

**Motivate and Inspire  
The Writer in YOU**

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Words, stories and ideas to help grow up your writing career

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All the information in this book is offered for the encouragement and motivation for discovering your unique place.

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**Introduction**

Writing can be a solitary, frustrating and uphill battle – and that is on the good days. Pouring out your heart to the world can literally suck you dry. It helps to find others that can encourage your journey. It motivates the actions when you have your heart stirred by the words or actions of others.

My desire in sharing these words is that they will provide you with just a little motivation or inspiration for taking that next step in your writing journey.

# # #

### **A Heart Ready for Response**

Develop the habits to become a heart ready for response. Christian writers hold more responsibility than other writers just telling stories. Each one of us should be prepared to give a response about the Who that directs the words and the why behind the need to share them. It is not just about a Christian message within the words, but the heart behind their creation.

#### Getting a Heart Ready for Response

Be ready to answer - Know why you do what you do. Some writers are in it for the money and others are in it to make a difference. Make a list of the reasons behind your actions. Let the list build a vision sentence that sums up what you want others to see and know about your writing abilities.

Be ready to pray – Comments from readers and those that want to begin their own writing journey often come with hurts, habits or hang-ups that need healing. Being in a place where those pains are presented to you will require a heart ready (and even eager) to cover that pain with a touch of prayer.

Be ready to encourage – The world drags down the heart and enthusiasm of those that dare to walk through it. Daily doses of inspiration and motivation can be the difference between a heart that stumbles on and a heart that stumbles and quits. Meeting those people – through the written words or personal appearances – means that you may be the only one that can offer the courage they need to be hearts that push through.

Be ready to stop – Reaching out to others may not be convenient for your timeline or schedule. It takes practice to live out the idea to “Love God – Love others,” especially when a deadline looms on the horizon. The time invested in holding out a hand to another will return an interest that could never be found another way.

Be ready to listen – There are so many needs in the world, and no single person can fill them all. Each person has been given a time, a season and a purpose. The only way to know yours is to know the Weaver on a personal and intimate basis. Listen to the directions that He gives you and then follow through on His directives.

Words have power – even those that are “just telling a story.” The Christian has been called to go to all the world and share the good news. Begin to come to a place where the One that created the good news is the One that directs your words and actions. Soon, you will become a heart ready to respond to the needs of those that you encounter.

# # #

### **Beyond Imagination**

Today, someone posted on Facebook (on a page where my debut novel, RUN, was mentioned) that he had a copy of my book and I would soon be a literary star.

Yesterday, I spoke before a group of writers at various stages of their careers and challenged them to take the steps into the dreams.

At this moment, I still find myself struggling between doing what I know I need to do to reach my own dreams and taking a break because I want to take a break.

Fortunately, I need to write a guest post and that is the little extra push I need to get me moving back in the direction that will land me at the “literary star” mentioned earlier.

*Top Tips for Getting Your Push Beyond Imagination*

- Find some accountability. I find there are two ways to best hold my feet to the fire. One is to ask someone to check up on me regularly. Two is to announce a release time for something. Today I announced that my second novel would be ready for release by early fall. Laying out a deadline like that makes it tough to wiggle around.

- Find some encouragement. Having other people – that are not related to me and have not known me all my life – that are yelling out my praises on Facebook provides enough inspiration to bring tears to my eyes. Knowing that others believe in your pursuits and your possibilities can pour fuel on an ember and light your world on fire.

- Find some time. Getting anywhere requires an investment and time will always be a component of that investment. I have to choose to release some things in my life in order to carve out a slot for my writing. And then I have to choose to utilize that time to write.

Dreams can come true. Becoming a literary star sits within my grasp . . . but I have to reach out, get moving, make that dream a reality in my life.

What do you dare to do to be more than you can think or imagine?

# # #

### **Breaking Through the Fog**

“Are you THE Kathryn Lang - the one that writes for that paper?” My husband’s groan could not be heard, but I could see it written all over his face. He sat helplessly as my head began to swell.

“Yes, that’s me.”

“I love what you write.”

The one compliment would have made my day. The fuss the ladies began to make over me made my year! It seemed like the perfect time to pitch my book.

“I’m editing my book right now.”

“I know it will be great. Never stop writing.”

That has been my problem in the past. I have stopped doing the things that I found a passion to do. I stopped writing when I was a teenager because I got a rejection (just one did me in). I stopped dancing in college because one coach told me I did not have the body to dance.

The praises that I received were an amazing boost to my ego. It was definitely something that I could get accustomed to hearing. But it was the reminder to stay true to my passion that meant the most.

Over the last few weeks I have struggled to stay on task. The dollar signs have clouded the passion and made it difficult for me to find my way. The fog began to lift yesterday. The encouragement from these women made everything crystal clear.

