

The seven masteries over writer's block

By Ashiedu Jude

THE SEVEN MASTERIES OVER WRITER'S BLOCK

Writing is like every other art including coding, visual art, design etc and all other creative ventures, which are all in the same category.

Merriam Webster dictionary defines writer's block as *"a psychological inhibition preventing a writer from proceeding with a piece"*.

In simplicity, writer's block can be avoided all together and every author or aspiring author can keep themselves in the realm and universe of creativity for as long as they want and need to remain inspired. It is a matter of consciously creating the right atmosphere internally and externally as a prerequisite to completing your writing project; without which, your entire effort will lead into frustration.

This article is for writer's who really cannot explain why they are facing writer's block at the very period when meeting a deadline is paramount. Like DUI, writing under the Influence (WUI) is definitely one source of writer's block.

I tried getting some of my colleagues to write a book as educators, due to their experiences in the field of teaching. As usual, I expected 90% of them to be interested in becoming a published author, yet only 10% of them ever did anything to make that happen. Some of them submitted manuscripts to me, which they have been keeping all these years hoping to be published authors one day. Writer's block has been the only demon stopping them from becoming certified writers and achieving their goal in becoming published authors and celebrity in this realm.

The techniques in this article are capital shots with 98% chance of hitting the target with efficacy. For some years, I have been writing poems, short stories, quotes, articles, also coded, designed electronic circuits etc, I taught different subject matters in various situations. Irrespective of the situation and circumstances, I got over writer's block each time I carried out the seven masteries mentioned here; though it seemed it happened haphazardly but with time then, I was able to master the sequence of events that always brought me out of the black hole called writer's block.

You will agree with me as writers, that most times going into isolation do not bring you out of the situation; and it becomes worse when you are under pressure to complete your work. Getting the nudge to write or create something is a call for action and sanctification by the creative forces within the universe; you are to make yourself available. It is either you agree or disagree with the higher calling. Easy for those who are not working fulltime, but for fulltime workers, they are to create time with a magic wand, period!

Hiring ghostwriters and becoming a bestselling author is cool and trendy. However, you might need to write out your heart to the public, then there is no way out, but do-it-yourself.

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Also worth noting is that the art of writing or creating ideas is not an emergency act that happens from zero to hundred mile per second. Though some authors boast of this kind of ability and been prolific; they are not you and you are not them, I have full assurance that writing is no different from reading, as most people are meant to believe that writing is for the gifted or talented by the gods. I believe everyone can become published authors as long as they can read; it is a matter of getting your interest on a subject matter and suggesting or finding solutions you can discuss about; then let the language experts do the editing. That simple. Allowing publishers to make you give up your dream of becoming an author, because they believe the gods called them, is crazy gone wild.

Without further ado, let me go on with the seven masteries you are eager to implement, putting you in the universe where all writers' muse inhabits.

The seven masteries are:

1. Meditation and fasting
2. Research/Rewrite your research
3. Interact/converse/discuss
4. Give help (Time, money etc)
5. Declare/Proclaim etc
6. Be happy even without any reason(s)
7. Avoid strife/stress/worry/anxiety

These are the seven key sources of inspirations that keep you writing non-stop. We are used to them but we have not taken time to apply them personal during our writing projects. They are your sequence of To-Do list in any writing project. Never compare yourself with other writers who profess not to experience any stop in flow; writer's block is actually a good thing, because it is a pointer that there is a missing link between you and the information you need to continue sharing, be it environmentally, psychology or both.

1. **Meditation and fasting**: Is non-negotiable at any point in your writing career. "A writer who does not meditate cannot levitate"; this is amongst my powerful mantras. Taking time to fast, detoxify your body helps the flow of your soul and spirit through your body when done in a meditative mood. Depending on your schedule one day or two in a month, bimonthly or quarterly will keep you flowing with creative energy. During your fast and meditation, avoid human interactions as possible; avoid the internet, emails, phone calls etc. You should only interact with your inner self; do not ask me if eastern form of meditation is involved, if you are okay with that fine, as long as you meditate and fast with little or no human interaction. The call to create as I said is a time to sanctify/separate you at given interval for a period.

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Preparing your body for the flow of information from within is pertinent to building the necessary mental and psychological muscles that will carry you all the way to the end of your writing project(s). Meditation clears up your mind, aligning you with the powerful creative forces in the universe; fasting on water makes it possible for you to rid junks inhibiting your physical system. Reconnecting with your muse can happen via mediation by keeping you fine tuned to the realm of inspiration and creativity; there is never a perfect external atmosphere to write, mediation helps you overcome major militating environmental facts that causes writer's block. By meditating, you swallow up your environment before and after the process.

2. **Research your subject/topic:** Make sure you know more about your topic than your previous knowledge of it. Ignorance is not bliss; ignorance will kill your writing career faster than a lethal injection. Plot out your ideas in chapters or synopsis depending on the length you wish to write; expand your synopsis by researching them and rewriting them to align with your goals. Mind you, because you have taken time to fast and mediate, you become accurate in picking out information that is necessary and useful to your project.

It is a personal deception or illusion to try starting too fresh. You need not start with a blank page after your first drafts of ideas. An idea page works magic in subsequent drafts. I go online or read an article that inspires me, and immediately I get it into my computer refocusing the subject matter, it becomes an innovation, which might not be prolific with blank pages. This is not plagiarising that involves replacing "his" with "her". Refocusing any research article is simply applying the results in one field and interpreting it in the light of another field to make it more useful to those in that field.

