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Overcome **Writer's** Block

9 Tips You Can Use **Right Now** to Get Unstuck



A **Special** Report by

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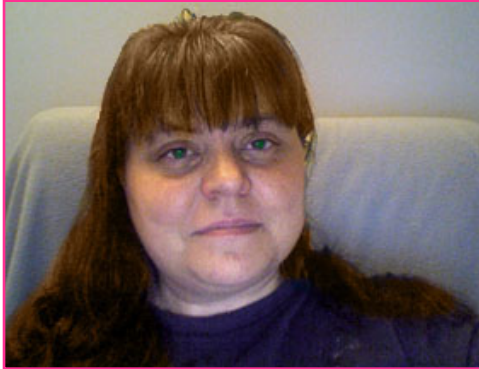
eBook written and designed by Annie Anderson

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Be on the lookout for a brand new, full length eBook based on this short report coming April 2008.

About the author



Annie Anderson is a writer, graphic designer and real estate entrepreneur from Washington State. She's written everything from short stories and poems to non-fiction books and novels, articles and more. She has won numerous awards for her short stories and poems. Her favorite "genre" is copywriting and ghostwriting for others. She's been

writing professionally since 1991 and has been freelancing as a writer and graphic designer for the past 10+ years.

You can email Annie at anniesanderson@gmail.com (personal comments, questions, etc) or results@asamediaigroup.com (for business related projects). You can also get in touch with Annie through the contact form on Annie Anderson | Blog at <http://annieandersonblog.com> .

In addition to writing, Annie enjoys reading, computers, music, movies, bike riding, hiking, travel, spending time with family and friends, lighthouses, beaches, cats and gardening to name a few.

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Give yourself permission to write - a simple, effective way to overcome writer's block.

If you've ever tried to write anything, you know you can be your own worst enemy.

"I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork." –

Peter De Vries

Perhaps you come up with excuse after excuse to avoid writing at all. Not enough time. Too tired. The kids need me. I'm too stressed out. I'll do it tomorrow. And so it goes – never getting your words down on paper.

But in this special report, I'll give you some tips to combat writer's block and fulfill your dreams of writing.

One of the easiest ways I've found to combat that problem myself is to schedule writing time. It could be daily or even just once a week. Whatever it is, decide on it RIGHT NOW and put it down in your calendar. Get up an hour earlier if you have to. Write on weekends. Find 10 minute chunks of time between your kids' activities. But do it.

There are experts who will tell you if you're serious about writing, you'll do it everyday. No matter what, you'll find a way if you desire it enough.

Well, hogwash.

You know it's easier said than done. But in the next tip, I'll share with you one simple way you CAN get into the habit of writing every day.

The most essential thing at this point, is your commitment to yourself – and that is to schedule writing time and then actually do it.

Enter it into your calendar right now. Go ahead, I'll wait . . .

Ok – did you mark it down? If you use a computer based calendar like iCal or Outlook, I suggest you set a reminder as well. And when that reminder pops up, don't ignore it! Drop whatever else you might be doing and write. Even if it's just for 15 minutes.

Start now and make it a habit.

Learn to write everyday

In the last section, I wrote that one way to overcome writer's block was to schedule writing time for yourself and briefly mentioned many experts will tell you to write everyday. Now, while I don't agree that if you don't write daily, you're not serious as many experts would have you believe, I'm going to show you how you can learn to write everyday.

Julia Cameron wrote a great series of books on the subject writing, one of which is called "The Artist's Way." I originally found this tip there.

Julia teaches a method called "Morning Pages" that is very helpful in overcoming writer's block. Simply put, every morning – before you do anything else – you write. Anything.

Write with paper and pen. Use a computer. But write. Just get something down on paper. And the premise is, that even though it'll be difficult in the beginning, after a while, you just get used to it and suddenly things find your way into your head and onto your paper.

I've been using this technique now for several years with great success. I now find that on days when I *don't* write my morning pages, the flow of the day is all wrong.

Now, you don't have to write every morning. I didn't when I first started. I wrote whenever I had a moment between kids' activities. But I do find that getting my thoughts on paper first thing as sort of a "brain dump" makes the day go smoother. I don't have all those jumbled thoughts smashing into each other and I can get down to business.

The best thing to do is schedule your time and then give this a try during your time and see where it takes you. You might just find it's the best thing for your writing.

Next tip – reading your way through writer's block.

Reading your way through writer's block

Maybe you're sitting there thinking there's no way in the world one can read their way through writers block. And that's what I used to think too. It just doesn't sound logical, does it?

But it is.

