

Confidence to Start

The “One Day” Speech

I know I've thrown a lot at you in this first module. Getting ideas and preparing to write is a big deal, especially if this is a new thing for you. If you're feeling intimidated or overwhelmed, there's good news. You're right on track! Lol. This job involves getting over insecurity and doubt and imposter syndrome over and over and over again. Those hurdles never go away. I can assure you that is the case for me. Fifteen+ books in, two RITA awards, best book awards from major publications, and I still have to jump those insecurity hurdles every dang time. But, the writers who are successful at this job lace up their running shoes even when they're scared, get in the starting blocks again, close their eyes, and just...move *forward*.

Inertia is a thing. We all know that. The dictionary's definition of inertia is, “a tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged.” Doing nothing is so much easier than starting something. It's so much safer! Writing is not immune to this law of nature.

Even once you're a working writer, sitting down to a blank page can be SO FREAKING INTIMIDATING. That feeling is always there. In fact, for me at least, it has only gotten worse. I'm sorry to tell you that, but it's the truth. When you first start writing, there are no expectations on you and you don't know what you don't know. It all just feels like a fun experiment.

I wasn't very intimidated when I started my first book (which sits blessedly unpublished in my closet) because I had nothing to lose. Once you're published, there are expectations. When I get stellar reviews on a book or win an award, it's amazing, and then it makes me fear the next book won't live up to that one. It's a never ending cycle that I've learned to embrace.

But if you're sitting down to write your first novel, you'll probably experience one extreme or the other.

Scenario #1: You'll be like I was and feel like you have nothing to lose, so you just go for it.

Benefits: You can have fun with it and not get locked up with fear or anxiety. You can play with the story without stress.

Drawbacks: You may rush forward and write yourself into a big ol' mess. (Not that I'm speaking from experience. *Cough*)

Scenario #2: You're intimidated to start or seized with fear that you could never do this. The task seems too big, too daunting. Your brain tells you fun lies like, "You're not a "real" writer." "Who do you think you are trying to do this?"

Benefits: You may take more time to learn and do pre-work on your story to ease your anxiety, so you may be better prepared once you start because you've thought through your story a lot.

(Note: this may mean outlining but it may not. I'm not an outliner, but I do a lot of prep work, which I'll talk about later.)

Drawbacks: You may talk yourself out of writing it in the first place or never finish. Writing becomes a "could've been" for you instead of a "did."

Whichever your style is, here's the thing: *you have to start.*

How many times have you heard people say, "One day I'm going to write a book."? The One Day speech is a popular one. A lot of people give the One Day speech. The vast majority will never write a single word of that book.

Don't let that be you.

You are here. You are paying for this class. You *are* a writer. That desire burns within you, and being here is a vote of confidence in yourself. Don't waste that.

So gather your ideas, work your way through this class, and then BEGIN. Word one, page one. We all start the same way. One word becomes two then three then eventually eighty, ninety, a hundred thousand. You can do this.

If you find your confidence wavering or feel overwhelmed at the start, give yourself permission for the words to be bad. Chances are, they will be bad on the first go round. That's okay! That's why revising and editing are part of the process. And sometimes you need to get a lot of crappy writing out of your system before you tap into the good stuff.

Like I said, my first novel (not counting the fan fiction one I wrote in high school) is in my closet and will remain there. It's not good. BUT it taught me so much about writing. I had to write that one in order to get to the next stage. Without that book, I wouldn't have had the chops to write the next one (Wanderlust) or the next (Crash Into You). So nothing you're doing is a waste even if a book doesn't see the light of day.

Don't give the One Day speech, give the Today speech. *Today, I will write.*

Theme Song

I'll leave you with this fantastic song if you need an extra kick in the butt. ;) You'll see "Theme Songs" sprinkled throughout the course. I did this because the course was originally called Rock That Romance Novel and I love music, but I also am including songs because I think that music

can sometimes create an association that helps to remember and solidify concepts. Hope you enjoy the songs!

"Could've Been Me" by The Struts (First lyric: "Don't want to live as an untold story...")