much you HAVE to get rid of it, RIGHT NOW; you need to mail a check to someone, and while you're out, there's some dry cleaning to pick up, and a sale at the corner office supply store; there's a phone call (or 20) that you MUST make so that you can clear the decks to write; and after that,

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something else comes up to take its place in the queue. **That's writer's block (the avoidance version.)**

However it manifests in your life, at some time or other, almost all writers (and creators of all stripes) fall prey to the insidious demon called writer's block. Is it fatal? It doesn't have to be.

Here is where I need to assure you of something important:

You're not broken. It's not hopeless. This situation is common for us all. And best of all, there IS a cure. I use it myself and I can tell you from experience it's 100% foolproof. My clients will say the same thing; it just plain works. And I want that for you, too, my friend!

Let's look at some of the REAL causes of writer's block, so that we can begin to unlock the cures.

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THREE MAIN CAUSES OF WRITER'S BLOCK

There can be more than three causes, but these are the most common and important that I've observed in my multiple decades as a writer and author.

CAUSE #1:

Failure to complete one of the 5 steps in the creative process.

The following information is from an excellent seminar by Ann Wylie, of Wylie Communications (www.wyliecomm.com). Follow and connect with her!

Now Pay Attention!

THIS is the secret that unlocked the doors to writer's block forever, for me and for countless others.

When writer's block stares you down, there are several things going on. You're not stuck. You're just disoriented about where you are and what's happening. Let's get clear.

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Here is what you need to know:

There are 5 steps in the creative process. ***Writer's block occurs when you didn't do enough of the preceding steps.*** That's it. It's that simple. Really.

In particular, writers often get stuck at Step #3 because you didn't forage and/or analyze, or at Step #4 because you didn't incubate; or because you're trying too hard and not playing joyfully.

So what are these steps? (If you've been writing a while, you will recognize them, even if you didn't think about them this way.)

1. Forage. Gather ideas, information, and material. Go as broadly as possible. Don't forage in your own backyard. Remember creative incest makes the offspring dumber and dumber! Collect as many ideas and as much material as you can – more than you think you will need, from as many sources as you can find. Magazines. YouTube videos. Banners on a bus or headlines on a newsletter. (Trust me on this: there's never "too much." There's often too little.)

2. Analyze. Sift through what you found. Sort it out, organize it. Do some initial planning, see what you have to work with. Move it around, turn it sideways and upside down. PLAY with it! (In fact, *operating in playful mode is one of the hidden secrets to staying out of writer's block.*) Once you've settled on one or

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more versions that feel good and make sense to you, you're ready to move to the next step. At this point you own the information, and it begins to take on a shape or flavor that is distinctive to YOU.

3. Incubate. For most writing projects, there is an essential down time. It can look like you are doing nothing, or doing something else; it can be long or short. You need this. Don't rush it. It's one of the most-skipped steps in the process and also one of the most critical. Think of it as gestating your baby; it needs as much time as it takes. You'll know when it's done because. . .

4. Breakthrough/Knuckle Down. A good idea hits you, you know how you want to proceed. You begin writing. You're inspired and practically driven to sit down and write write write as if you're on fire. This is the nuts and bolts of your craft. This is the final stage. You implement everything, make it happen. Get the words rolling, let it flow, and pull all the pieces together. This stage is often fast and furious, and, for a true writer, this is the time when you forget to eat or take breaks – it can be all-consuming. You'll know you're done with this step when there simply isn't anything else flowing. It slows down and rests. Time to take a breath – or a break.

5. Review What You Have. This step can only be taken after all the others have been done. If you attempt this step too soon, you will automatically block the flow. Save it for the last. (It must be said here that for longer projects, you will

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repeat all 5 steps in order, and repeat them several times. That's normal and to be expected. Let it happen and don't worry, as long as you're "in the zone.")

Finally: if you find yourself stuck, facing a block, take a look at the 5 steps of the process, and identify where you are. Which step did you not do? Which step did you rush? Which step is not complete?

Go back and do that, and then your block will disappear as if by magic. (Well, it will seem magical, but really, it's a process, and you need to do all the parts or it won't work right.)

BONUS POINT: One more thing before we close this part. Did you notice that nowhere in this 5 step creative process is there any mention of marketing or selling? That's on purpose**. Creating a product and marketing it require two different kinds of thinking**, and many different kinds of approaches.

The thing that's most important to recognize here is that veering off into thoughts about "how will I sell this?" or anything at all having to do with marketing WILL automatically take you out of the 5 step creative process, and put you into a different head space.