See, it's a proven fact that readers are better writers. It's also proven that readers are better speakers. The reason those are true is because your brain and your eye get used to certain structures, certain word combinations and so when you finally go to write something yourself, you will almost automatically follow that same formula.

Thus, writing becomes more natural. You learn by doing. And other than the act of writing itself, reading is a very natural way to learn that structure.

Read about anything. Growing tomatoes. Real Estate Investing. Read novels, romance stories, science fiction stories. Read magazines like Oprah's O Magazine or Entrepreneur Weekly or Time. Whatever, just read.

And as you read, be on the lookout for topics and ideas. When you find something interesting, write it down in a small notebook. (Always keep a notebook handy!) Then, when you're having trouble finding something to write about, get out your notebook.

You can also go places – out to eat, the park, movies, etc – and just listen to people around you. What are they talking about? What are they doing?

Watch them. Write it down.

Once you have that down, you've won half the battle. The next step is to let your imagination take over. Give your imagination permission to come out of hiding.

When you were a kid, you probably used your imagination readily and without much thought. But as you grew up, you learned that sometimes (like during school and other serious activities), adults frowned on using ones imagination. So, you learned to stuff your creativity in box.

Well, it's time to let it out!

Does that make sense? We'll talk more about using your imagination muscle to overcome writer's block in the next section.

Let your imagination run riot!

I actually thought of this tip while I was reading Dr. Mani's blog earlier. He had written a post about one way of being happy was to let your imagination run riot and I thought it fit with overcoming writer's block as well.

Remember in the last section when I mentioned that as children, we were discouraged from using our imaginations? Well, what happened? We learned to stuff our creativity in a box, didn't we?

And now that we need it, we have no idea how to use it. We might even get short tempered with our own kids when they're being silly or illogical and tell them to quit letting their imaginations get away with them.

Bad idea, folks. Having a vivid imagination can not only help you learn to be happy like Dr. Mani suggests, it can get you out of writer's block when you need it most.

Think about it – when you were a kid and you needed an escape or needed a good story to tell your friends, you maybe told "tall tales" or exaggerated the truth, right? And learning how to tap into that now can help eliminate writer's block.

Take out your notebook, write it down. Get in the habit of writing snippets of anything you hear – from the TV, the radio, other people's conversations, kids – and use those in your morning writing prompts or scheduled writing time. (You did schedule your time, right?)

Bonus Tip: Don't forget to keep that notebook with you at all times. It doesn't have to be very big, just make sure it's comfortable enough to write in when something strikes you. Practice taking notes, even.

Then when you sit down to write, practice letting your imagination take over. Write fast. Write anything.

And that will be the next tip – learning to write quickly, without editing or formatting.

Write quickly without editing or formatting

It took me forever to learn to write without editing. And – admittedly – I still do it at times. But it's hugely important to overcoming writer's block.

Every time you stop for something, to fix a misspelled word, answer the phone, read an email or anything else, you lose momentum. And as you lose that momentum, your brain decides there are better things to do besides write. It becomes conditioned to doing anything but writing. So, when you finally sit down to write, your brain thinks it's time to do something else.

The best way I've found to overcome that, is to sit down and write as FAST as absolutely possible. Turn your screen off if you have to if you're using a computer. Blind fold yourself. Whatever you have to do so that those little annoying things like spelling mistakes and formatting annoyances don't get your attention.

Don't go back to fix anything until the very end. Don't fix grammar, don't fix spelling and for goodness sake, don't fix any formatting! Just write! That's your task during your writing time. **Notice it isn't called EDITING.** It's called WRITING.

Why? Because we are W R I T I N G! ;-)

We are putting thoughts down on paper. Get it in your head that editing and writing are two VERY different things. And you'll be well on your way to overcoming writer's block. Your brain – and maybe even your fingers – will know that when you sit down to write, it's job is be fully present, coming up with ideas and being in flow.

If you follow the act of writing quickly, not only will you – obviously – write faster, you'll probably find the editing process to be much smoother too. And over time, you might even find you actually make less mistakes.

Next up – don't edit your own work. You might be surprised how this can help you overcome writer's block.

Don't edit your own work

I can hear you thinking "Annie is off her rocker this time" but I assure you, that not editing your own work can help you overcome writer's block.

Here's why –
You're too close to your own words.

You know what you wanted to say and when you didn't say it right, when something messed that up and you decided to edit your own stuff, your brain said "hey, why bother here? I can't write right anyway. What's the point?"

Just like editing and formatting when you're writing, your brain thinks it's time to do something else. It gets conditioned to writing wrong and decides there are certainly better things to do.

