

How to Get Unstuck in Your Writing: my best trick

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<http://greatstorybook.com/get-unstuck-writing-best-trick/>

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- How to Get Unstuck in Your Writing: my best trick

Everyone gets stuck creatively. This is about how to get unstuck – and it's the best trick I know, because it works so well and so immediately.

I've been teaching creative writing to both adults and kids for several years, and there has never ever been a student who doesn't get stuck at some point.

Every writer gets creatively stuck.

This is one of the best ways I know to get unstuck in your writing and have the story flowing again.

No matter how creative a student might usually be, I know that there will be days when the words just won't come easily. But I do know what to do about it.

I have a lot of tricks to shake things up, to help different students get out of their daze or their depression or their stress and get down to the hard (but fun) business of fiction writing. This one is my favorites.

Stop writing, pick up a crayon and draw.

There's more to it than that, and I will get to all the details here, but this is essentially the key. You've

got to do some coloring.

You might not believe this could possibly work.

Out of all my students, there was only one who got nowhere at all with this method – on the first try. A week later, he tried it again and it worked like gangbusters.

For all my other students, regardless of age or anything else about them, this has worked upon the first try.

Free the Mind, Get Unstuck in Your Writing

We so often get stuck in a story, but it's usually for something really insignificant, like word choice. It's easy to get tripped-up by thinking, "Oh, what's the word? I can't think of the word, the right word for what I want to say."

When this happens, you have to leave words behind and get to the story, the character. But how do you do that if your mind is obsessing about something tedious? Well, you need to shut down the computer - or put down your pen.

1. Pick up a crayon (or something else – but COLOR). Start drawing.
2. It doesn't matter what you draw. Really. It does not matter. Just draw. Don't think; draw.
3. Let your entire arm move with your coloring instrument. When you feel like you want to stop for a moment, then stop.
4. Look at what you've drawn. What do you think? *What is it?*

Keep Going

5. Start talking, and as you do, add more lines or blobs or whatever it is your drawing needs in order to make what you say about the drawing true. Add as you go.

Make it up as you go. Above all, have fun with it. *This should be the story you want to tell*, not the story you feel obliged to tell.

My First Time

The first time I tried this with someone else, I was only 12 years old and babysitting a little girl. It was one of my first babysitting gigs.

That little girl was quite a terror, with a reputation for driving babysitters crazy – but after being with her for about half an hour, and getting dished – as she did *everything she could do* to make me angry, I was convinced she just needed to see that she had a great imagination.

(She really did come up with some very devious things to do! *Very* imaginative.)

She could either apply her imagination to acting like pure demon spawn, or she could be wonderful. Her choice – and I told her that, in those words.

The little girl must have been about 5 years old. She couldn't read or write yet. But she could draw. So I told her to tell me a story and draw the pictures.

We sat on the floor and she started to draw, and she made up a story about what she was drawing.

Her story was brilliant, but what was more amazing for me to see was her face. She just lit up. Her scrunched-up little evil face transformed and relaxed into a smiling happy face, beaming. *She was beaming.*

I suppose in a way this was my first experience as a teacher – though it was a discovery made completely by accident, and out of desperation.

Doing this Alone

To be honest, I don't know how difficult it might be to do this alone, without a writing partner. I've been doing it for so long that I don't remember how it felt when I started. There was no one else there, just me.

But it does get easier the more you do it. Like everything else, really.

So just give it a try. You can pair up with a writing buddy. If you're alone, just talk it out as you go, or maybe think in a certain narrative voice - as if I'm there next to you and asking you about it.

I do that sort of thing all the time – so I can't be the only one. (*Right?*)

Getting Results, Getting the Flow Going

This is about getting down to the story you want to tell, and getting your head in the right creative space to really do it – freely, nothing holding you back.

The wonderful stories are those that feel as if the words had to be on the page in just that way. A special flow just happens – or at least, that's how it feels for us as readers.

But sometimes, as writers, we can't just do that – we can't just put wonderful words onto the page. So you've got to do something to get things going again. This is one of the most effective methods I know to help make that happen for people.

What do you do to get unstuck creatively? Write below, let me know – or, as ever, write me an email. You know I love getting those.

Keep creating, no matter what.

This entry is part of the series

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