

Write Crap

Author: Michael Wilson

Published on: December 4, 2002

Related Subject(s): Not Indexed

We all come to the page with the highest of expectations. We often forget that the words don't spring forth effortlessly from our foreheads. They come through pain, experience, fear, and of course, endless re-writes. These high expectations often cause writers block because we expect these first words to be perfect, and these unrealistic expectations often stop the writing before it even gets started. My advice: write crap. Accept that it is crap. And keep on writing.

How do you do this? Use one of the rules of writing practice that Natalie Goldberg introduced in her second book, *Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life*: You are free to write the worst junk in America (or Canada, World, Universe, etc. You get the idea.) A simple rule that can be used as a mantra when you are struggling with your writing and suffering from self-doubt. Write crap.

I have to remind myself of this rule often when I'm writing. So often I hate what I write. It seems to awkward, clumsy and makes me look almost illiterate. I hated the first draft of this article as well, but it had some good ideas which I shaped and rewrote until it was something that I am not too embarrassed to show my friend, Matt who critiques my work. Even then, there are still lines that I'm not happy with, but part of being a writer is to learning to not expect absolute perfection all of the time. Not everything that you write is going to be great.

I am not alone. Many writers hate their first drafts and talk about how they make them feel. Stephen King, Ernest Hemingway and Anne Lamott all have written about this in great detail. So have many other writers. You are not alone. Crappy first drafts make all of us wonder why we pick up the pen in the first place. But you have to accept them and write through them. If you relax and focus on the process and allow your Inner Critic fade away, writing will be easier.

So write crap. Writing crap will serve as the fertilizer for the better writing that will follow as long as that writing is uninfluenced by your Inner Critic. And who knows, your writing might not be as bad as you think it is. Sometimes your Inner Critic makes you think it is crap in order to get you to stop writing. So keep writing.. Crap.