

## Keep Words the Heartbeat of *Your* Writer's Life

My writing career started when I was in grade school. We learned how to write Haiku poetry as a class exercise. Its complex simplicity surprised me, especially how quickly the words came. I received praise and encouragement.

Fast forward to my advanced English class in high school, and yeah, not so good. My elderly teacher disregarded almost everything I wrote.

I was hitting a downward spiral in my writing classes. I did not receive productive advice, so I felt like a failure. I stopped writing for fear of defeat. It was paralyzing. My notebook of poetry became extinct.

A kind, positive critique could have made a difference. Criticism has both positive and negative connotations.

Dictionary.com describes it as “the act of passing judgment, passing severe judgment, censure, and faultfinding.”

Thesaurus.com says it can mean “appraisal, appreciation, assessment, and observation.” Is it as negative as Dictionary.com describes it now?

- Don't take criticisms to heart. Move forward with your aspirations, by removing the negative critic. Write everything to *your* perfection, including daily communications. Tune your talents and habits by being involved in groups, engaging in LinkedIn, and updating your website.

Thankfully, my beaten ego boosted a love of reading.

You should immerse yourself in literature, magazines, and popular writings, which I was fortunately already doing.

- Read current publications and books; stay relevant in the niche you are writing. Ground your artistic impulses, with positive reinforcement. Choose classes and teachers who direct with expertise, understanding, and patience, like American Writers and Artists.

Fast-forward twenty-five years — a husband, two children, many positive endorsements, and yet, my writing was still lying in the quest for an opportunity.

I started honing my skills, by picking up the pen and taking writing classes at the local technical school.

Boy, was that ever a revelation! Writing changes over the course of years, and it was like learning a different language. The flowery, fluff-filled writing I had learned was nothing like the writing of today.

- Engage in the culture of today's writing. Read current, published works in your niche, of all varieties, including Social Media posts, blogs, and updates. Reach out to others in your field by exchanging information and ideas.

When you become a published writer, don't be surprised. After all, isn't that the job you chose? Isn't that your expectation? Ask yourself, *When was the last time I had a job, which I loved, yet I did not succeed?* I'll bet that's rarely happened, if ever.

- Call yourself a writer. Say to all who ask — "I AM a writer!" The sooner you start, the quicker you'll believe. Take courage with the words of American author, Steven Pressfield, who said, "A writer is a writer when he says he is."

Then, WATCH YOUR LIFE CHANGE!