



Jericho Writers Newsletter – 30th Jan 2024

I'm finding writing hard. Oh Boo Hoo! Is what I say to myself as every January draws to its close. It's officially the most depressing time of year. You're still recovering from the over-indulgence of Christmas, and you've made New Year resolutions which you've already failed at. You were going to start a new book / edit that awful draft / fulfil an astronomical daily word count. But instead, you've mainlined Baileys, short-circuited your brain with affirmations and only written one paragraph.

My second book *THE SAVED* is just out. I love it and was happy and confident for about ten seconds in January during the kerfuffle of publicity. But now I'm plunged into my usual doubts and stresses as I start my third book. (Success so doesn't reduce writing insecurities!) So, here's my Writing Reboot Recipe:

STEP 1: TOUGH LOVE

I don't HAVE to write my next book. But if I want to, I HAVE to be honest and get focussed. Here are the questions I ask myself:

Do I really want to write a book, as opposed to 'have written' a book?

If you only want to 'have written' one, then I would suggest you GIVE UP, because writing is hard enough even if you like it! But if you do want to write one, then commit fully to the process, knowing there will be ups and downs, but that it'll be fulfilling.

What if I do love writing, but don't love this particular book idea?

GIVE UP THIS IDEA; or pick it apart to find what you do love about it.

What if I do love writing, but don't have the time/energy.

GIVE UP FOR NOW; and start again when you do have the time/energy.

What if I do love writing, have the time, but the publishing industry is against me?

GIVE UP; or let go of the corroding negativities all writers feel sometimes: *the publishing industry isn't fair* (what is fair in life?); *bad books get big promotions* (they had a sellable

hook, find yours); *I've got problems with my agent/ publisher* (then work on the relationship or change it). Feel, seethe, then let go, and get on with your journey.

But what if I keep on trying and I still can't get where I want to in publishing?

GIVE UP; or decide you enjoy writing enough to keep going, knowing that if you keep developing you may find the specific success you're aiming for, or you'll find other successes along the way.

STEP 2: SELF-CARE

Once focussed, I'm a massive believer in positivity and that you can far exceed your expectations with the right mindset and routines.

I tell myself that all writers struggle sometimes. Everyone has doubts/bad days/writing weaknesses. But doubts are just thoughts not truths/bad days pass/and you can focus on your strengths and work on your weaknesses.

Look after yourself: good sleep, healthy tasty food (with the odd Tunnock's Teacake), exercise, meditation, yoga, massage, or my favourite: Russian saunas with freezing plunge pools.

Have a doable, supportive routine that suits you. Mine:

- After I've strung out breakfast as long as possible, I sit at my desk.
- 10 mins meditation app.
- Breathe in orange blossom oil – who the hell knows if it's good for creativity, but it's my focussing ritual.
- Two hours writing.
- Exercise.
- Looooong lunch.
- Two more hours writing.
- Make a list of things to do tomorrow.
- When you can't write, set a stopwatch for 10 mins and write anyway. If after three tries, you're still stuck, GIVE UP and go for a walk or do anything that zones you out of self-berating. Start again tomorrow. Some days are just not writing days.

STEP 3: FINDING SUPPORT

Writing is tough, so get help:

- FIND WRITING FRIENDS. I regularly zoom with four writers I met on a [writing course](#).
- FIND A [MENTOR](#). Invaluable for motivation.
- LISTEN TO WRITING PODCASTS. For tips and feeling not alone. E.g. Chloe Timms' [Confessions of a Debut Novelist](#)
- READ WRITING BOOKS. E.g. [How to Write](#) by Louise Tondeur or Jericho Writers' founder Harry Bingham's [How to Write a Novel](#).

- FIND POSITIVE MINDSET TOOLS. E.g. Sophie Hannah's [Dream Author coaching](#).
- READ WRITERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA. Endless tips and funny honesty. E.g. [Philippa East on X](#)
- USE THE MARVELLOUS JERICO: for support at every step of the writing and publishing process. E.g. as I start my 3rd book, I've found the following resources helpful: [7 Tips For Writing A Thriller Novel](#) (article), [Book Outline Template](#) (worksheet) and [Resilience and the Writer: How to Keep Going When Things Get Tough with Natali Simmonds](#) (video).

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Liz Webb originally trained as a classical dancer, then worked as a secretary, stationery shop manager, art class model, cocktail waitress, stand-up comic, voice-over artist, script editor and radio drama producer, before becoming a novelist. She lives in North London.

Find out how Liz went from Jericho Writers Premium Member to published author with her [success story](#) and read our [latest interview](#) with Liz to hear all about her brand new psychological thriller THE SAVED.