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## Writer's Block Is Real

Ever since I started writing, I've seen the term 'writer's block' argued in one of two ways: either it's real, or it's not.

For me, it's real. I know what it's like to sit down and not be able to write a single word. I know what it's like to have a million thoughts and feelings running through my mind and not be able to grab a hold of a single one of them. I know what it's like to have the words in my head and not be able to write them down. And I know what an enormous struggle it can be to get a few words down in a desperate attempt to write only to delete those words altogether.

The reasons and causes of writer's block have been debated forever but for me I've been blocked by either intense emotional struggles, or my mind is just overloaded with a raging storm of thoughts, feelings, and words. Either way is very hard to work through and though I understand both scenarios better than I ever have, I still remember what it's like to go through them, and I know either one can happen to me again.

I have always wanted to be one of those writers who could write through anything but sadly my writing, unlike my sleeping ability, doesn't work that way (*there's an old joke from my family that I can sleep through anything- insane heat and humidity, riots, and possibly nuclear war though I have doubts about that last one*). But during times of huge and intense emotional struggle and upheaval, writing has been the last thing I've even thought about doing. Well, I thought about it but in reality I was either too exhausted to sit down and try to find my words, or worse, I felt intense guilt and fear for even wanting to make that little bit of effort.

As a woman, I have always felt there were more demands on my time than for a man. For example, my father could be loud and pushy about his writing time but I feel like if I had done that I would have been landed on so hard I would have to have been peeled up off the floor. Later on, I knew there were people who felt my pursuit of writing was foolish, selfish, and a complete waste of time simply because the meager amount of time I did take to write made me unavailable to them whenever they wanted me to be. I know now that I had every right to time of my own but that's in hindsight. Back then, that overwhelming guilt and fear of

pissing people off kept me blocked more times than I ever want to admit to.

In the years since those difficult times, I've struggled to write because of an avalanche of thoughts, feelings, and words that have raged like a category-five hurricane inside my mind. I know now this was just fallout and the silence after a raging battle that was like a huge echo of noise, but this raging storm took every ounce of energy I had to work through it. But I know I needed to work through those personal storms to get to where I'm at today.

So for any writer reading this who's been blocked, who has sat down to write day in and day out and gotten nothing written, it's okay. In fact, it's more than okay. It means your human and you're not perfect. Don't let anyone try to take you on a guilt-trip you don't need to take for this. Don't let anyone make you feel bad about yourself for going through writing times like this. Because in my thirty-six years of writing I can tell you from my personal experience 'writer's block' is real. And most of all, you have to find a way to work through it no matter how long it takes.

Don't give up on your writing when this happens because after a storm there is always calm and eventually, the echoes of those storms will fade and you'll be able to breathe, think, and feel again. And yes, the words will come to you. And if anyone doesn't understand that, walk away from them and do your dead-level best to banish their words from your mind. Those words are like a poison you need to get out of your mind and guard yourself against. When it comes to writing, focus on yourself and tell yourself you're not selfish for pursuing it when you have the time and the energy to do so.

Writer's block is real like a storm is real, like your thoughts and feelings are real. But like all storms, eventually it will come to an end. You'll learn from each storm and grow stronger every time because of that. And most of all, believe in yourself and you'll find your words again, and they'll be better than before.