

My Storybook Process (Part 6): um... now I'm a procrastinating writer *ahem

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/my-storybook-process-part-6-um-now-im-procrastinating-but-i-have-a-process-for-this-too/>

This entry is part 6 of 10 in the series [My Storybook Process](#)

[My Storybook Process](#)

- [My Storybook Process \(Part 1\): creating a new thing](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 2\): creating new characters](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 3\): creating the story](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 4\): creating the manuscript for a children's book](#)
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 5\): creating rising action](#)
- My Storybook Process (Part 6): um... now I'm a procrastinating writer *ahem
- [My Storybook Process \(Part 7\): creating an ending](#)
- [How to Stay Motivated to Finish Your Story: 7 ways](#)
- [How to Procrastinate \(yes, there IS a right way!\)](#)
- [Falling Hard and Writing Anyway](#)

I'll have to be straight-up here – I haven't worked on the Bunny and Witch book all week. The manuscript is finished and all there is to do at this point are the illustrations.

I just couldn't do it.

The one drawback with creating computer illustrations is that – as a writer, that means I'm spending hours upon hours at the computer. I knew this was a potential problem when I decided to go with computer drawings, but – that's really the style I want for this particular series.

This is how I procrastinate. When I can't write for one thing, I write for another project. When I can't paint or draw for one project, I dive into another one. It keeps me going.

Don't Beat Yourself Up

I've learned though not to beat myself up about it. Instead of avoiding my computer (with the thought that I have to do a certain task first and if I don't use the computer for that one thing, then I should... do

something else – anything else), I'm just going to do something else. In this case, that something else is a painting for another story I have in mind.

This is how I like to procrastinate – or how I've learned to procrastinate on a project. If I feel like I need a break from a project, I take that break – by working on a project that is completely different.

Becoming desensitized... to a project? You bet.

I read about a [series of psychology studies](#) headed by Professor Alejandro Lleras that actually backs this up. The idea is that we can become desensitized to anything, not just violence in movies (which is probably the most commonly discussed example of societal desensitization), but to absolutely anything at all.

This is a detail of the above painting. To really get away from the computer drawings I've been doing for Bunny and Witch, I've determined to do something completely different for this other story I have in mind. It's multi-media on canvas, and highly textural.

The indoor plant you bought for the living room last year. You probably don't notice it as much as you did after you got it. Initially, its leaves caught your attention and admiration every time you walked into the room. It was the new addition. Now, it's part of the whole, something you're used to seeing every day.

The same is true with the things we do. A new job is especially draining and exciting, but after a while it usually becomes routine, maybe even boring. There's no reason to think that writing or painting might not become hard work. Should it?

The Arts = Innovation = Different (from everything else)

I think we generally tend to hold different standards for creativity than we do anything else. It comes from the understanding that creativity is more fun, it comes with a greater amount of autonomy than most other kinds of work, and it's all about innovation.

How can this possibly become something we don't want to do or could find ourselves unable to even think about tackling? The thing is, creating anything at all is work. It's incredibly fun and fulfilling, but it's still work – otherwise, everyone would be doing it.

If you hit a wall or you just feel like you need a break, allow yourself that break. At least from the project you're currently plowing through.

If you're dry and need some inspiration, try one of these [Wednesday Inspirations](#). These creative exercises can help. We all have moments when we just dry up, feeling empty - as if we've used up our creativity. It can happen. If that's the case, you need to get out first. Do something you don't usually do. Try a brain teaser or a creative exercise of some sort, and then get back to your project.

Another detail from the painting, this is my white kitty. I'm thinking of calling her Juji Bean. Most

stories are detailed on paper first. But sometimes, I start with an image - something I just would like to see in a story, and go from there, working backwards.

Get into your “pit moment”

It doesn't have to be months – as I know many people will let certain projects sit because there's something about it they don't want to fix or don't want to work through. The older the project becomes, the more intimidating it becomes. So don't let your projects sit for too long, just a week, maybe a few weeks, but not more.

When you do have the break, pick up either a new project or an old one. This “pit moment” as I call it is the perfect time to make a break-through in one of your other stories. Why? Well – at least for myself, I find that **the pit moment is when I am so prepared to not face a certain task that even one of my most difficult projects to get through will feel like a relief** to me.

What about Deadlines?

What do I do when I'm on deadline? I exercise. I go on a long walk. I read from a book far outside anything I would ever write (something totally different). Then I just dive head-on into the pit and get it done. I don't know of any other way to do it, but I do find that taking a couple of hours to do something else first really does help.

What about you? How do you handle those pit moments, when you procrastinate on a project? What do you do when you are feeling that pit but are writing on deadline? Write below, let me know – or just send me an email.

Next week, I'll have more about my progress on Bunny and Witch. There's the rest of the storybook building process to explain, including the particulars about certain non-story pages (like copyright page, etc.). That's coming. Sign up for my newsletter, and I'll send that right to you.

Don't stop breathing, don't stop creating. Just keep going, steady on, “steady as she goes.” It's your ship. Sail!

This entry is part of the series

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[<< My Storybook Process \(Part 5\): creating rising action](#)[My Storybook Process \(Part 7\): creating an ending >>](#)