

How to Overcome Depression and Write Again

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/how-to-overcome-depression-and-write-again/>

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This is about how a writer can overcome depression and write again.

I was asked recently for serious help in jump-starting creativity from a writer who is in such a state of shock that she cannot write. When I got the email, it wasn't a surprise. I've been seeing and hearing from many writers - both online and in my creative writing classes - that they feel unable to write these days. It's like an epidemic.

How does a writer overcome depression and get back to writing quality stories? That's what we'll tackle here.

Artwork by Jonny Lindner.

If you don't kick the depression that is keeping you from being creative, you run the risk of pulling yourself further and further away from doing what you love most: writing. It can become stale if

you let the pen rest too long.

What with all the political craziness happening all over the world (and most recently in the US), many writers are feeling - not just stuck, but really and truly desolate, unable to put anything on the paper.

It's this awful, "I just can't seem to write anything, I'm so depressed" problem, symptomatic of when hope has been gut-punched out of you and the stunned shock has not yet dimmed enough for you to verbalize anything at all.

Step One to Overcome Depression

My best advice is to *first* let yourself feel the pain, but do it as a writer must do – by writing out your shock, your depression, your pain. Don't write for your readers, write just for you. Really.

If you're a painter, paint your anger and frustration and shock. Don't approach the canvas with any sort of plan. Just paint whatever comes. If it ends-up being trash, at least you'll have a well-prepped canvas.

If you're a writer, sit down with a pad of paper and pen and just write whatever is in your head. It doesn't matter at all what it is. Just write. Dump whatever is in there.

Get it all out. Write until your stomach stops hurting and the pain has transferred to your fingers, then your hand, and then your arm. Write until you cannot write any more.

Never Say Never

You can't tell me that you *can't do this!* Of course you can. Even if you can only scratch-out angry looking squiggles and splotches, do that. Write swear words in between the splotches. Just get it out, whatever is in you that is keeping you from writing The Good Stuff.

The Purpose Here is NOT to Create

At this stage, it doesn't matter what comes. The purpose isn't to create. You're not creating ANYTHING at all here. You're clearing-out. In fact, you've already created all sorts of stuff - the problem is that it's backlogged inside of you, preventing you from doing other stuff.

So you've got to get that OUT. Produce in material form what is already created inside of you. It isn't your depression that you've created. You have thoughts and ideas in your head and because they are negative you feel like there's nothing good you can produce.

Thing is, you **MUST** produce something here, whether you like it or not. So produce your pile of kaka so you can move on to creating and producing the things you want.

Get Down To Basics

The best way for a writer to produce the kaka is with a pen.

Not your computer, your pen. Yes, *really*.

Step Two: the Creative Exercise, Post-dump

Once you have sufficiently dumped, you'll be able to try this creative exercise.

It's a story starter, but it's unlike most. Usually, the story starters I give (and that most writing instructors give) are at most two sentences long.

But if you're really in the dumps, one or two sentence-long story starters won't be enough. You still are most likely to have problems getting a fictional story on the page.

So what I've got for you is a longer, more detailed story starter. I've used this very recently (and to happy success) in a creative writing class.

At the beginning of class, my students were rather depressed, had no energy and really just wanted to do nothing at all. So I dictated this story starter to them (which they then needed to write-out). Then they could continue the story, finish it.

There are times when a writing class goes really, really well and I know I can use the class concept again. This was one of those times, so I'm really happy to share it with you now.

The Story Starter Exercise

I don't want you to just print out this story starter. I want you to copy it, word for word, by hand. The reason for this is that **it will help you**. Writing isn't just an exercise of a certain corner of the mind.

Writing is a physical action, and we feel it more, take it in more fully, if we also physically write the words out on paper.

If you're seriously into using tech, you won't want to do this. *But please just trust me on this* – I've seen incredible results here, over and over, especially with my adult students who are more reluctant to do what I tell them to do!

It really makes a difference.

Here's the story, written below. Write it out and then finish it. If you're inspired to do so, snap a picture of the results and send that to me in an email. I'd love to know what you write!

The Story

Yesterday afternoon, I went outside to play with my friend Max. It was cold, gray and wet, but it was always fun to play with Max.

We dug in the dirt and threw leaves up in the air. Those were like fireworks. I got a small stick and Max got one too and we used those as tiny swords.

The Big Leaves were knights and they fought to the death to save the Gooey Earthworm of Gooooood, a far and distant Kingdom where there are no princesses.

Suddenly, we saw a strange orange light. There was a glowing, just a little bit, just behind a tree.

At first, we were just a little bit scared, but we had to know what it was of course. So we got down on the ground on all fours and crawled around the tree to the other side.

When I saw it, I had to...

Keep creating, no matter what.

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