As such, after your research, whenever you find yourself tearing away your drafts because they do not make sense, try working with an idea page that inspires you, and you will be surprised how fresh ideas can rush through effortlessly.

3. **Interact/Converse:** Now it is time to converse. You know your circle of inspiration, always be around friends, family and environments that inspire you, they have a way of helping you maintain the flow of inspiration into you. Nevertheless, during mediation you do not need them to be with you, because you might fall into the trap of tying your inspiration to them and when they are not around nothing happens to your beloved creativity. Moreover, nothing hinders your inspiration more than being around those who gripe and complain every now and then; it will take a creative and mature writer to harness such uninspiring people, environments or situations into a worthwhile piece. Budding writers should avoid as much negative or toxic influence that stops or slows them from interacting wisely with their inner muse.

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Most times, those you interact with do not necessarily say or do anything that has correlation with your writing projects, but they are sources of fresh point of view or something outside your project, that inspires you to write something else. Some people, who meet me for the first time, see me as an introvert. You will conclude I should naturally have all the time in the world to muse and meditate, which is true, yet at every point in time, keeping alert to the forces of creativity makes all the difference. It might be taking a walk, talking to a total stranger, and sharing ideas with likeminded people or causing a harmless disruption to the natural flow of events and see what it takes to return to normal. These are few ways of keeping your antenna tuned into the frequency of creative forces within you.

4. **Give help:** As they say, "giving is living", we should all live to give. Giving is not restricted to finances or material needs of other people, and that does not stop you from meeting physical needs, when necessary or as an act of benevolence. Giving is a universal law and a viable rate of exchange to get or receive from invincible forces, with creativity and inspiration inclusive. No matter how new you are in writing, there are always people around who need your level of experience; it might be helping a young elementary pupil to express a creative writing homework on paper or making yourself available for voluntary causes. Whatever it takes you, by giving help to people in need, you learn better, improve yourself in creative ways to help people solve problems. Giving is a problem solving technique and it opens up your bowel of imagination to activities that involves creativity. Make your giving a conscious activity and do not in any way request for repayment.
5. **Make declarations:** Personal time with you words, places the right sources of information on your path. No matter how you feel or how your environment is disorganised, keep the right words at your disposal. We are in a fallen world and things go wrong every now and then, that does not mean anything should go wrong with your mouth and heart. Irrespective of if you believe in creation or not, the world was created from words and responds to words. Do not be disturbed by your feelings or surroundings; if there are law enforcement agencies that arrest those who litter our environment, also make it your personal duty not to litter the universe with negative words, because they will definitely comeback to get you. When I am hurt and in the process of speaking unpleasant words, I force myself to a painful silence, go out to have a relieving laughter. ***You can vent your anger for all I care but make sure you stop venting harmful words into the atmosphere;*** they are the major toxins that destroy the portals of creativity in our present world today. What other people say to you will not stop you from accessing your inner inspiration, but any

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negative responses you vocalise will gradually pull you into writer's block more often than necessary.

6. **Be Happy:** Crap happens all the time, do not worry too much about them, and always be happy. When appalling things happen to anyone, you or loved ones, it is your choice to keep your emotions on check or go out and vent them longer than necessary and risk the chances of missing creative ideas that are knocking in the door of your heart. Writing and other forms of creativity are same source, but expressed in diverse forms. Writer's block is more psychological than environmental; happiness has a way of stirring up your heart and keeping your emotions alert to divine fluttering in you.

The world might be a sad place to be, no doubt, there is always a ray of light through which you can source your happiness. However, discipline yourself to the point where your happiness does not depend on temporal things (including your family); happiness is an attitude you have to develop the skill, it does not fall on you like seizure, and you have to make deliberate effort to be happy to complete any creative or inspiring task. In addition, if there is nothing remotely to be happy about, then be happy that other people are happy and they are getting help from unexpected sources. In your moody times, making other people happy makes you happy too; that fulfils the law of giving, discussed earlier. The seven masteries as discussed in this article should be the lifestyle of every writer who intends to overcome or avoid writer's block and complete writing tasks or meeting deadlines.

7. **Rid strife/anxiety:** Give and forgive. Decide what is important to you at the beginning of your writing project. Is anxiety or strife worth your energy? These emotional circumstances are medically proven to accelerate illness and reduce the body defence mechanism. Imagine how much harm it can do to your writing career and creativity. Rejections by publishers should not be a determinant factor of your creative worth. For rookies, writing in the perspective of your inspiration helps you harness your emotions to flow with the subject matter of your write up.

I tried writing short stories when I started, but reading the stories of some writer's startled me, it amazed me how well they thought out their stories. I discovered that though my short stories seem crappy as novels, but were appreciated by stage plays and short films directors; obviously I should develop screen stories with my inspiration for fiction. The anxiety of becoming a writer stopped when I understood how I could channel and refocus my creativity into diverse genre of art instead of one aspect.

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Forgiving those who hurt you and refusing to get into animosity with people is the only way to avoid channelling your energy into destroying your inspiration. Your mind is meant to be generating ideas and solving problems, do not allow anyone rent space in your head in the midst of you exploring creativity in the universe.

Make it a duty to adjust your lifestyle during your creative writing adventure, at that point you are pregnant and should protect the idea with these seven masteries; they are like prenatal and antenatal checkups to keep writers with pregnant projects safe, before delivery.