Never stop. Once you grasp your passion and your dream then pursue it to the end.

# # #

### **Avoiding the Squirrels**

The more I try to focus on what I know to do the more distractions pop up and demand my attention. I try to ignore them, but they run around me in circles making my head spin. The harder I focus the more determined those stupid squirrels become. I can hear them barking at my heels right now.

Chasing squirrels became my expression for choosing the distractions over the things I knew to do. The image came from the movie, "Up" (which I highly recommend if you have not seen it). Squirrels are those things in life that distract me from taking the steps that I know I am supposed to take. These are those things that lead me off track or in so many circles that I end up wondering which way is up.

I have gotten so good at chasing squirrels that I thought I would share the best ways to make squirrel chasing part of your normal routine.

*Tips for Squirrel Chasing*

1. Never look before you leap - just jump right after the noise or movement. Stop everything that you know to do to investigate that mysterious crinkle in the corner. Change your direction to look into that illusion of activity.

2. Never talk to someone who has been there and done that - because I know what is best for MY life so why bother talking to someone else? I just need to follow my gut, my heart or my instinct and let it lead me to the prize.

3. Never use logic when emotions can handle the situation - it sounds like a squirrel and there is movement so it must be a squirrel (even if I am in an airplane 30,000 feet in the air).

4. Never stick to the plan - no matter how detailed or specific the design, it can always be improved by diverting time, energy and effort into chasing that furry tailed rascal.

5. Never learn from your own mistakes - so what if it was just a figment of my imagination last time. This time it HAS to be a squirrel.

6. Never let the desire to chase the squirrel be hindered by the need to do what is right - work can wait. Family can wait. The purpose and passion can wait. The only important thing is the squirrel.

Getting things done requires doing what needs to be done. I have to learn to refuse to let the squirrels hinder my purpose.

# # #

### **Leaping into My Writing**

“You are now on your own.”

The idea of launching my person writing floated around my head for months – years I might even say. The concept of making those writings the main substance of my income seemed like a Herculean task best left to the experts. The idea still cried out to be noticed. I just worked hard to ignore it.

Three months ago my mother went into Hospice and that single moment clarified my idea. I gave notice to most of my clients – but I held on to one. It seems to me that the closer some of us get to pursuing the dream the harder we cling to the very anchor holding us to the past.

Three weeks ago my mother died and losing her sent me into a spin that I did not expect. There was the expected flurry of some activities combined with the massive storms of so much more. Words refused to show up and I was left staring at blank pages. My final client sent me notice this morning that they would be turning the work over to another writer.

I suggested the move. Part of me knew that until I let go of the anchor I would never truly fly. The other part of me knew that all of my current commitments were hindering my ability to focus on the needs of the client. None of me was ready for that moment of standing there on my own.

What to do when there is nothing else to do?

I started writing again yesterday. It felt good to see the words pouring out. I even thought that maybe there would be a way to balance the client and my life. Then the email came and that was no longer an option.

So this is it. I make it or break it with my own writing skills. I have the tools. I have been weaned on many websites and trained by some great and knowledgeable people. I have what it takes, but now I have to leap and know that all of that will help me spread my wings and fly.

What to do when there is nothing else to do – you jump!

# # #

## **CHALLENGE**

Flash Fiction Challenge – Foodie Focus

Putting together random words for a great flash fiction challenge seems impossible. The creative mind goes to words that it wants to use. I decided to let each of my family members add a word to one that I came up with – just to be sure it was random.

## Words for Flash Fiction

Bouncy

Breakfast

Hunger

Ham

Pie

I have learned not to ask my family for random words just before I make them lunch. Still, it could be interesting. The flash fiction challenge is to take these five words and craft them into a story under 600 words.

### *Locked Away*

*“Ham it up all you want. Mom will still get you when she gets home.” Cal yelled at his brother from behind the barricaded closet door.*

*It was partly his fault that he was in the position in the first place. He had been trying to keep his youngest brother under control while his mom was out running errands. The more he tried to reel him in, the more bouncy Spencer seemed to get.*

*Breakfast started the issues. Cal knew that the third bowl of sugary cereal might not be the best meal for a boy that already had enough energy to power a small country. He had tried to get him to eat the egg pie mom had left them, but the pitch of the whine that Spencer could produce often made Cal fold.*

*Cal got comfortable in the tight closet. He had almost pushed his way out once, but Spencer and his friend had managed to push him back in and then they had barricaded the door. The more they laughed, the more Cal worried about what they might be doing on the other side of the door.*

*Cal was beginning to experience the pains of hunger. Dealing with Spencer at breakfast had made him miss out on eating more than one slice of the egg pie himself. His stomach growled as he thought about it.*

*“Are you guys getting hungry yet?” Maybe a bribe would get him out of the closet. “I could get you some pizza.” The other two boys continued to run*

