

TLDR: This is my version of Steven King's On Writing but shittier

I don't really get this second book. Each time I post a page, I get about 10 likes. But each time I post about the book itself, I get next to 0. There are worse problems.

This is the final chapter zero of the three chapters. You only get one, so choose wisely. I guess you already did.

F.r.a.m.e.w.o.r.k.s.: A collection of pages about depressing topics. Every letter of the word "Frameworks" is a page, which allows for collaboration in the future.

Box Theory: A new framework to view all human interactions. Each page has an image attached and operates like a textbook. This is a more ethereal collection in which all pages will fit a very cohesive theme. My favorite, but that's because I have rewritten it ten times (cognitive dissonance).

Tutorial: You are currently reading this chapter. Its goal is to explain how to create a page. How to integrate others into this project. It is the most experimental of all the chapters. It will likely be the one that is picked the least.

This chapter attempts to explain all the concepts and ideas that go into this book. It is far less cohesive and more meta.

I visited my Grandma's place today, and she asked me for an audio version of my book. Her poor vision and my shitty font have made reading my book difficult. This was how I got past my fear of making a second book

This was the dozenth time she has asked that question, even pointing to the book on her coffee table. My sister-in-law told me a similar story about the book in her parents' home. This made me uncomfortable. Book 1 has always felt incomplete to me. The lack of proper editors, proper drawings, or a proper cover has stuck with me. Like running out of time in class and turning in a B grade version of what I wanted.

I am often introduced to new people as a published author. This has always felt like a participation trophy when you self-publish a book and sell 150 copies. The weight of the word "published author" is too heavy for me. A first impression too strong and hard to live up to. I tend to downplay the book as much as possible and talk about it with as few words as I can.

One fact has always bothered me. Lots of people have told me they bought the book, but very few have told me they finished it. No one has reached out to me complaining about some page. None of my ideas have been challenged. Was my book so bad that no one read it?

This thought has always lingered in my brain. It has rotted the first book. When people tell me they are going to buy it, I tell them not to. It worries me they will read it and think less of me. Find out I'm not a real author. But, I'm starting to realize perhaps that's a bit too harsh. Was the book really meant to be read? I barely finish any books, and I never tell the author afterward.

I've been talking to some of my SF friends and realized I truly have ended up in a classic quarter-life crisis. A point of too much stagnation to enjoy the above-average life I have. So my friend suggested there was only one solution. Throw a little Instagram poll. What should I do next:

Writing - it's pretty obvious the second book isn't coming out. But with my current writing groups, I could branch out in a new direction. I could truly embrace the tech version of myself and start a Substack. An organic growth version of my current book.

App - Do you ever spend unconsensual nights alone? It turns out most nights you are free, so is one of your friends. I have this app named Inverse Calendar that will fix that problem. A place to tell an exact group of people you are free and the activity you prefer to do.

Job - My job has kind of sucked for a couple of months too long. Should I just fill all my current hobby void with a startup? Something small enough I stop having a life and just work till I don't have existential thoughts.

YouTube - Israel vs. Palestine. Trans sports. Uncanceled, a series on redemption, where I interview everyone who I have wronged and see their thoughts. A true attempt at a YouTube/TikTok channel.

Chill - I stop trying to be a person of purpose and just live/laugh/love. I give up on goals and just enjoy life.

Chapter 1B Tutorial

I resisted this book for a bit and ended up searching Instagram for the answer

These are some factors that made me doubt the second book

There is nothing more truly magical than a new idea. All you have to do is write the correct 10,000 words, and you could be a trillionaire. That girl who got away will come crawling back. Israel will take your advice and start creating peace treaties.

The issue is you have to actually follow through in reality. As soon as you put the first 10 words down, half of these grandiose goals fade away. Each bit of progress made punctures your perfection.

By the time the book is halfway through, you realize 80% of the potential is gone. Your goal was the Great Gatsby 2, and you ended with the Wish.com version.

This is why so many people fail to accomplish their goals. Their grandiose expectations get ripped apart. You are going to have to actually write a couple more of these before they become good.

The more Instagram brain rot you consume will teach you otherwise. You're no longer shown your work. Only a finished product. You just see the finished art piece, not them crying in the shower the week before.

Anyone can start off with infinite potential energy. Only the best can convert a fraction of that to kinetic energy.

I really wanted to embrace more two page ideas in this book like this one.

This potential energy is easy to fix; just lower your expectations. Just self-publish and sell a reasonable number of copies. Just give up.

There's only one issue. Every year, there is a New York Times bestseller. There are a half-dozen super grandiose, super transformative books. Somehow, there are some lucky bastards brave enough to try and make it to the top.

All advice follows the same Goldilocks principle, where you have to take it in moderation to be useful.

Every artist seems to have at least a handful of problems. Their best writing seems to come from the adversity against these demons. Yet, even the book *On Writing* makes it very clear this is a myth. "You don't need to be sad to make art," King says after casually kicking a cocaine habit.

The truth is the line between purpose and excuse can be blurry. "Alcoholic" is a less fun title than "aspiring author." It's possible that the breakups and intense emotions aren't needed to make this book good. But, it's impossible for those exact same pages about those exact topics to be written without them.

These are the type of topics where you will start to see the underlying issue of fairness come out. Maybe a healthy dose of narcissism, alcoholism, and trauma isn't totally useless.

