

Untitled document

Business



“ The all-encompassing emptiness of a blank page haunts me as I stare, judging me, challenging me to fill it.

I can't. The ideas swim around in my head, but they're mushy. Not quite there. Nothing befitting the haughty spotlessness of my paper. “ What if..

. no...wait!.

.. no...” and so on clouds around me, blurring the sides of my vision, only enhancing the bare page in front of me. I wrack my brain, trying to get something, anything, down onto the paper, but come up with nothing. The swirling thoughts, emotions, words that make up my conscience contrast greatly with the vast whiteness of my canvas.

So why can't I seem to write anything?” We've all been plagued by what is commonly known as ' writer's block', a feeling of helplessness in front of an empty page, accompanied by dread at imposed deadlines or a desperation to overcome them. It's often seen as something to wait out, with encouragement given to the affected to go out and take a break from writing. Common “ solutions” include ' focusing on something else' or ' waiting for inspiration to strike'. But often such remedies keep us from addressing the core issue; in actuality, writer's block is far from a disease or a mental infliction, instead stemming from our own fears and personal expectations. The idea of writer's block originated in the 1800's, when writers and poets believed that their creativity came from various deities, and a shortage of ideas indicated a disappointment of the gods. This was later expanded into the concept of writers as ' tortured souls', unable to create without misery.

A more modern take is the current notion of writer's block, a supposed mental barrier "blocking" the author from putting ideas onto a page. It has become such a common phenomenon that many people still believe it's a somewhat mystical condition, magically stopping a creative mind in its tracks. While many people think of writer's block as something out of our control, it is more of a self-imposed inhibition, one that can be surpassed by recognizing it as such. As Susan Reynolds puts in her article, "5 Reasons You're Experiencing Writer's Block", "..

. the very nature of the art of writing incorporates uncertainty, experimentation, and a willingness to create art from the depths of who we are. Writing is a mentally challenging occupation which requires more hard-core, cognitive expenditure than many other lines of work." Jeff Goins in "What's Really Happening When You Get Writer's Block" adds, "Few professions require the honesty and self-reflection that writing does. Few vocations demand the constant mining of one's life experiences, and even fewer allow you to spin this information into beautiful prose for public consumption.

" This provides an explanation for why this phenomenon exclusively occurs in those who follow a creative path, the artists, authors (hence writer's block) and poets that so often shock us with their inventiveness. So where does this mental hurdle come from? There are many causes, the most prevalent one being fear. Fear of rejection, of failure, of judgement. It's human nature to want to impress those around us; we fear that what we create won't live up to our impossibly high standards. This leads to subconscious excuses; again

falling back on the ‘writer’s block’ explanation. It becomes less about how others perceive our talent and more how we see ourselves.

Another common cause of writer’s block is simple burnout. This could mean that a writer is overworked, and is one case where allowing the mind to rest can be beneficial. This is not to be taken as ‘wait for it to come to you’, however; as Goins further states, “The difference between professional writers and amateurs is this: Both encounter blocks, but one pushes through while the other gets paralyzed.” Oftentimes the best solution is to continue writing, so as to bypass the mental barrier. The first step in relieving the strain of writer’s block is to come to terms with the fact that it is perfectly normal. Even the most esteemed authors experience it, and maintaining interest throughout a piece isn’t always easy.

The most important thing to do is to remind yourself that it’s all internal, and that the only thing holding you back is you. The answer varies from case to case; some report that getting rid of distractions helps, others will tell that finding a new source of inspiration is essential. Recognizing a personally effective solution is critical towards prompting a conflicted author to realize the cause of their inaction, forcing them to take a step back and look at the root of their issue. Oftentimes, it will then proceed to the aspiring writer overcoming their slump and even learning about themselves in the process. Writer’s block is a condition that continues to bedevil creative minds everywhere, but the important thing to realize is that it isn’t some all-powerful force, it is easily defeated by taking the time to reflect on one’s fears, and ultimately, goals. The realization of one’s own limitations can become the key in finding a whole new source of inspiration.