*around on the other side of the door. “Would you like to go out and roast hotdogs over a fire?” Normally the idea of burning something would send Spencer running to get in line.*

*Cal put his head against the door. It was suddenly quiet – too quiet. The only thing worse than having them out there being loud was having them out there not making any noise at all. Cal began to panic. Maybe they were out at the creek. Maybe they wandered off into the woods. Maybe . . .*

*“Cal?”*

*His mother’s voice pierced through the door. Cal smiled. It made sense now. “In here.” They were hiding because they knew it was over. Cal heard the furniture scraping over the floor and then the door was open.*

*His mom was smiling when he stepped out of the closet. “I bet you have a tale to tell.”*

*“I think it will be more interesting to hear it from Spencer first.”*

You have seen one way these words can be woven into a story. Now write your own.

# # #

### **Learning How to Do It All**

I can do it all . . . I just have to figure out how to do it all at the same time. I manage a little here. I find a way to do a little there. Sooner or later, something slips through the cracks and I am left wondering what on earth I was doing in the first place.

#### *Top Tips for Doing it All*

Know what you really want to do. Having a plan for life (much like you would create for a business) will help to direct the choices. I need to know what I want to accomplish. I need to know why I want to accomplish it. I need to have steps to get me across the finish line. The right plan will help me understand what I really want to do.

Set a goal (or two). Long term goals – where you want to be in five years and ten years – can be the motivation for reaching the next level. Dream big, but dream honestly. I have to be willing to stretch myself if I am ever going to be more than I am right now.

Keep moving. Nothing gets done if I am not doing anything. Sitting around wishing and hoping will leave me starry eyed, but not much more. Action is the difference between a dream and a win.

Get some support. Accountability pushes me when my own motivation has dwindled. It helps to have others that will encourage me in my journey to success – and that will hold my feet to the fire when I am struggling to get moving again.

Cut back. Getting it all done does not mean everything under the sun. Some things will have to be cut. Review the activities that take up the day and find the ones that work best. I need to do what I need to do and sometimes that means not doing what I do not need to do.

I have to know what I want if I am going to get to where I want to be. Investing the time and effort into my what, how and when can be the key to finding my way to do it all.

# # #

### **Learning to Bend**

I bend, but the storms have helped me develop the strength not to break. Unexpected ice storms cause me to creak. Strong winds storms push me to my limits. The heat of summer forces my roots down even deeper. Through it all I stand.

But there are days when the bending, creaking and stretching seem like to much to take.

It would be easier to quit. The stress and strain of it all seems like a ridiculous choice when the toughest times are at hand. There is an easier way. There is a better way. There is a way that would make me happier. There HAS to be.

Relax in the midst of it all and just bend. Do it right now. Bend your head forward and breathe. Bend to the sides and breathe. Bend just a little and soon you break the hold the storm has on your life.

Today it was working through papers for my dad that had to do with my mom. She died in March, but the pain of her absence hit me with a vengeance I could never have expected. One thing piled up on another thing and soon something as trivial as being put on hold caused me to break down.

Bend.

I cried. I bent over my desk and let the tears fall for a moment. It was too much.

Bend.

I wiped the tear and took a deep breath. Pain will happen. Tears will fall. But I will not break. I will keep bending and shifting and bending and shifting until the storm has passed.

Pushing on with a writing career, no matter what direction that career takes, is not for the weak. The attitudes and behaviors of people thrown at something you cared for and molded will cause some to want to fold. Cruel words, rejections, and the lack of sales can all drive you to want to give up. It can push you to the breaking point.

Just bend. When it comes down to it, bend your head down. Now say a prayer. And let the peace that passes all understanding be the soothing water that makes it possible for you to keep bending until you find your way.

# # #

## **CHALLENGE**

Find one person that is in your niche or expertise and do something to build them up. Share a blog a post link. Give a shout out on Twitter. The key is to be sincere in the thoughts and to follow up on the responses.

Today we begin to build relationships.

What are you going to do to connect with others in a personal way through the internet or social media?

# # #

### **Make Anything Happen NOW**

"If you want something to happen in your life then you can't sit around and wait for it to come to you." The words were for my husband, but they smacked me pretty hard as well. There are things that I dream about and hope for, but what am I really doing to make them a reality in my life?

The answer is nothing.

Stepping out into my dreams can be like walking in Alabama mud. It saps the energy and fills the mind with dread that at any moment I can fall. My own thoughts about pursuing the dream are soon crowded out by questions and fears. It seems easier to stay where I am than risk not getting to where I want to be.

Fear of failure cannot be an option. After all, the only guaranteed way to fail is to not even try. It may be scary to jump out with nothing but faith holding me up. The road ahead may be dark, intimidating and even overwhelming. The mountain may look impossible from this vantage point. One step small step out, just one little piece of the puzzle at a time, and a long, deep breath will get me going in the right direction.