The Hyper-Morality Problem

Hyper Real has a lot of meaning but this is one of them that I focus on.

People keep asking me what this book is about. Even as most of these are just obvious attempts to fill the awkward break in conversation, I still fail to answer properly. What the fuck is this book about? Well, one idea for sure I hope people start to get is morals.

People seem to think morals and ethics are somehow subjective. But Kohlberg has created a well-researched morality scale that is used to this day. It goes like this:

You have a wife. You are poor. Do you go to Walgreens at night and steal the medicine?

Surprisingly, this is the only question needed to understand a person's morals. Spoiler: it's not really about the yes or no answer; it's about the reasoning.

If you want the top score, you can say something like, "I would steal because a life is more important than a petty crime." A bad answer would be, "I wouldn't steal because it's against the law." Believing the laws are morals is a low score. The issue is, this is not your real answer.

This is how people treat mistakes. Why would that guy steal? They use their theoretical morals to understand real-world results. You're afraid of calling people on the phone. You're telling me you suddenly gain the courage to break into a Walgreens and steal?

Knowing the correct answer and actually doing that answer is not the same.

This is a second theme common through out my books.

When you hear someone say they hate Nickelback, you wonder, do they know a single song by this artist? Do you have any idea how this thought appeared in their head?

The real answer is a random comedian in 2003 decided he was just going to hate Nickelback. Through echo chambers and memes, your brain was invaded with the same idea.

Why do you hate fast fashion so much? You're not wearing the clothes one and throwing it out; what part of it is fast? The children workers also made the Nike shoes you wear; why is the fast fashion part the thing you care about.

This is what makes writing interesting. For me, the whole goal is this: To take a reader's brain hostage and expose them to new ideas.

To confirm things they swear only they worry about. To clean out the propaganda they have already swallowed. You can decide if it's literally a statement like this or has some cat in some hat in it. An artistic intent vs. a literal one.

But, every book and every art piece, in some ways, has this goal. To be novel, to be new. To invoke the brain to think.

Some people say all creation should be about the artist. Others say the audience is important. At the end of the day, someone has to learn something, though, or you have failed your purpose.

The Trough of Doubt*

Once I go through most of this draft I encountered this state for a month.

The first boss battle to any project is realizing it sucks. To get to a point where you know this might be the worst piece of trash anyone has ever created. This is when you know you have finally created something good.

You must reach this point in every project; a period of temporary illusion. A breakpoint where the average person gaslights themselves into giving up. To continue, you must swallow every bit of pride and trust that the second draft will be better.

The first draft is the breakup. It's the death in the family. It's the layoff. No matter how dire it seems, a month from now, you will have repressed all memory of it. You must hold on to the mantra that this too shall pass.

It's not a question of talent. A divine writing god can't escape this phase. It's not even an issue of expectations. It's just takes a couple of tries to stack on top of whatever pile of shit you have created.

After staring at the page 30 times, your eyes will start to bleed. You don't ever want to hear your voice again. But, by the 90th time reading it, somehow somehow it gets better.

You will hate your work when you finish it. You will have dreams about it. But as the time passes, this will change. It is just the tax the artist pays. At least, every bit of extra effort will eventually be illuminated.

Integration

Here is my attempt at dedicated and anecdotal pages.

I will likely remove them later.

After you take ayahuasca for the fourth day and can still taste the puke in your mouth, the guides inform you of an inconvenient truth. Doing the drugs was the easy part; it's much harder to integrate the drug's changes into your life.

When in Tanzania, you see people who have so much less than you. Yet, you can tell they are so much happier than you. The Internet speed is nostalgic to a childhood where loading a video could take 15 minutes. While a hot shower is not a given, the inability to drink the tap water is. Electricity has a bedtime in which it no longer works afterward. The average house is closer to a prehistoric shelter than a home.

When you get that first warm shower or the first drink from the tap, you expect this feeling of gratitude to stick. To really start to appreciate your life more afterward. Alexa mentions living in a Kenyan home for two weeks experiencing even more immersion. But even she begrudgingly accepts that the appreciation wears off quicker than you think.

I come back to New York hoping to slow down my lifestyle a bit (as they say, 'pole pole'). It's clear, though, from the first few days, this will not be the case. I don't have time to fully integrate newfound gratitude. But that's also because no psychologist recommends Africa as a way to gain gratitude. They already solved that issue a long time ago.

My goal is to not post writings anymore.

One alternative showcase is my second form of motivation but it's not sustainable.

The basics of the brain are pretty easy to comprehend. Your motivation is based entirely on dopamine activations your brain gives you. You get a little hit when you start a task and you get a bigger hit when you finish.

Something like a cigarette follows the same process. A cue that makes you think of smoking, a bit of dopamine before you smoke, and a bit of dopamine afterwards. The longer in between these points, the more dopamine drainage occurs.

So, things like cocaine and TikTok make sense. A true brain rot experience where the reward comes right after the effort starts. You are able to make yourself temporarily happy without needing to put in the work.

The ability for longer attention spans, the ability for longer, harder projects become too difficult. When you write a book, there is no perceived finish line until you are fully published.

This is what causes the eventual abandonment of the project. There are no intermediate points of dopamine that our brain craves.

I "fixed this problem" by posting a lot of my writing to Instagram, taking a long-term goal and using external validation to achieve it. I'm sure this strategy will never backfire for me...