



WRITER'S BLOCK DETOX

TRANSCRIPT: WEEK 4 VIDEO

WEEK 4

Hi – you've made it, you're on week 4 of the Writer's Block Detox! I hope you've been having fun, and it's great to have you here. This is a good week, so let's get down to it.

Now, this week is choose your own adventure week. Hopefully you've done the exercises from last week; if you haven't, go and do them, because they will give you a good idea about whether there's something that you've been working on over the last few weeks that really excites you and that you really want to get your teeth into, or whether the idea of writing a longer short story just at the moment makes you go ugh. And either is fine, you know, do what you're most comfortable with.

That's why we're doing the choose your own adventure approach, because while it is great to be developing ideas and turning them into proper stories and to be able to write for these longer periods, actually, writing consistently is much more important, being able to sit down and start writing is absolutely critical. These little bits of writing that you've been doing are basically your equivalent to practising piano scales, and it's something that you can pick up and come back to at any time during your life.

So I'm going to come back to that, but let me explain how this week is gonna work.

First of all, you are now choosing how long you write for. Remember there's no word police, there's no timing police, there's no right answer, there's no proper way of doing it. Hopefully you'll have a bit of a better idea by now of what works for you, whether that's doing really short intense bursts or whether it's pacing yourself, thinking for a bit and then doing, you know, spreading it out over half an hour. Do what works for you, whether you work best morning, evening, whatever. The only thing to remember is that this should still be free-writing: the idea is that you write without stopping or censoring yourself, and that bypasses your inner critic, so you mustn't stop to edit as you go, you mustn't stop to wonder whether what you've done is right. Just keep writing.

Now that we're clear on that, you need to choose your path for the week. So your options are:

- 1) Write a short story that you've developed using last week's exercises and which, if you've completed the exercises you will have written prompts for. So there was a task at the end of last week to help you map that out. If you're doing this, make sure that you write your prompts and make them accessible, so put them in your diary or pin them up by your notebook, put them somewhere that you can't miss them. Make it easy for yourself because if you're doing your own prompts, they're not going to come into your inbox.
- 2) Your emails this week will actually have 2 suggestions, it'll be either to do your own prompt or to follow one that I set. Your second path is to choose your own time limit and respond to the free-writing prompt, just like you have been doing for the last few weeks. Simple. Just keep going. Have fun.
- 3) Is kind of a hybrid approach, and that's flash fiction. So you're going to be free-writing still, but you're also practising making something complete, no matter how bad it is, you're practising creating an arc and finishing something. To do this, I would say that really there's 2 main approaches. The first would be to choose how long you're writing for and just write without stopping for most of it, so say you would write for 10 or 15 minutes, and then give yourself another 10 minutes to reread it, work out an ending and do a very brief edit to incorporate the ending into it. And I mean very brief when I say edit. The second, which is an easier approach for me and might be worth you trying, is to spend a minute or two at the start brainstorming anything you can think of to do with the prompt, then spend

another minute or two coming up with endings or structures and sketching out just a really rough idea of what you want to write, maybe the start and an end point and what needs to happen to get you there, and then spend say the remaining 12 minutes actually free-writing it. So you're still writing without stopping, you're still letting whatever comes out, you're still letting it be bad, but you've got a map of where you're going rather than finding out as it comes, and if you are doing flash fiction that can make it easier because you know your end point.

So, I just want to come back to this idea of what you **SHOULD** do and what you should choose... some people are going to want the challenge of a short story, some people want the excitement of playing with new ideas every day or just find the daily practice really helpful. Maybe you fancy trying flash fiction, or maybe you want to just keep the pressure off and stick to the prompts because you know that that way you're going to actually write.

Remember, it's much better to be writing than not writing, and it doesn't really matter how that happens. One of the reasons that we do have a short story option is to show you that you can take this approach into your wider writing life, so you can make it fun, you can make it drama free, you can still do things in small chunks and you can still make it really easy by working out what's going to happen in advance and creating prompts for yourself so that you never have the barrier of having to work out what comes next. That's such a useful tool for you to have in the long term.

So remember that whichever you choose, this is a no shame and no guilt zone. It's entirely what works for you. And you know what, you might go through months of just free-writing, writing nothing, writing nonsense, writing about how you feel about your day at work, or you might go through a phase where trying poetry is right for you, or you might start working on a novel for a few months and then you might write a short story a week and then you might go back to free-writing. Pick what works for you right now, because you can always change your mind later. You can change your mind half way through the week if you want. You're probably only going to be doing most of you 15 minutes, 500 words at the most, so it doesn't matter. There's always tomorrow, you can always start again on something new. And it's the same again if you find yourself falling off the wagon. There's always today. Start again.

This is all really about making you feel like a writer, a better writer through doing it and exploring more, and a happier and more creative writer because you're actually working on ideas and because you're doing something. This is your daily training, this is your marathon training really, and the act of writing is intrinsically valuable no matter which way you choose to do it. So never feel bad about what you **SHOULD** be doing, just do what will make you feel good about writing.

Okay, that's my little rant on should over, so I'm going to go for now, but I'll be back during the week. Speak to you then.