Martina McBride has a song called "Anyway." In it the lyrics talk about dreams so out of reach that they might not ever work out but that you should dream anyway. It's one of those songs that sticks in my head and encourages me to dare to believe.

Believing and dreaming are only part of the equation. Like I was telling my husband, I have to do. So today I will do more than dream. Today is the day that I leap.

What are you letting anchor you to the ground so that you are unable to fly towards your dreams?

# # #

## **Make Writing a Priority – Secrets Learned from Austin Boyd**

Time keeps on slippin . . . slippin . . . slippin.

The song mentions time slipping into the future – I just want to know where my day went. I started out with the best intentions and even a schedule. Then time just kept on slipping and it was the end of the day.

Austin Boyd took chose to spend some of his time talking to newer writers at the Southern Christian Writers Conference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He said that to be a writer we had to write, so there had to be a moment when writing became the priority.

### *Time Budgeting Tips Learned from Austin Boyd*

- Differentiate between the important and the urgent and then choose the important. Family is important. Writing is important. Taking the neighbor to the grocery would be urgent. Developing a filter to focus on the important will begin to reduce the time clutter issues in your life.
  
- Make a list of what you need to do. Go through the list and put the most important things at the top of the list. Review the list once again. Now exclude all of the small stuff at the bottom of the list. If you still have trouble figuring out how you will get it all done then reverse your thinking and start determining what you will not be done. In the end, you will have a list that you can accomplish.
  
- Schedule out the time stealers. Buy an egg timer that you can set for different amounts of time and then set it when you get involved with the internet, social media, games or the television. There is nothing wrong with taking a break, but take a determined break or you will look up and realize the day is spent.
  
- Set aside five minutes each day to brainstorm ideas. Be creative. Think outside the box. Now write down these ideas and keep them in a way that you can easily access them. As your time balances out, make room in the

schedule to address these ideas one at a time and you will have the tools to keep the wheels turning in your writing.

One step at a time and you get there. Time will not keep slipping away if I keep it duct taped to the floor. I will determine how I spend my time and I will make each purchase worth its weight in gold.

# # #

### **CHALLENGE**

All things can be beneficial – in moderation. But if I want to build my writing success I have to be ready and willing to cut the fat, so to speak. Nothing stands in my way but me. If I can break the habits that are holding me back then I can reach the success that I desire.

What is one thing that you can cut from your schedule or activities? I know that I can choose to only turn on the internet when I actually need to use the internet. In other words, I am going to cage up my distracting squirrels.

So, what are you going to change in order to reach your success?

Be sure to come back and link to your post – if you post. Or at least just take a moment and share your goals so that we can help encourage and support each other.

Good luck and good writing.

# # #

### **Find YOUR Ways to Get Beyond**

Writing for a living can be difficult on many days and worse than pulling a tooth on others. The content may not be something you love or even enjoy, but it is always important to someone. It would be nice if someone could invent a liquid form of "you go girl" for those days when my motivation has burrowed into a hole and refuses to come out.

Take one more step - that is what I keep telling myself. The only way I can arrive at my destination is if I continue to move towards that destination. It is just when the energy wanes and the inspiration dissipates, all I want to do is stay in bed (except to get out and soak in a hot bath). The last thing I want to do is push at something that seems more likely to never happen.

Yes, even a woman that lives in a world of rainbows and lollipops can have her down days.

The difference between a life of success and one of failure lies in a desire that will find some way to get those moments and days of "nothing is going right" and get back into the track of "everything is possible."

### *Develop YOUR Ways*

1. Get some motivation music. It does not have to motivate anyone but you - so whatever makes you want to dance, sing or go sliding through your house in your underwear and white tee shirt is the right choice for you.

2. Build a cheerleading squad. There will be days when you will not be able to find the energy on your own. It may be that the car has stalled in the intersection and it just refuses to budge. It is important to have someone that will get out with you and push - or that will do all the pushing while you try and steer.

3. Accomplish something. A small task, checked off and moved past, can lead to another small task being overcome. Sometimes these small accomplishments can drive the desire to see the mountain as a mole hill and begin climbing again.

4. Create a fall back plan. It is not about retreating, but about taking the time to regroup, reorganize and redesign. Set up a system that gives you the opportunity to recharge when you are stumbling around for hope.

There will be days! Develop some keys to help you push beyond the struggles and begin moving forward to the success that you desire in your writing career.

# # #

## **Persistence Rules**

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence." I grew up with this saying on my wall. The only way I would ever reach the goals I set for my life would be if I continued to do what needed to be done until I got there.

### *Building a Foundation of Persistence*

- Believe it. "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right." Henry Ford. I have to get to the point where the goal that I have for my life is settled deep in my knower.

