

Born Creators – we are all creative in one way or another and should not need to worry about ‘writers block’.

Advice for:

- *Those having trouble with ‘writer’s block’*
- *Those wishing to start out with writing or drawing*
- *Those considering creativity in general and its relation to our lives*

We are all born creators in one way or another – pretty much everything we do is an act of creation – making a living, making homes, having families, making a life that reflects who we are, having conversations, making friends, making love..... so please don’t be afraid to experiment with new forms of creation, and please don’t allow yourself to succumb to so called ‘writer’s block’.

Writing and Drawing can be done simply by daring to let the pen wander and see where it goes. If you are stuck, then just do things a bit differently to how you normally do them – play, play, be children again, explore, delight in the ability we have to make things up – games, stories, new worlds, visions, let your mind just relax instead of expecting it to do something particular – let it roam free of the usual patterns you have trained it into.

You can even write nonsense or doodle until you come up with something. My casual doodles can be turned into interesting drawings by cropping out promising bits and then expanding on them. Nonsense writing can trigger ideas. Particular words or sound patterns or memories can evoke scenes.

If you really still can’t get anywhere, then just take a break - go for a walk to examine the wonderful detail of nature, observe the wonderful variation of human (or animal) behaviour. This is research! It gives you background and also often kick starts inspiration. Noticing, observing, being a witness to the creation all around us is vital to us - we are not meant to create in a vacuum. Take photos, make sketches, take notes.

Sitting in a café sketching or writing can get the flow going – notice how the man in the green raincoat comes in with a newspaper under his arm and picks the table at the back as if he always goes to that one at this time of day on his way somewhere, or perhaps he has singled out that one to meet someone at. Notice how the young woman in the floral dress negotiates the steps with her high heels, watch the lines of her leg muscles, and the shape of her face as she turns to look for her friend inside. Do a quick sketch of her, even if it’s just the parts you notice particularly, or jot down notes about how she looks and what you think she might be feeling. What do you think she is up to? What might her life be like? Would she make a good character in a story? Even if she isn’t going to meet the man in the back, you could make this happen in your story. You can do anything you fancy!

Listening to music, watching movies, reading other people’s books, etc, can also be considered as research – you are investigating different ways of saying or showing things,

styles and topics - even watching the news can trigger ideas – there is inspiration everywhere.

Awareness of ourselves in all of this obviously has its place. Who are we? What do we feel, what do we think? What do we want to express, and in what sort of way do we tend to express ourselves? How do we live, how do we dress? Do we have different personas for different situations? How do we fit in with others, and what is around us – nature, history, politics, philosophy, science? Do we have connections with particular places that might make good settings? What sort of details fascinate us?

Sometimes writing can become confused because of *too many* ideas at once. If this is the case, then jot things down and then go off and get some exercise or do some chores, or even have a nap. Your mind will sift through stuff in the meantime and make some sense of it sooner or later. You won't forget any of it because of your notes, but you won't be tied up in knots by it any more. Sometimes you will pick out parts of it to use now and maybe come back to the rest of it years later, suddenly finding it fits with something else you needed extra bits for perhaps.

To go back to the beginning we are all born creators in one way or another – pretty much everything we do is an act of creation – living, making homes, having families, making a life that reflects who we are, having conversations, making friends, making love..... So if you are already an artist or writer, then why even entertain the idea of writers or artists block? Don't wind yourself up getting exasperated - just get on with living, and soon you will be back in the flow.

If you think you haven't started writing or drawing yet, then the same thing applies. Don't be afraid to create – you are in fact doing it already – it's just a matter of getting a hold of some of your observations and experiences and getting them down on paper. Just make a start and don't worry too much about how. You can always come back and hone things later, and in the meantime, practice (as they say) makes perfect.

There is usually a style of writing or drawing to suit everyone, so researching what others do, and trying out things is always good. I'm okay with oils or acrylics or pastels for example, yet hopeless with watercolours. I am much better at doing suggestive representations of things rather than trying to copy them exactly. Abstracts and patterns can be played around with in many ways, just as using certain words or sound patterns can be intriguing. Writing poems or songs in a surreal or symbolic style can be a very effective way of expressing something that would otherwise sound didactic. Narrative can be done in many ways, such as diary form, or telling a story as an observer, or speaking as one of the characters, for example. You can plan out stages beforehand, or you can see where a character, or a place, or even just a mood, or tone of voice takes you.

Even if you do get fed up with trying to draw or write, there are so many other ways you can be creative I cannot begin to count them. Gardening, cooking, sewing or knitting,

DIY, woodwork, stonework, flower arranging, photography..... the list goes on. I do believe we all have it in us to continue the chain of creation..... after all, we were ourselves created, and we have an amazing world to witness and respond to.

Children are naturally curious, but sometimes people lose that as they grow up in a world that is demanding so much of them. We need to remember to take time out for ourselves just to wander and explore – feel the world around us, appreciate our place here and all the incredible things we can do.

If you are more aware of the world around you, and of yourself, then it also becomes easier to take steps to ensure that your life goes the way you want it to. We literally create our own realities!

Julia Woodman – Writer, Life Coach, Counsellor, Stress Consultant, etc



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”Do we Fear Change?”, “The Way that I see it”, and “Where are we going?”

The Mantra for 2012 may also be of interest.