

INTRODUCTION

“Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work.”

—Stephen King

After finishing my latest novel, a YA futuristic tome, which was a profound, glorious grind, the book in front of you poured out of me. I was in the flow again and for that I’m grateful.

What did I write about?

Writing. The process. The agony, the ecstasy and the rewriting. Yes, rewriting. It’s not all glamour.

I wrote about emotions that only make sense to writers: the thrill of structure, the joy of a strong word and the palpable excitement of writing THE END after the last sentence of a completed draft that *will* change the world.

I wrote about being recently inspired and depressingly lost. How couldn’t I be? I changed an entire novel from third person to first person. I wrote about unabashedly borrowing ideas from hero writers and refurbishing them with my own magic. I wrote about the glory of writing every day and dreaming where that river of sentences might be winding. Why not? I’ve been published before. I’ve had screenplays produced. I got short-listed for an Oscar. So I wrote about ideas and structure, outlines and character, gratuitous adverbs, exposition and the glory of rewrites.

I wrote about that perfect opening sentence and a lack of time. Life getting in the way. Dwindling belief. Writing in a vacuum, a lack of feedback and mental whirlpools spinning negativity. Yes, it turns out experience isn’t enough to dam those emotions. Success isn’t enough.

That’s the rub.

That’s why I wrote the book.

To figure out a way to work with the good and the bad, I wanted to write a book that doubled as a wise, insightful, inspiring friend.

So I stirred the cauldron of my experience, subconscious and otherwise; wild emotions, miracle work days and existential uncertainties and poured it all into thirty-one short chapters.

The book starts with reminders and ways to flow and feel good enough to keep going. Then we dig into the mechanics. I filled the chapters with tested ideas, new insights, novel encouragements and the wisdom of writers far greater than myself because I *need* to help make another writer—*you*—feel unstoppable. The brew was heated with **prompts** and **tips** and inspiration to create mind-potions that sharpen the writing process and keep it going and flowing while slaying the demons that remain. The book exists to push you to writing greatness and writing joy.

This is not only a book to get the new writer brave and flowing. This is a comeback book for you wonderful, experienced writers who feel maybe a little shut down, not as free-flowing or, heaven forbid, cynical. Don't you want to feel excited again? I do. I need to.

So here it is, in your hands: *Hey, Writer*.

How do you use it? *Read it, put it down, write. Read it, put it down, write more. Read it, put it down, celebrate. Re-write. Repeat.*

In approaching *Hey, Writer*, I'd recommend travelling chronologically from this introduction on. However, if you need a specific jolt of inspiration, information or encouragement for where you're blocked at any given moment in the writing process, jump to the chapter title that fits the need. Here are a few to clarify my suggestion: THE RIGHT TO WRITE; BE A DRAMA QUEEN; SLEEP ENOUGH; STRUCTURE CREATES FREEDOM; LOOSE WORDS SINK SCRIPTS; SHOW SOME CHARACTER; STEAL.

You get it.

You also know what I know. It's all up to you. The brew works better for those who are brave and committed to writing, and courage will have your back. No matter how experienced or inexperienced you are, the same physics applies. You have to sit down with a working pen or a functioning keyboard and write that first word, the same way every work of genius starts.

I promise you this: whether you're working on a novel, a screenplay, an essay, a book of poetry or a free-flowing journal; whether you write fiction or non-fiction, suspense, horror, coming-of-age sci-fi, epic fantasy, LGBTQ romance, dystopian YA, business proposals, comedy sketches, social justice manifestos, tech manuals, biography, historical fiction, drama, political satire or anything else, the act of writing your words down will make you a better writer. That is the *Hey, Writer* goal. To prompt you, tip you, and cajole you in the direction of your best work yet.

In an uncertain future, your writing is a super power. Your writing helps negotiate trouble and joy. And sometimes it causes trouble. That can be good for sales. Be brave with your words.

Victor Hugo wrote, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come."

Let me rewrite that. How about this: "Nothing is more powerful *to you* than an idea whose time has come *to you*." Free that idea. Imagine it developed. Now go for it.

Be a friend to your creativity by writing. Writing might be the best friend you ever have. I hope it's not, actually. But if it is, make it a great one. Loyal. Honest. Exciting. Reliable. Inspiring. Passionate. Original. Fun.

Okay, that's it. Let's go.

It's time to write.