- Support it. Find people that will believe with you, push you to continue when you want to stop and will carry you when all else fails. The right support can be all the difference.

- Say it. The things you say will be the things you believe. Create "I am" and "I will" statements that will drive you in the direction that you desire.

I set a goal of 6,000 words a few months back and made it - one day. The next day, tornadoes tore through my community and flipped my world upside down. That chaos has been a great excuse for not even attempting my goals, much less reaching them.

The other morning I woke up and realized that I was supposed to be writing. Excuses would always be available, but unless I take the action to make my dreams a reality they will continue to only be dreams.

November is National Novel Writing Month. The challenge to write 1667 words each day provided the motivation to take on my goals once again. Meeting with other writers and writing groups, in person and online, has provided the inspiration to let the words flow. And making that one statement to my husband, "I am supposed to be writing," reminded me again that the gift and passion I have for words will only get me to my goals if I make the effort to write.

Believe that you are going to reach your goal. Find people that will support and encourage you on your journey. And say the words over and over until you are unable to say anything else.

# # #

### **Press On to Victory**

“Press on: Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” – Calvin Coolidge

Press on because the only thing standing in the path of your success is your own mind.

Press on because there is nothing that is as bad as you make it out to be in your mind.

Press on because the mind can barely comprehend the amazing blessings that the Father bestows.

Press on because you may not know in your mind the what, but you know in your heart and spirit the Who and that makes all the difference.

I dove competitively when I was in high school. Every year I went up against the same girl. Every year she beat me. The last year I competed, I spent the night before terrified about getting beat again. I HATE to lose. I called up a friend and he told me if it was stressing me out that bad then I should just go home. My coach pushed me to dive despite my fears. She beat me again. But my fears did not. That was my first lesson in pressing on.

A college professor told me that my writing would never be worth pursuing. My grandmother told me that writing was not something you did for a living because they called them starving artists for a reason. I still wrote. And eventually the internet began to open up avenues for me to pursue my writing with boldness. I am still in this lesson of pressing on

and discovering more and more that it is not the talent, but the pursuit that will get me there.

My son started gymnastics last year. He struggled for a while to master the balance beam. He worried about falling off. He worried about messing up. “Keep trying” was the encouragement I offered, until I saw him one day on a log out in the back yard. “Pretend the balance beam is a log.” It made a difference. Sometimes pressing on means seeing things differently (and with a little imagination). I hope that this is the beginning of teaching my own children the value of pressing on.

Press on. Never let the world tell you what you can do. Never let circumstances define you. Never let problems dictate the path. Press on.

# # #

### **Shifting the Blame**

My writing opportunities continue to expand. My dreams continue to grow. My results stay the same . . . and I look around wondering how these opportunities are not meeting up with my dreams.

I want to blame someone else. I want to point the finger at the economy. I want to deflect the truth from where it sits squarely – I am not where I want to be because I am not doing what I know I need to do.

All of the words of encouragement from friends and family will not get me there.

All of the plans for the future (and for the now) will not get me there.

All of the “ifs,” “buts,” and “maybes” will not get me there.

Intentions are great, but they do not build dreams. Only my actions will ever take me to that place of exceeding abundance that I desire. I can, if I think I can and then act in a way that brings the thoughts to life.

So, even though I want to point in another direction, I know where the true and only fault lies. I am squandering my “talents.” If I want to be in that place of the servant that received more, then I have to take action. I have to put the talents to work with a heart determined to reach the purpose of the Master and bless Him upon His return.

It is not about my feelings – although feelings will always try to step in the way.

It is not about the others around me – although people have a tendency to put a kink in my day.

It is not about my circumstances – although circumstances will push me to run or tie me down and make me stay.

### *Developing Consistency for Action*

- do something. Something will often lead to something else which may end me up in the place where I should have been all along. Not doing something will increase the difficulty of getting started in the first place. Momentum begets momentum begets momentum . . . do something.

- get away. The clutter of life can hinder hope. I love my family, but sometimes a few moments alone can be all that I need to recharge. Alone, I can be still. Still, I can hear. When I hear the direction then I can be secure in my steps. Sometimes I have to be willing to get away.

- offer praise. Thank the Lord for all that He has done – in the moment, in the day and in life. Look around at all of the amazing blessings. Write down the good, positive and uplifting things. Hope and faith thrive in a heart committed to offer praise.

“You have been chosen by the ultimate judge above for many great things ahead. I see the light around you.” These words were recently shared with me about my walk and my writing. Confirmation that I am aimed in the right direction. Now I just have to be willing to fire!

What actions will you take to begin the momentum towards your dreams?

# # #

### **Surrounded by Conspiracy**

It IS a conspiracy. The technician that was at the house would neither confirm nor deny it, so I know THEY are out to get me. What are the odds

that my main internet connection would go out and when I plugged in my back up air card it was ALSO not working? They planned it that way – I know they did.