And secondly, sometimes you're so used to what you meant to say, that you skip right over mistakes because you take for granted what it is actually written. You don't even notice mistakes because your eye sees it the right way, knowing what it should be.

So, send your editing to someone else. Your brain will not know that it messed something up and so when you go to sit down, it will think "Wow! I can do this! I'm good at this." And writing becomes a joy again. But when your head thinks you can't, it sabotages your work time, frustrating you in the end.

Now, I'm not talking about having someone else do your spell checking or your revisions, just have someone else read through it and point out places where it doesn't flow as well as it could and that kind of thing. And certainly, it might be cumbersome to have someone edit your quick blog posts or short articles, but your major projects – like books, eBooks, and long sales letter type stuff – have an outside person go over them with a fine tooth comb.

And if you need an editor, my email is elsewhere on this report. I'd be happy to help you out. Just shoot me a quick note.

In the next section, we'll talk more about cleaning up, only this time, it'll be having a clean workspace.

Have a clean workspace

Just like nature abhors a vacuum, your brain dislikes clutter. Brains just don't function well when things are disorganized. Having a clean workspace can help you overcome writer's block.

Being organized really is helpful. Not only does it save you time when you're trying to find things, it also invokes a feeling of peace and calmness.

Don't believe me?

Trash your workspace and then just TRY sitting there without feeling cramped. I bet it will get to you at some point. You'll want to move things out of your line of vision. You might want to throw things out. Or you'll waste time finding that report you printed out for your rush project.

Once your thought and concentration go down the tube, you'll clam up and everything you intended to write will be long gone.

Distractions are the biggest culprit to unproductive writing and contribute to the top reasons why writers experience writer's block. And some of the most common distractions, besides outside noise like family, are workspace clutter.

Get organized. Put things away. Make sure everything has a place of its own. Keep things neat and come up with a system for keeping everything in its place. Your writing time will be more productive. And when you have productive writing time, you tend to stay on task much better which always leads to reducing writer's block.

When you're productive, your brain learns to trust and enjoy your writing time instead of dreading it.

In the next section, we'll talk more about ways to enjoy the writing process and "get in the mood."

Getting in the mood

Setting the scene of your workspace can do wonders for your enthusiasm as well as your muse. When you feel relaxed, calm, and happy, it's much easier to overcome writer's block.

One of the best ways I've found to overcome writer's block besides having a clean workspace like we talked about in our last section, is to have a quiet, warm, atmosphere to work in.

Fortunately, I have a home office of my own where I can go and close the door. I know many people don't have that small luxury. So, it's particularly important for you to find somewhere you can write comfortably. Preferably, it should be away from outside distractions like family, phones ringing, televisions and the like.

Now, I love music. And for me, writing with quiet, yet energetic music in the background is beneficial. So, I have a stereo system and all my CD's in my office. I can crank up the tunes and drown out all the background noise from my kids and husband and neighborhood lawnmowers or dogs barking.

Another point about getting in the mood, is having good lighting and a comfortable desk and chair. Especially if you write using a computer. Ideas flow much easier when the environment is nice to be in.

You don't need fancy or expensive equipment but your space should be well lit, your chair should be easy and comfortable to sit in and any items like notepad and paper that you may need, should all be within reach. If you need books and papers to be spread out while you're working, you'll need a desk or table with adequate space to accommodate those things.

Hang posters, pictures and other memorabilia on your walls or place them on shelves so that you have special things to inspire you as you work.

Your goal is to have an environment that is safe, clean, organized and a pleasure to be in that will allow you to work at optimum performance.

Which brings us to our last section for this report – when to write and discovering your flow.

Discovering your flow or when to write

So – the big question – how do I get in the flow?

There's no perfect answer here. People work differently. For example, I tend to be a night person. I do not do mornings well and so my most productive time is often afternoon and evening.

In any case, you can find your flow by figuring out when you're most alert, when you feel like you do your best work. Ask yourself a few questions like:

- ✓ **When do I feel most active?**
- ✓ **What time of day do I feel most alert and awake?**
- ✓ **Do I like to get up early in the morning?**
- ✓ **Or do I prefer to stay up late at night?**

It's really that simple.

But I know for a lot of people, myself included, we can't always work at the our most productive time of day. During the week when my husband is at work, I often don't get to work until later in the evening although my most optimum time of day is afternoon.

In times like that, we have to learn to work through the distractions. It can be hard! Especially if you have little kids at home. But if you take steps to keep yourself organized and implement some of the other ideas we've talked about in previous sections, you'll find it easier to overcome other obstacles – like temper tantrums! ;-)

And with all of these "tools" up your sleeve, you'll be a writing maniac in no time!

