

BREAKING THROUGH WRITER'S BLOCK

When the Words Won't Come

Conference Handout Edwina Perkins

The 4 Real Causes of Writer's Block

The real issue is usually one of these four:

1. FEAR

Fear whispers: Who do you think you are? It shows up as procrastination, perfectionism, and every distraction you've ever chased.

Key Insight:

Legitimate fear humbles us. Humility motivates hard work. Hard work leads to success. Fear can be fuel.

My personal fear:

2. PROCRASTINATION

You haven't defeated procrastination. But you can outsmart it.

Strategy: Schedule procrastination days into your writing calendar. Know your pages-per-day. Never let that number become impossible.

My deadline:

My daily page goal:

3. PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism looks like quality control. But unchecked, it steals your manuscript.

Strategy: Separate writing from editing. First drafts are not final drafts. You cannot edit a blank page.

One place perfectionism slows me down:

4. DISTRACTIONS

Distraction doesn't knock. It sneaks in through the screen.

Strategy: Set a strict writing schedule. Turn off all other media. Protect your writing hours like the sacred time they are.

My writing hours:

Biggest distraction to address:

9 Strategies When You're Still Stuck

Just write — One page a day. Show up even when it's not your best.

Lower your expectations — Two good paragraphs is a win. Be the tortoise.

Get to know your characters — Zoom in when the big picture overwhelms.

Read — You can't pour from an empty well.

Give yourself a break — Your best ideas rarely come while staring at a screen.

Start at the end — Know your last scene before you write your first.

Brainstorm without judgment — Set a timer. Let everything out. Don't censor.

Change your scenery — A coffee shop, a park, a window with a view.

Stop while you're ahead — Leave something in the tank so tomorrow's page isn't blank

My Action Plan

The cause most likely behind my writer's block right now:

Cause:

One strategy I will try this week:

My next writing session is scheduled for:

"You can't edit a blank page."

— Jodi Picoult