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How to Obliterate Writer's Block



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**The
New York
Times**

Entrepreneur

ADWEEK

CRAIN'S
NEW YORK BUSINESS

Originally trained as a psychologist, Dr. Glenn Livingston has helped literally thousands of clients. Along with his wife Sharon, he's sold consulting, teambuilding, and workshops to big names like AT&T, Nextel, Panasonic, Whirlpool, Novartis, Lipton, Colgate-Palmolive, Kraft, and Panasonic. Their work, research, and theories have been seen in major media publications like The New York Times, Entrepreneur Magazine, Crain's NY Business, AdWeek, America West, and more!

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How to Obliterate **Writer's Block** (for Coaches and Consultants)

Another Quick Tips Cheat Sheet by Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.

If you're a coach or consultant, the ability to frequently and persuasively communicate is immensely important. Effortless, meaningful, and powerful messages dramatically improve client acquisition—as well as results and referrals!

Blogs, tweets, Facebook posts, newsletters, client email, written exercises, YouTube video scripting... as technology grows, so do our opportunities for contact with our prospective and current clients.

And here's the thing: When you've got something valuable to say, it's much more about frequency than it is about perfection.

MORE FREQUENT MESSAGING = MORE CLIENTS = MORE MONEY.

(Seriously, once you've got even a small audience which likes you, you're MUCH better creating fifty A- or B+ quality messages than five or six A+ quality ones)

BUT WHAT IF YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY?

How in the world are you going to communicate, with value, on such a regular basis? How will you ever maintain that level of "intimacy" in your relationship with your list?

In other words, it's not just copywriters and authors who suffer from "writer's block", we coaches and consultants pay the price in spades.

Thankfully, there are some simple principles which overcome writer's block, virtually every time:

1. Write For Your Children, Not Your Parents Or Your Teachers:

Most of the time when we feel blocked, we're experiencing an inner critic which prejudices every word before it even has time to form in our brain. It's as if we think our parents or schoolteachers are looking over our shoulders, critiquing everything we do.

Who wouldn't clam up in such a situation?

But here's the truth. **The people you want to reach in your market are EATING your words, NOT CRITIQUING THEM.** (Yes, of course there are

always a few bitter, mean people who enjoy pointing out every last mistake, but they're their own worst punishment)...

The people you *want* to reach want to be FED, much more so than they want to be taught in the traditional sense. They're *not* looking for a demonstration of brilliance which would get past a dissertation committee.

Sometimes at seminars the topic of writer's block comes up. There are always several coaches who insist they don't have anything to say to their market on a regular basis...

At these times I immediately ask how many of them have small children. Amongst the sea of hands which go up I then ask "How many of you had something to say to them yesterday?"

Everyone nods.

When we think of feeding rather than impressing our prospects and customers the issue of judgment mostly melts away.

I'll always remember one particular session with a treasured mentor where I was stressing out about whether I was doing enough to help this particular boy who's father had deserted him. *(A long time ago when I was a young psychologist and before I really knew what coaching was)*

My mentor said "Glenn, this boy is soaking up every thing you say, do, and smell like. Stop worrying, and just go back and be PRESENT with him. Get out of your head and just BE with him. That's 84,000 times better than what his father did!"

This still gives me chills when I think of it.

Think of your audience like your children. Feed them and BE with them... don't lecture. It's almost impossible to go wrong if you follow this advice.

2. Learn How to Vomit

No, I'm not suggesting you become bulimic.

I'm borrowing a colorful metaphor from the world of improvisation.

When actors agree to improvise, they don't get the luxury of having "actors' block"...

There's an audience, it's live, and something had better come out of their mouths or it's going to be pretty darn awkward!

I took a class on improvisation in college. When I got my first case of nerves my professor took me aside and said something I'll never forget: "*Glenn, just vomit. We'll make it pretty once it's out*".

He was right, and nowhere is it more true than with regards to writing!

Vomit your words onto the screen and you'll have plenty of time to make it pretty before you publish it (*don't you just love word processors?*)...

On the other hand, if you insist everything you put on the screen must be "pretty" first, you'll have precious little to work with an polish up.

Vomit first. Make it pretty once it's out of you.

Words to live by

3. Start with the Ugliest Truth

Here's something most people don't know...

When you feel like you've got "nothing to say", it's really because there's *something* you don't want to say.

When I was studying to be a psychotherapist we learned something very interesting... the mind is never blank. Never.

How do we know?

There are dozens of scientific studies on sleep and dreaming which involved waking people up in the deepest stages of sleep. I'm not talking about REM (*where dreaming occurs*), but the parts we never remember, where we're most soundly asleep and our body is involved in restoring itself.

It's this part of the human experience we most associate with "nothingness" or a blank mind.

Yet when we put people in a sleep lab and wake them up at these times to ask what they were thinking or "dreaming" (*not technically a dream because it's not during REM*), they've ALWAYS got something to say. Always.

In coaching sessions, you gradually come to observe people can never really be thinking about "nothing" (*George Castanza aside*). Instead, after a few hundred sessions you realize **people stop talking when their associations lead them to something they don't WANT to say.**

Writers block is NOT an empty mind. Writers block is the painful and fatiguing experience of preventing yourself from saying what you don't want to say!

How can you use this to be in more frequent contact with your prospects and customers with regular, valuable communication?

Simple.

Sit down and ask yourself what the ugliest truth on your mind is today, then vomit it out on the screen. Remember you can edit it later.

Like this:

"No matter how much I accomplish as a marketer/educator, no matter how much money I make, no matter how many people have made millions from my work, etc... I'll always feel like a 'fallen priest' who should still be using his skills and training to help suicidal people instead of creating businesses and building an empire."

OK. Now that the "ugly truth" is out there, how can I turn it into a useful blog post, newsletter article, or cheat sheet for my audience?

I could cite 3 examples of how guilt about making money actually CAUSES suffering in the very audience you want to help.

For example, if I let this feeling get the better of me I wouldn't keep sharing what I've learned...and a strong argument could be made that the coaches on my list would not only earn less money, but they'd be less well equipped to help others.

Also, and this is key... it doesn't matter what niche you coach, you can always find a way to use the ugly truth to break your writer's block .

For example, let's say I was a body language coach.

I could still use the ugly truth above. I'd talk about how, to truly exude confidence with body language, you need to examine and dispute your own guilt, or else you'll only *mimic* the posture of confidence, portraying an empty shadow of the stature you're trying to project.

Or let's say I was a parenting coach and I had a client who was spending a lot of their session time feeling guilty about something trivial in their

lives. I might say “Listen, your little girl doesn’t want you to feel guilty. You might be thirty years old, but she’s only three. So every minute you can’t be present with her because you’re beating yourself up actually FEELS like TEN minutes to her. She’s only going to be young once...and the first few years are SO critical. You can’t afford the luxury of feeling guilty!”

Get the point?

Feeling blocked?

Write for your children, learn how to vomit, and tell the ugly truth.

Now go write something!

www.BecomeARealCoach.com

How to Become a Better Listener



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