

August 4, 2020

Writers Write

This two-word phrase came to me as I sat down to write a series of blog entries and got through three of them before a massive sinus attack hit me. But the phrase stayed in my mind and when that happens, I sit down and listen to it and figure out where it came from.

For the longest time, I have felt like when I sit down to write that I should be doing something else. What else should I be doing if it's not urgent or can wait? That's a good question and one I think involves the ever-present yet not-quite-real 'someone'. Yes, the dreaded 'someone' who is so persistent in asking stupid questions like:

“Why are you writing? Shouldn't you be doing something else?”

Now in the past I would have bent my head in shame and said, “Yes, I should be doing something else.” And then I would have found something else to do.

Now I stand tall and proud and say, “No. I am a writer and writers write.”

I know all too well there are a lot of people who call themselves writers yet don't write, or write near as often as they should. They seem to love the idea of being a writer and being seen as a writer, but they're not willing to put in the work. The problem with these wannabe's as I call them is they are really good at projecting their perceived superiority over those of us who write and rewrite and edit until our brains turn to slime and slide out of our ears.

Don't listen to these wannabe's. You don't have to in order to be polite and not hurt their feelings. They didn't think twice about hurting yours by tearing you down so you don't owe them anything in return for that. No, this is not being mean. This is about standing up for yourself and your work.

My late father once said to me: “Most people need to be told what to do and when to do it. You're not one of them.”

You don't have to be told what to do and when do it if that's not the situation you're in. Being a writer means being your own boss so be the boss you've always wanted to have. My inner boss would tell me right now to run with this idea and

see where it goes. She'd tell me chores can wait (trust me, dust bunnies are the worst squatters around). And if you've eaten food, have something to drink, and you've been to the bathroom, you can sit down and write.

Writers write so they have words to revise because you can't revise and edit a blank page. You can't rewrite something if you haven't something already. Writing, rewriting, editing, and revising are how words are polished to a shine and crafted to solid precision. But you can't make something from nothing so you need to get the words down and if you have to, tell yourself no one is perfect. And not being perfect is more than okay. 'Wannabe's' and 'Someone's' will tell you in their own insidious ways that your work will never amount to anything, or that you should know better to begin with, or anything that makes them feel superior.

You don't write for 'wannabe's' or 'someone's'. You write for yourself first and foremost. You don't write to anyone else's expectations but your own. You have to take charge of your work and make it your own. Remember when it comes to your writing, you're the boss of it. You write the words, not them. You edit and revise, not them. And since you're a boss who does your own work, you can also do your own research and find the answers to your own questions.

Writers write.

If you have to, tell yourself this every time you can. Because if you hear this enough, you'll start to believe it. And once you believe it, you'll do it.