I discovered that the THEYS of this world often cause a lot of the chaos that inhabits my world. Listening to my children . . . I am they. So, no matter who your THEY may be or what the conspiracy is that is keeping you from your purpose, there are some things you can do that will get you through.

### *Tips for Getting Through the Conspiracy and Beyond the Reach of They*

- Smile! Nothing throws off the conspirators faster than a smile. The power of the smile will pour through your body and on to anyone that it encounters. Taking the time to smile will break the clouds – even if just for a moment.

- See beyond the moment. Not getting on the internet allowed me to focus more time on my family and on editing my novel, RUN (WARNING! Shameless plug . . . RUN will be available in bookstores later this month). I quit looking at the lack of internet access and found the possibilities that it offered.

- Review the situation and adjust for the circumstances. At the end of the day, I got more done that I ever did with the distraction of the internet. Not having the option made me realize that I need to adjust how I utilize that particular tool.

Maybe it was a conspiracy . . . by maybe instead of THEY plotting the annoyance, it was God planning the opportunity. I have found that what some see as a log in the road is often just a redirection down the right path.

# # #

### **The Hope of Tomorrow**

There are moments in life when you look around and wonder if the path you are on is in the right zip code for where you are supposed to be.

Everything looks wrong, feels wrong and even wears wrong. You just feel out of place.

I was there. Not only had my mother died, but the deadline I set for getting on the map with my writing and speaking had slipped past at the same time. I looked around and realized that nothing was like I thought it should be. Quitting seemed to be the logical choice – or at least backing up and punting.

It got worse.

The moment I think that all of the shoes have dropped and all of the rugs have been pulled out from under me is often the same moment it gets even worse. I got an email that cut my pride and even integrity – and it happened in front of my kids and my nephew.

My gut instinct was to react in kind. Calmer heads prevailed. I responded with a basic “this could have been handled better and best of luck in the future.” That alone was an example to those watching my reactions. My next step was even more important because I chose to let the past stay in the past and I jumped with both feet into the future that I had moments before been contemplating letting go.

That is why they say when you feel you are at the end of your rope then tie a knot and hold on. Tomorrow holds the hope – and it always shows up just when the time is right.

My choice to look at the problem as a possibility paved the way for two interview requests, one book review request, and one additional contact that holds unknown potential (and they all came in one day). My children and nephew witnessed firsthand that doing what I knew to be right opened the door for a heaping of blessings.

Keep holding – keep hoping – and keep pushing, because tomorrow will bring the dawn that you desire.

*My Secrets for Holding On*

- Surround yourself with others that believe in your dream. Even one person that says you can do it when you hit that brick wall can be enough to get you over that wall and moving forward again.

- Review your own actions before requesting action from others. Do all that you can do, FIRST. Once you have those actions in place then reach out.

- Ask for help. You know who to ask, so ask. There are people out there that want nothing more than to support you in your journey. Ask for their support in the way that you know suits them best.

- Keep praying. Pray about your own situation, but look for opportunities to lift up others in prayer. Focusing on the lives of others often brings clarity into our own lives.

Tomorrow hold the hope – and you need to find your own keys for reaching out to that hope until you have it in your grasp.

# # #

### **The Path to Writing Success**

“If you are willing to help enough people get what they want in life then you will find that you get what you want in life.” This idea comes from a quote by Zig Ziglar and it ties in directly with the Golden Rule. Do unto others.

Most writers get caught up in the “I” of it all. I want to get a book deal. I want to get published in this magazine. I want to make enough money to become a full-time writer. I want to continue making enough money that I do NOT have to go back to a regular job.

Several weeks back I had the opportunity to reach out and help a friend. Our conversation opened up the realization that others were struggling with the same issues. I started spending some of my day doing things to help those that I could help and I soon discovered that I was closer to my own goals than I had even been.

The idea of giving up the “I” stuff for the “you” stuff can be uncomfortable in the best of situations and painful in the worst. But the investment ALWAYS pays off exceedingly, abundantly above all that I can think or imagine. It is not about what you have done for me lately – but about how I can do for you. It is not about the benefits I get from the actions – but about the blessings that will flow both ways.

This holiday is a great moment to step back and think about what I am willing to sacrifice to allow others to become more. The freedom to be all that you want to be comes when you are willing to be bold enough in your actions towards others to provide them with the ability to discover their own freedom.

# # #

### **CHALLENGE**

A picture may paint a thousand words, but someone still has to put those words to action by sharing them. That is the challenge for this Friday. You have three pictures to choose from. All three have someone or something in a place that they should not be. Picture one: a boy up to his waist in a mud hole. Picture two: a tree in the back end of a suburban. Picture three: a boy in a garbage can.

