

The greatest trick the devil ever played was convincing the world he wasn't real.

In a similar vein the fear of judgement and the fear of failure have expertly hidden behind the term 'writer's block'.

### **Other writers' blocks**

What I find very encouraging about writer's block (fear of failure/judgement) is that it even happens to the best.

The best writers in the world are not the best in the world because they are devoid of fear, they are the best because they found a way to overcome their fear long enough to produce something remarkable.

And I have proof!

For my first quote we're going to go back a few years to hear from the inimitable Ernest Hemingway.

"There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed."

Now let's switch up the industries and find out what one of the most famous songwriters in the world (John Lennon) said about making a Beatles album:

"We were going through hell. We often do. It's torture every time we produce anything. The Beatles haven't got any magic you haven't got. We suffer like hell anytime we make anything"

And now for my final example let's jump forward in time to a TED talk given by the author of the huge hit 'Eat, Pray, Love' where she revealed that whilst working on the soon to be bestseller she fell into a 'pit of despair' where there was a voice in her head telling her:

"This is going to be a disaster. This is going to be the worst book ever written. Not just bad, but the worst book ever written!"

Bleeding, going through hell and pits of despair don't sound like walks in the park.

They sound like titanic wrestles with fear!

So if you are experiencing the symptoms of writer's block (fear of judgement/failure) then do not fret. You're not alone.

## **Getting over that block**

Now from what I've seen there is no ONE way to deal with writer's block (fear of judgement/failure). Each creative has found a style that suits them and so can you.

Here's a few methods to get you started:

Dan Harmon recommends lowering the bar...

"My best advice about writer's block is: the reason you're having a hard time writing is because of a conflict between the GOAL of writing well and the FEAR of writing badly. By default, our instinct is to conquer the fear, but our feelings are much, much, less within our control than the goals we set, and since it's the conflict BETWEEN the two forces blocking you, if you simply change your goal from "writing well" to "writing badly," you will be a veritable fucking fountain of material,"

Tom Waits would talk out loud to the fear and say things like "go bother Leonard Cohen".

Austin Kleon recommends restrictions...

"The best way to get over a creative block is simply to place some constraints on yourself. It seems contradictory, but when it comes to creative work, limitations mean freedom."

You could reward the fear like you would a child.

"Now fear, if you're well behaved and help me write for an hour, I'll get you an ice cream" (you might pile on the pounds with this method)

You could back fear into a corner and use it against itself with accountability.

"Hey guys, on the 25th I'm going to send you an essay, do you mind letting me know what you think of it?"

Now that others are expecting your work your fear of failure is going to go into overdrive and push you to produce something good.

You could reiterate your commitment to the fear.

"I will be delivering a manuscript on the 12th whether the work is good or not. So it would be in your interest Fear for you to work with me to make it the best it can be."

## **Intimately familiar with rejection**

Upon reading the different ways to manage your way through the fear your writer's block (fear of judgement/failure) may have sidled over to the worst case scenario generator and

started to churn out some classics! Which I reckon can be grouped into two categories - rejection and criticism.

To address this let's imagine for a second that the worst does happen and you get rejected and or criticised.

That's not something to avoid!

That's a vital part of the creative process.

You've just been handed a perfect opportunity to practice a valuable creative skill.

As Eliot Peper said:

"If you do anything creative then you will become intimately familiar with rejection"

Before Kate diCamillo became a bestselling author she received 473 rejection letters. The Booker prize winner Shuggie Bain was rejected 30 times before being published. And never forget that the worldwide phenomenon that is Harry Potter was rejected 12 times before it the bookshelves.

Imagine reaching a level where rejection and criticism was water off a duck's back to you.

You'd be unstoppable!

### **Avoidance rarely alleviates fear**

Now, for the conclusion!

Which after all that we've covered you might have already guessed.

It's rare for avoidance to alleviate fear.

If you run away from dogs every time you encounter one you'll never see their non-violent side.

It's only by standing your ground do you get to see that not all dogs want to attack you and the majority of them are well behaved and just want a cuddle.

Similarly with writing it's only through practice that you discover that criticism or rejection isn't fatal. It's only by inching yourself forward despite being terrified that you realise there's an alternative to obeying the fear.

You have a say too.

If all those other creatives found a way to manage their fear so can you!

So the only way to get through writer's block is to write.

Write daily, write hourly,  
write gaily, write sourly.  
Write badly, write crappy,  
write madly, write happy.  
Write for fun,  
write for someone.

It doesn't matter how you do it, just write.

To bring this post to a close I will leave you with a final question - knowing that your time on this earth is limited and it could end at any moment - do you want to spend any more of your precious time giving into fear?