

Writing Tips: Writing is Hard without Self Esteem

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I've noticed that the more I try to please others with my writing, the harder it is to put words on the page. I'm sure every writer suffers doubt and fear. We all want approval and validation.

Self esteem is essential for writing. Over the years I've found the following tips have improved my self esteem.

Avoid comparing yourself to others

As individuals we each possess unique gifts to offer the world. We can always find talents and traits in others that we admire but it is more productive to find talents and traits in ourselves that we admire. If you're an athlete bask in the glow of your victories. If you're a musician, artist, entertainer, writer or an intellect, relish your unique abilities.

Discard limiting beliefs

Sometimes we hold onto beliefs about ourselves or others that damage our self esteem. Unfortunately these beliefs don't require any evidence, they only need a seed of doubt or disapproval to root and grow. Take the time to explore your beliefs and then consider whether they help or hinder your success in life. Here are some limiting beliefs I discovered and discarded –

To be a good writer everyone must like your work. Obviously this is an impossible standard. People have different likes and dislikes so even great writers will have their share of critics. Now I believe that good writers are those who take time to improve their craft, actually write and pay attention to the details.

I can only write about things I've experienced. This is extremely limiting because I haven't experienced a haunting or time travel, nor have I been personally involved in a crime, government conspiracy or alien invasion.

Take Responsibility

You have the power to create your life, better or worse. You are not the product of other people's thoughts or actions, but rather your own thoughts and actions. As long as you let other people dictate your happiness or success you are playing the role of a victim. If you are an adult, living in a democratic society, you are only a victim by choice. Of course there will be circumstances beyond our control, but we choose our actions and beliefs.

Nourish your soul

For physical health you watch what you eat, selecting nutritious foods and avoiding junk foods or toxins. If you want mental health, seek out positive people who will feed your creativity and avoid toxic company. Exercise your talent by doing something you love and find like minded people interested in learning this activity with you.

Honor your strengths, but work to improve

Don't beat yourself up demanding perfection or unrealistic expectations. Do honestly assess areas where you can learn and improve. Be your most gentle critic. If you want to improve your social skills, reach out to others, if you want to improve your physical abilities, set physical goals and take action.

Accept Failure

Failure is the cost of taking action. A child who doesn't risk falling will never learn to walk. Accept failure as inevitable and embrace the learning opportunity that comes with them. You can also use the failures of others (as well as their successes) to learn.

Some days writing is hard. The only way I can write in spite of my fear is to believe my words matter.

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