

7 Experiments to Liberate Your Voice

Fear of writing is very common. Face it.

Then turn your attention to the work by experimenting.

Experiment 1: Start a Session with a Reset Ritual. (Before)

Clear space in your brain for writing by putting away what went before.

Possible example: Mindful Pause

1. Pause and take 8-10 deep breaths. Feel each inhalation and exhalation. Focus your mind entirely on the steady rhythm of your breathing during this time.
2. At the end of 8-10 breaths, conclude with a question: which of my character strengths will I bring forth as I write?

What character strength emerged? → from Jane Anderson's *30 Days of Character Strengths*

Experiment 2: Picture Your Audience avatars. (Before)

Start with the **Why?** Why do you want to be a writer?

Who do you want to affect?

Who can you imagine listening when you explain your ideas?

How do you want them to be changed by reading your work?

Remembering the why, who, and how supports motivation.

Write them down and revisit whenever you feel stuck.

Experiment 3: Work in stages. (During)

Writing and editing (judging) are two distinct activities. Don't do both at the same time.

Edit in multiple stages:

- Big picture →(Have you buried the lead?)
- Paragraph level →(Can people see your structure?)
- Wording and punctuation →(Does your piece need an AND-ectomy?)

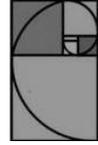
Experiment 4: Play with ideas. (During)

Sit and clear your mind for 10 minutes.

Write ideas on yellow stickies as fast as you can.

Play with them to see possible shapes.

Creativity often involves letting ideas emerge from your subconscious.



Experiment 5: Collect and nourish story seeds. (During)

Stories, well told, make your message sticky.

All of life is grist for the story mill – keep a story log.

Mine your own writing for generalizations that could be supported by stories.

Make your stories vivid: Show, don't tell.

To motivate behavior change, three types of stories

- Good behavior
- Bad behavior
- Transitions

Experiment 6: Build habits. (During)

Pick one behavior to practice regularly that will move your writing forward

Some examples:

- Write something every day.
- Sit in the same place. Or try a different spot until you find the one that works.
- Spend time at the end of one writing session preparing for the next.
- Read your writing out loud.

Experiment 7: Make writing social. (After)

Writing does not have to be entirely solitary.

You can become a better writer by practicing and paying attention to what works and doesn't work in writing by other people.

Other people will see strengths in your writing that you didn't see yourself.