



5 WAYS TO UNLEASH YOUR WRITING MOJO MAGIC

Thank you for downloading this FREE module. This is your workbook to guide you to unleashing your writing mojo magic and achieve your writing goals.

“Everybody wants to write a novel. But, somehow, somewhere, those best intentions get stuck and instead of a finished manuscript, there’s either a blank page or loads of documents with the first few paragraphs.

Which one are you?”

The Talker:



The Talker is identifiable by the amount of talking they accomplish rather than the amount of bum-in-seat. A Talker wants to write a novel, has ideas, may even have attended one or two courses, but has not written a single word. Nada. Zero. Zip.

Every year, the Talker will write down their goal of being a published author and every year this goal gets relegated to the following year. For the Talker, talking about the goal is akin to making it happen. However, the reality is, nothing is happening.

The Talker can also be known as the Procrastinator. Sound familiar?

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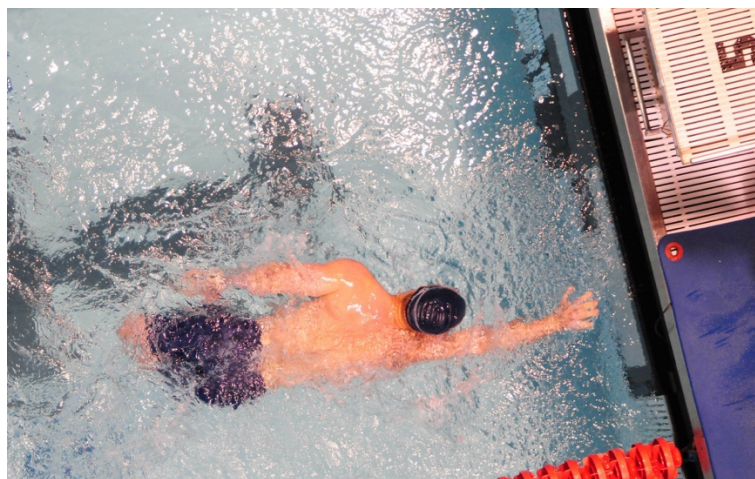
The Stop/Starter:



One step beyond the Talker, is the Stop/Starter. These writers have lists and lists of documents with novels that they've started. These documents span anywhere from one line to about three or four pages. Sometimes, they hit a good spot and write an entire few thousand words. And then...they carry on with the next project.

On the positive side, the Stop/Starter has LOADS of ideas. And they want to explore every single one.

The Can't-Finisher:



The Can't-Finisher is exactly that – some who can't finish. They want to finish. More than anything they want to write 'The End', but they can't.

The Can't-Finisher goes back and edits their first draft as it's happening, adding in more characters, changing situations, and generally, tweaking and fiddling. The result? They have half a novel or even three-quarters of a novel, but no actual finished product. Why? Because it's not perfect – if they could just do this or that, then it would be ready.

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The Uninspired:



This can happen at any stage. Maybe you wrote the first novel in a series and now, look at that, the muse has disappeared entirely. Maybe you were writing away, in the flow, everything was wonderful and pink unicorns, and then, wham, something happened and now you don't feel it...at all.

Which one do you identify with the most?

(and you may be an uninspired/can't-finisher)

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WHAT CAUSES ANY OF THE ABOVE?

Creative Recovery

Every kid starts off as a creator but somewhere along the way that natural curiosity and enthusiasm slip-slides away. We put away our paint and clay for more grown-up pursuits.

Maybe a teacher or a close friend said something derogatory about your creative work? Or poured scorn over your creative dreams.

The result is that as much as we want to unleash our creativity, we believe it to be stunted, ugly, incomplete or unwanted. We judge our rough work by someone's polished final draft. We let harsh words swirl around in the background, hampering any creativity that's trying to breathe.

The truth is you'll never make everyone happy with your creative work, but I guarantee that if you don't voice the work in your creative heart, you'll make yourself miserable.

Creative recovery is a life-long affliction for many, vacillating along a spectrum of 'alright' to 'I totally suck'. For many, it manifests as imposter syndrome but for others it manifests as chronic fear of ever starting.

The Process

There's no one way to write a book, much like there's no one way to wash dishes or conduct your relationships with your nearest and dearest. Some writers write at desks, others in potting sheds, and others on trains to work. Some write in the morning, some in the evening, some in the gaps when they have five whole minutes to themselves. Some write on their MacBook Pros, others by hand in an A5 spiral notebook.

Your way = the right way.

But, your creativity is uniquely yours as well. Sometimes an idea takes a loooooong time to develop. Sometimes it drops from the sky. Other times you'll start on a piece of work and put it to one side – you might come back to it, you might never. Sometimes that gap is a few weeks, other times, years. Some people like deadlines to work to, others don't.

Planning, thinking, researching are all part of the process, too, but seem to be forgotten in the need to *writewritewrite* and they really shouldn't. Some authors describe 'giving birth to their novel'. That's a whole lot of time incubating something, nurturing it, letting it grow.