All of these pictures have GREAT stories of their own. But I want to hear what you think. It can be in the form of the perfect caption for the image. You can choose to create a story that explains what happen before, during or after the photo. It may be that the image stirs an idea in you that will come out in the form of a great blog post.

Let the image stir the words and then see what comes from the mix.

Will you take the challenge?



*Revenge (inspired by image #2)*

*The squirrels had threatened a rebellion. Clues were scattered all around in the form of acorns bombed down on the heads of the unsuspecting citizens below. All of the threats were ignored. The roar of the engines still sent the furry fiends scurrying up the nearest tree.*

*They had enough. The plan began to unfold in the cover of darkness. They took turns standing watch and working on the revenge. It took three days, and they were getting exhausted. "Keep going. We are almost there." Their leader still showed the results of a close call with one of the cars. His tail would never be the same. His anger motivated them to push on.*

*By the following evening, it was time. The wind blew, the limb creaked and the squirrels danced on a limb in the next tree over in anticipation of the results.*

**CRASH!**

*The suburban never stood a chance. The limb was no ordinary branch. It was large enough to be classified as a tree on its own. The fall of a limb that large from a distance that high left little to salvage.*

*"We will have to total the automobile." The insurance company looked at the pile of tree and car. He shook his head. "How did this happen?" He heard a noise that sounded like laughter from up in the trees.*

*"It was the squirrels." The young boy had been playing in the sand box in front of the house.*

*“The squirrels? What do you mean?”*

*The boy stopped playing and looked around. He saw them on the limb. They saw him as well. “Um . . . nothing.”*

*The insurance adjuster shrugged his shoulders and signed off on the paperwork. He looked around again at the carnage and the scene around it. All the other trees were in perfect order. There was no major debris – not that there would have been. He had checked the weather report from the night before just to be sure that there was not a freak storm that he had managed to miss. The night was clear with only a slight wind.*

*He caught a glimpse of several squirrels on a limb in a nearby tree. He looked at them and then back at the damage. “I wonder.” He turned back to look up at the squirrels once again, but they were gone.*

*He made a point to watch for squirrels when he drove down the driveway. It was better to be safe than sorry if the warning from the boy was to be believed.*

Choose any of the images and then create from there – a poem, a story or maybe a news report. The point of this challenge is to let your imagination give life to the thousand words from the image.

# # #

### **Break Writer’s Block with Ten Simple Tips**

Writer’s block causes freelance writers around the globe to tremble. No words translates into no paychecks – and no paychecks is never a good place to find yourself.

Nothing frustrates writers faster than not being to write. Sitting, staring at the blank space and hoping for something to miraculously show up just makes it more difficult to get words to flow. Writers want to write, but writer’s block keeps the words from complying to that desire.

Fear not – you can overcome.

## *10 Tips to Knockout Writer's Block*

1. Keep a folder of inspirational quotes, sayings and images that make you smile. A smile can do wonders for breaking the words free.
2. Get connected with a group – online or in person. It all becomes a little easier when you know you are not alone.
3. Remember – it is NOT as bad as it seems. You just look stuck. You just feel stuck. You are not really stuck. All you need to break through the writer's block, the fog, or the darkness is to notice that little light trickling through. It is there!
4. Write something. You may not be able to find the words you need for the current project. You may not be able to write what you are expecting. Write SOMETHING. Comment on a post. Shoot of a few tweets. Make a journal entry. Write a letter to the editor. Get words moving and soon the words will be flowing in the direction that you desire.
5. Read to write. Set down the pencil or back away from the computer. Stop trying to write and just read something. Words that excite you from others will often break through your own writer's block.
6. Find a happy place – or build one if you must. Create a retreat location where you can get away from it all. Find a place where you can be free – free to let your mind wander and chase down the words that you need. Imagination is the great slayer of writer's block.
7. Get organized. Clutter clutters up everything. Cutting back, clearing out and straightening up leaves more time, more energy, more space and even more finances. Less really is more.
8. Eject, reject and neglect the negatives. Choosing the things that are good, encouraging and uplifting for your focus. Let the rest of it go.
9. Get a mental picture of the end result. See the finish line. See yourself doing it. See what it looks like when you are done. Get the image in your mind and lock it there. Seeing it will settle it. Settling it will make it possible for you to find a way.

10. Set a deadline. Break the project into mini-projects if you must, but have a time limit and stay within that time limit. Be realistic, but still challenging. Be sure to include incentives for your deadlines (like time to go to a meeting or party, a new software program or maybe a great writing book). Knowing there is a finish and a reward can give you the fuel to drive right through any writer's block trying to stand in your way.

The only thing stopping you is you. Break through. Push on. Keep moving. Refuse to let something as silly as writer's block stop you from reaching your success.