If you want to avoid writer's block, avoid marketing until you're completely finished with the product or project. I can't even begin to tell you how many

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times I've sabotaged my momentum by going off track into marketing territory. Take it from me: stay away from marketing until you're actually ready to switch gears from "I'm creating something" to "It's done now; what shall I do with it?"

CAUSE #2:
The Two Energies of Writing: Which Style Are You?

The following information is gleaned from a great article in The New York Times Book Review, by Laura Miller (Sunday, January 11, 2004.)

Alice Flaherty, a neurologist studying possible connections between brain chemistry and writers block in "The Midnight Disease: The Drive to Write, Writer's Block and the Creative Brain", believes that "there are perhaps only two types of writer's block, high energy and low energy."

Flaherty says that the low energy type may be a symptom of treatable depression, which "afflicts writers at a rate 8 to 10 times higher than the general population." High energy block falls into a category that Flaherty believes is associated with anxiety.

Interestingly, besides checking yourself into a psychotherapist for treatment (unless you believe you need to do so for other reasons,) there are some things you can do if you feel you may be a "depressive" or "anxious" type. Both high and

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low energy can cause blocks.

For the depressive side of things what usually works is to create an even larger project which is so huge it would require more than one lifetime to complete; by comparison, the REAL project seems easy and therefore your perception allows you to proceed without the block. Doesn't sound logical, but it often works!

For anxious types the cure can be as simple as either lowering the stakes or raising them. To lower the stakes, tell yourself that you are NOT going to send this anywhere; no one else will ever see it, so who cares if it's a masterpiece or not? Make your work a "rough draft", and you may just fool yourself into having fun with it.

To raise the stakes, use a technique I call "upping the ante." Create a consequence significantly more undesirable than the one you fear. For example, if you don't write your article by the deadline, you will write out a check for $500 to the opposing political party, or a cause you despise. Make it truly disgusting, so that the consequences are dire.

Another technique that works to raise the ante is to involve someone else to whom you cannot afford to look bad. Tell this person what you're up to, and realize that unless you perform as stated, the embarrassment is going to come back and bite you hard. The desire to avoid humiliation and embarrassment is strong enough in

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most people that you will do whatever it requires not to experience it!

There is a tiny genre of books about writer's block with titles like, "Why I Have Not Written Any of My Books" and "Out of Sheer Rage: Wrestling with D.H. Lawrence." They are predictably hilarious, but one wonders, if this is what it took to avoid writing, what might they have done had they REALLY written?

So, to recap:

Depressed? Make the end-goal project bigger, to make your immediate task seem truly possible in comparison.

Anxious? Make it less important, or establish bigger consequences.

NOTE: I am a writer and a coach, not a psychotherapist. If you are clinically depressed or chronically anxious please seek the help of a qualified professional. That's what they're here for. Reach out and connect with the right person who will help you with more serious or chronic issues. You'll be glad you did.

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CAUSE #3:

Battling the Inner Critic

Ah yes. The critic. This one is perhaps the easiest one of all (and no, I'm not crazy; you'll see why in a moment) because it has to do with timing and the sequence of the writing process, similar to Cause #1.

Let's just admit it. We all have an inner critic. S/he is there to help you stay out of trouble, so don't be too hard on her/him. The problem is, your critic sometimes gets "trigger happy," jumping in too soon. Its voice prematurely edits your work, or worse, discredits it before it hits the page. That's when the trouble starts.

You have to make friends with your critic and allow its voice at the appropriate times, not when IT wants to appear. *You're in charge, and you need to be clear about that from the start.*

If your inner critic is plaguing you, here are some techniques you can try.

1) Write down the "wrong" word anyway. That's what thesauri are for; you can change it later.

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2) Turn off the computer monitor so the critic can't see what's being written (if you're writing by hand.)

3) If you submit your writing to others, and fear the dreaded rejection letter, write a heartfelt response dripping with emotion (which you are NOT going to send under any circumstances) that says exactly how you feel about their obviously misguided and torturous rejection. It's amazing how cathartic the experience is! Get the feelings expressed (without sending them anywhere, tempting though that may be) and then move on to your next writing endeavors.

4) Mostly, though, **when it's time to write, write**. Let the proofreading, editing, marketing, and everything else connected with the process flow afterwards. Nothing happens until the words are on the page, so stay in command and tell the other "helpful" parts of your psyche to take a back seat for now; you'll get back to them when you're ready -- and not before.