Thank you!

Thank you for downloading this free report and taking the time read it. I hope you enjoyed it!

As I mentioned earlier, I'm here to help you. If you have some work that needs editing or you're just stuck and need some advice, I'm an email away. Just shoot me a message and let's get you on track. My contact info is below.

In addition to editing and proofreading, I also provide graphic design services as well as copywriting and ghostwriting. You'll find my rates are reasonable and the service is quick and simple.

Again, thank you for your interest in this report. It's been a pleasure!

Blessings,

~ Annie Anderson

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[The Write Point](#)

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[Annie Anderson | Blog](#)

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Please accept this special bonus as a thank you for your support –

This offer entitles the reader to a **free half hour consultation** to review your website or marketing materials. Send me an email to schedule your analysis at one of the above email addresses.

Bonus Section

Introduction

(Yes, I know . . . Introductions usually go at the front of a publication, not near the end. But as it happens, I was actually finished with the rest of my revisions before I decided to include this section. And rather than undo some of the tricks I used to keep everything in place in the Word Processor I'm using, it made far more sense to add a Bonus Section with the Intro and a few other items at the end. Ultimately when the full length book is complete, these will be in their rightful places.)

The text of Overcome Writer's Block was first produced on my internet marketing & more blog which I used (and still use) for testing ideas learned in Ed Dale's Thirty Day Challenge (abbreviated as 30dc hereafter). At the time these blurbs were written, each was done as a separate blog post for Dr. Mani's "Heart Kids Blogathon" which I participated in shortly after the 30dc in 2007. I wrote them purely off the top of my head during the Blogathon. I hadn't even decided before hand what topic to write on – these are simply what came out when I sat down in my chair for my block of time. I had a lot of fun writing these short blurbs and decided to compile them into a report at the request of several people who followed the blog.

And that's ultimately what I'm getting at here – writing should be fun! It should not be a chore – you shouldn't dread doing it. That's why I went ahead and created this report. I wanted to open some doors for you and share what I've learned over the years.

What follows are the gems I've come to "live by" as a writer and graphic designer. While they may not be earth-shattering or new ideas, I hope they are as helpful to you as they have been to me.

Thanks for reading along!



Write what you know - Bonus Tip #1

For most people who are even semi-serious about writing, it goes without saying that you write best when you write what you know. This is something most writers – new and old alike – have heard before or have figured out for themselves. But I'm including it here because it's truly important.

Writing what you know is a great way to beat writer's block. Sure, you might be tired of the subjects you are familiar with but for a lot of writers, suffering from a block is much more difficult to deal with when you add the stress of a new subject to it. Save writing about new topics for a time when you're not already stressed out.

No matter what you do to get yourself over the hump, remember that every writer needs a boost every now and then. Even the great ones.

Write what you want to learn - Bonus Tip #2

And that brings me to the real tip here – Write What You Want to Learn About.

Seriously. If there's something you're interested in that you haven't learned or don't know much about, take the opportunity staring you in the face – start learning about new things thus giving yourself unlimited resources for writing.

Now, you might say I just contradicted myself there. And to be sure, I did just write opposing ideas. But here's the thing – there's no one way around writer's block. Not everything works for every person, either. You know yourself best.

Here's what I've learned though – pushing myself in new directions, always being open and willing to learn new things, has helped me more than any other thing, and probably even more than every other trick combined.

So, ask yourself – What would I like to learn about? Fly fishing? Software programming? Metaphysics? Whatever it is, don't just sit there – go find it! Use the internet and the library and research a new subject. Get involved in clubs and organizations that are built around the topic . . .

And have fun!

Have fun

The last thing I want to write about in this special report, is no matter what else you do, whether you have writer's block or not, give yourself permission to have fun. It's hard to get ideas when you have nothing to inspire you. It's hard to get ideas when you spend your time cooped up without the interaction and company of others.

What can you do to bring some fun into your life?

It could be a simple activity like going for a walk in your neighborhood or walking on trails in the woods or around a lake.

It could be something like watching a movie with your family at the theater or going to see a play at the local performing arts center.

Or maybe you enjoy hiking or bike riding or beach-combing or fishing or crochet.

Just remember to get out there and spice things up a bit now and then. Watch the people around you, listen to bits and pieces of conversations as you pass people in the mall. Whatever.

The point here is don't get stuck in a routine. Life doesn't have to be all about the mundane aspects of living. It was meant to be filled with things that make you feel present, aware, alive and blessed!