The Craft

Maybe you've got stuck because there are gaps in your knowledge of the craft (not *that* craft, *writing* craft). If you're not sure what should happen next, maybe you need help with plotting. Or maybe it reads as boring because there's no emotional arc. Hey, what's an emotional arc? Yep, you need some craftwork.

All authors, no matter where they are on the publishing ladder, will, at some time or other, need help with their craft.

Making the Connection

Simply put – you need other writers. These can be beginners, pros, or anyone in between.

Other writers can be a source of inspiration, assistance, commiseration, and empathy. They are your support structure.

I'm not suggesting joining a writers' group where you write together, necessarily. This might be ideal for you. But, even a forum where you can share your feelings about the process, is going to build in the camaraderie that's missing in this solitary pursuit.

Which one do you identify with the most?

(and you may be all of them)

The 5 Ways

1) Be prepared to suck



Have a gander round Goodreads. Look up your favourite novels. Someone, somewhere, hated it. HATED it.

You can't please everyone all of the time.

Someone, somewhere also had a really bad novel published. Take comfort in this. If they can do it, so can you.

The only way to write one great novel is to write many bad novels. Maybe that's an exaggeration, but practice makes perfect. No-one starts off with brilliant straight out of the gate (and if they do, it's fluke). It's said that it's easier to edit a draft rather than a blank page, and that's very true.

Write it down, fix it later. You can always fix it later.

2) Get shorty

Why? A few reasons:

- Look at that! You're writing every day! It can be done. All it is, is habit.
- No matter how small the word count, the words are being written. Slowly is better than nothing at all.
- And whaddaya know? You FINISHED seven pieces of writing. SEVEN. FINISHED. There they are. They exist. You can FINISH something.

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Here's the **SEVEN DAY GET SHORTY CHALLENGE**:

- **Day One**: Four different book titles for your international best-sellers
- **Day Two**: A four-tweet story about a boy who can't find his heart
- **Day Three**: Two four-line verses about Janu-worry
- **Day Four**: A letter from your favourite author to you (s/he/they have just read your latest novel)
- **Day Five**: Four closing lines to your international best-selling novel
- **Day Six**: Your author blurb
- **Day Seven**: A paragraph from your autobiography of the worst moment in your life when all was lost

3) Do ONE thing differently

Sometimes not writing is because your creative 'well' (to borrow from Julia Cameron) has run dry. This is not surprising considering the demands of modern-day living: kids, jobs, partnerships, relationships, traffic, commuting, shopping, admin, Netflix bingeing, etc, etc, etc.

It's way too easy to get into the same ole', same ole'. That's why you need to shake it up a little. Not a lot. I'm not asking for BIG changes, only tiny ones.

One tiny difference every day = BIG change over time

Here are some suggestions:

Switch up the process

- Where do you write? Go somewhere else...
- Don't use your PC, use a notebook. And vice versa
- Start in the middle of your story
- Write the ending rather than the beginning
- Listen to music you don't normally listen to
- Write in the morning before anyone's awake

Switch up your *creativity*

- Write in a different genre
- Draw/paint/sketch a comic strip/kid's book character/cartoon
- Sew/knit/crochet
- Bake something from scratch
- Try out a different recipe – something you've never attempted but always wanted to
- Rearrange your furniture
- Go dancing

Switch up your *experiences*

- Visit a new part of town
- Read a different genre – something you'd NEVER read
- Watch a foreign film
- Wander round an art gallery/flea market/food market
- Take in a live concert
- Take up a different sport – wrestling, boxing, rock climbing

4) Celebrate the small

Tell me something...have you got an image of yourself signing that agent or publishing deal with a giant bottle of champagne on ice and an FB update that tells the world? It's a great vision to hold (keep doing that and if you don't, *start* doing it).

BUT.

That might happen years from now. What about the successes in-between?

Did you pick up some romance novels in the sub-genre you'd like to write in? Yes? Job done. Celebrate? You get to read them.

Did you spend some time working out a character's motivation? Yes? Job done. Celebrate? An episode of whatever you're watching.

Did you write a few paragraphs of your novel today? Yes? Job done. Celebrate? Guilt-free watching the sunset.

Look, I have no idea what your idea of a celebration is but make it something to match the task. Make it something you love as well. I like to use going to watch movies and heading out for a swim as my celebrations. There are others and they change with the seasons, but they work.

Writing is hard work. Celebrate all of your successes.

5) Find your people

Connecting with other romance writers is a surefire way to feel less alone in this otherwise overwhelming industry.

Romancelandia is a very real thing.

In SA, we have ROSA who have chapters in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, as well as an annual conference. www.romancewriters.co.za

In the US, there's the RWA who also have state chapters, and an annual conference (that's about fifteen times the size of ROSA's). www.rwa.org.

There are also organisations in the UK, Australia, Canada...

Thanks to the Internet, it's never been easier to find your tribe of romance writers.

On Twitter, there are heaps of writers, agents, bloggers and editors always chatting about their favourite topic – romance writing. I've lost count how many threads there are on writer difficulties, how-to's, what the publishing world is looking for, as well as scandals (Cockygate).

YOUR TRIBE IS OUT THERE – FIND THEM.