5) Make a conscious contract with your critic. The contract is: s/he agrees to give you the time and space you need to complete the writing, to capture your thoughts in print first, and in return you agree to give her/him equal time to tell you whatever s/he wants to say about it when it is done, that you want to hear it and you will listen. (That last part is important.)

Your critic does actually have useful information and messages for you, but not

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during the writing process. Get the sequence right, and you will find a new balance you didn't know was possible.

I like to think of the writer as the one who is planting the seeds in the garden, and the critic is the one who comes along to inspect the results and weed out what doesn't belong there; if you look too soon and pull up the seedling to see if you like how it looks, there is not going to be any food! You need to wait until the plant is big enough to withstand scrutiny before doing so, for fear of damaging (or destroying) it.

There you have 5 ways to deal with your inner (and sometimes outer critics.) Take some risks, set some boundaries, and do what you need to do to have a healthier relationship with your process and your work. Your relationship with your inner critic can be quite rewarding once you get clear about how to make it work for you rather than against you.

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TOOLS FOR BLASTING THROUGH WRITER'S BLOCK

Here are some great resources for helping you control the "Writer's Block Demon".

Books

Outwitting Writer's Block: And Other Problems of the Pen by Jenna Glatzer

Writing From the Inside Out: Transforming Your Psychological Blocks to Release the Writer Within by Dennis Palumbo

How Writers Work: Finding a Process That Works For You by Ralph Fletcher

The Procrastinator's Handbook: Mastering the Art of Doing It Now by Rita Emmett

Creating by Robert Fritz

Following Through: *A Revolutionary New Model for Finishing Whatever You Start* by Steve Levinson and Pete C. Greider

A Whack on the Side of the Head (and *Creative Whack Pack* and *Innovative*

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Whack Pack) by Roger Van Oech

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Idea Generators

When you are feeling stuck about how to come up with some fresh ideas for your title, or for anything else you're working on, you need this great piece of software from one of the most creative minds of our time, Shery Ma Belle Arrieta. The WriteSparks idea generator includes a First Line Generator, a Cliche Starter Generator, A What If Story Generator, a Random Story Words Generator, and a host more.

This tool is just plain fun, and hey -- if you're experiencing writer's block, how about giving this a try and see if it busts you out of your block?

https://www.creativindie.com/writing-prompts-story-generator/

I'm currently neutral on the virtues and pitfalls of AI but if you'd like to try AI as a tool to kickstart your imagination, here are some good ones (don't copy what it tells you, just use it as a springboard):

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https://www.copy.ai/tools/content-idea-generator

https://notegpt.io/ai-idea-generator

https://ideanote.io/idea-generator

https://talknotes.io/tools/idea-generator

BONUS TOOL

Have you ever wished for a simple way to get more control of your ideas and your schedule, your contacts and your "stuff"? Well, here's a nifty new virtual tool to help you do that! (It won't help you find your socks, or make you coffee in the morning, but if it can be organized virtually, Notesbrowser will do it for you.)

Here's the link for that: http://www.notesbrowser.com

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nancy Boyd is a Soul Mechanic—yes, that's a real thing—and the founder of Bright Wings, Inc., an evolving ecosystem for conscious evolution. After surviving three near-death experiences, chronic illness, and the adventures of entrepreneurship, she now helps seekers and change-makers tune their lives to their soul's frequency.

With programs like the Soul Path Academy, the Soul Mechanic's Garage, and a publishing imprint called Bright Wings Press, Nancy blends spiritual depth, practical wisdom, and just enough irreverence to keep things interesting.

She's an award-winning writer, best-selling author, and winner of the 2009 International Coach of the Year award. When she's not writing (which is most of

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the time) she loves travel, cooking healthy and interesting meals, spending quality time with her fiancee in Eugene, OR, and helping to create the kind of world no one needs to recover from.

Connect with me on my Substack channel ~ ***Soul Mastery Dispatch: Nurturing the Spirit of Change***: https://soulmasterydispatch.substack.com/ or on my website:
https://brightwings.com where you'll find all my programs, blog and books.

Follow me on Amazon as I build my library of titles and grow my publishing business through Bright Wings Press:
https://www.amazon.com/Lessons-Edge-Taking-Wheel-Before/dp/B0F9FSRYR5

Want to know how your soul is wired?

https://app.agolix.com/assessment/24129/start

Thanks for reading!

May all your creative journeys be fun and fabulous.

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