# # #

### **Obedience Leads to Writing Success**

Distractions can get the better part of my day before I even know there are distractions in the room. Discovering a long, lost diary or chatting with a friend online can have its benefits and purpose, but I have to remember not to let them steal my focus. The easier path lies in the way of those distractions and they DO NOT lead to where I know I want to go.

I gave into those distractions the other day. Little things kept me from putting a single word down on paper. That night I slid into a webinar to listen to a friend give a bible lesson online. It was simply to support him - there was nothing I expected to get from the lesson . . . right! God had different plans. I have discovered that He usually does.

“Has God called you to something and you have turned back to say goodbye to your family or bury your dead?” The words were directed at me. I HAVE turned back. I have postponed the directives. I have chosen to wait to respond.

Obedience without hesitation does not come naturally to most people. Writers especially tend to be independent in actions, words and thoughts. Creating a habit of obedience only comes from building a foundation of trust. Trust comes from relationship. Building a relationship with God will give you the trust to step out, the courage to walk boldly ahead and the wisdom to know when to do both.

Make today the day that you choose to develop a personal relationship that will allow you to pursue your writing with obedience beyond hesitation. Create a habit of obedience that flows over into actions for writing success.

## *Top Eleven Tips for Writing Success*

1. Know your purpose – why is that you are writing. If you don't know why you are doing something then it will be difficult to do it successfully.
2. Do the purpose – there will be things that get in the way of your freelance writing purpose. You have to come back to that purpose and give it the time and care it needs.
3. Stay positive – look for the good in everything. It is **ESPECIALLY** important to look for good in any rejections that you might receive for your freelance writing queries.
4. Manage your time – learn how to schedule all that you need to do and to make time for your personal freelance writing along the way.
5. Laugh regularly – humor is the best tool to overcome defeat and to drive you one to freelance writing success.
6. Edit all that you do – be ready to present a completed work so that your freelance writing is always at the peak of professionalism.
7. Move toward your goals – every day do at least five things that will help you reach your freelance writing goals.
8. Bring life to your writing – look for stories in the ordinary actions of your life and of the lives around you.
9. Bring your writing to life – make your readers use all of their senses by being descriptive.
10. Write in a new way – create your own voice. Trends are fine, but give them your own twist.
11. Give it a break – walk away from the work before sending it in. Come back later and look at it with fresh eyes.

*Luke 9:59 "He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."*

How are you going to reply to your calling?

# # #

**Write Something Worth Reading**

"Should I write something just because I set a goal to write something every day?" My friend, Dawn, has been working on growing her blog, Penguin's Ponderings, and she sent me that question the other night. I immediately responded that she should write about that very thing and it turned into a post about motivation.

Creating consistency in a blog can be a challenge for beginners and experienced writers alike. There are just days when the words want to go in a different direction or refuse to come at all. It is more important to write something for the sake of writing or to let the day go without anything to share.

Skipping a day when I am trying to build my consistency will just mean skipping another day in the not too distant future. Procrastination has a way of growing into an out of control nuisance (much like Kudzu).

Writing words with no meaning or heart can hurt my relationship with my readers. It would be almost as bad as offering peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to my Thanksgiving dinner guests.

That means that it is important to write something worth reading even when I feel like skipping a day of writing. Getting to that place becomes the difference between a consistent writer and one that lets the muse hold the reins.

### *Top Tips for Writing Something Worth Reading*

1. Write naked - not so that the neighbors get a free peep show, but so that the readers see that you are a real person. I struggle to stay consistent so others should find comfort in knowing they are not alone.
2. Lean on a friend - let the inspiration of others guide the words that you write. The question that Dawn posed for herself was one I had to face the very next day. Her words of motivation helped inspire my own thoughts about what direction I needed to take.
3. Just do it - stop whining about having to write and write. The words may be worth keeping and they may be best served in File 13. Most of the times just starting to write provides me with some direction about what to write that is worth reading.

It seems that like most things in my life, building a successful blog and ultimately a successful writing career, comes back around to one thing. In this case, it is that I have to write. Getting to the point that I desire can happen no other way. Even on those days when the words are hiding for dear life, I have to find a way to lure them out and write something worth reading.

### **Closing**

Each heart receives motivation and encouragement through a unique pattern. May these words begin to be a part of that patten.

Be blessed,

Kathryn

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“Words have power – and I work to share words that ignite hope and possibility in those they encounter.”

Kathryn Lang continues to grow her career as a wordsmith. She shares words in talks, teachings, columns and stories to provide the hearts that hear with some fuel for hope.

Take a moment to visit <http://www.kathrynclang.com> to read more of her writings. You can also contact Kathryn to speak at your next event or conference by emailing her at [kathrynlang@kathrynlang.com](mailto:kathrynlang@kathrynlang.com).

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