

## Overcoming Writing Roadblocks

by Alan Vincent Michaels

### About This Presentation

Does the blank page intimidate you? Do you struggle finding the best words to use or feel your prose and characters need more substance? Are there moments you can't see what to write next? Fear not. You're not alone! All writers, from those new to the craft to experienced, best-selling novelists, struggle with how to start, what to write, and how to push onward to the last sentence of a story or novel.

In this discussion, we'll talk about how to overcome your writing roadblocks and share ideas on how to achieve your literary goals. We'll share what might be causing us to resist writing, what might be sapping our creativity, or what might be getting in our way of writing what is in our hearts.

### Let's Warm Up!

Just like you're advised to stretch and limber-up before taking on a heavy lifting task, going for a long walk, or cycling to the store, doing a writing warm-up can help you break through that mental barrier to getting started. Here are several warm-ups that can help you get accomplish that...

*Forget about spelling, grammar, and structure* – Right! Easier said than done. Ms. Adrian's voice looms in your head: "Remember, subject, verb, preposition. Always look up words you don't know how to spell. No dangling prepositions. Watch for serial commas. IT apostrophe S is always IT IS. It's not a possessive! Remember this ..., remember that ..., remember ..." It's hard to forget, but you need to try.

*Find a place that's just for you* – Create a "free zone" for yourself. It's any place that's free from distractions, noise, cats (or dogs), children, and spouses. For the most part, writing is a solitary endeavor. You need space to be by yourself.

*Always take writing risks* – Remember this little piece of advice your grade school teachers never told you: "You don't have to show your work to anyone." Create it, let it flow, and hide it away until you say it's safe to come out.

*Lastly, just write!* – Writing begets writing. Just like when you walk one mile, then two, then five, you build up your stamina to keep going. The same is true for writing. Give it a try, and see how far you go!

### Successfully Overcoming Common Writing Roadblocks

**O'Brian Gunn** provides these four tips to avoid being taunted by the blank page or screen, and to think of what's confronting you to be more of a "road stumble" than a roadblock:

- Be Original
- Find Fresh Ideas
- Look for Inspiration
- Be Motivated by Rejections

## 4 Writing Roadblocks (and What to Do About Them)

Jodi Brandon's blog about writing roadblocks provides some practical solutions to age-old issues:

- Creative Lapse
- Self-Doubt
- Burnout
- Self-Sabotage

## Three Roadblocks to Writing Success

Jennifer Blanchard writes that we all procrastinate from time to time, but writers and other creative types seem to be particularly susceptible to procrastination. She delves into the root causes of procrastination:

- Laziness
- Fear
- Perfectionism

## A Few Conclusions

The reasons for roadblocks are as numerous as the number of writers out there. We can be our own worst enemy when it comes to writing. Fear and procrastination lead to self-doubt and self-sabotage, as Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Brandon opined.

The reasons for becoming a successful writer – one who writes, not necessarily who makes the most money; that's for another time – are also as numerous as the number of writers out there.

Think about it. Stories have been composed for thousands of years – first, as the spoken word, then scrawled on walls and tablets, then printed. Just look at all the books on the shelves at Barnes & Noble or your computer screen when you scan the "What's new" lists on Amazon. They didn't just appear because someone waved a magic wand – well, maybe some did. In truth, writers put words to paper or a computer screen, and those words were transformed into magazines, books, ebooks, and webpages.

Everyone has a story in their heads and hearts that wants to be released and shared with the world. Let that story fly free from its cage, then smile and applaud yourself for a job well done.

## Resources

- **Successfully Overcoming Common Writing Roadblocks**  
O'Brian Gunn, August 1, 2017  
<https://www.bkacontent.com/overcoming-writing-roadblocks/>
- **On the Blog: 4 Writing Roadblocks (and What to Do About Them)**  
Jodi Brandon, March 1, 2017  
<https://www.jodibrandoneditorial.com/blog/4-writing-roadblocks>
- **Three Roadblocks to Writing Success**  
Jennifer Blanchard, undated  
<http://jenniferblanchard.net/roadblocks-to-writing-success/>