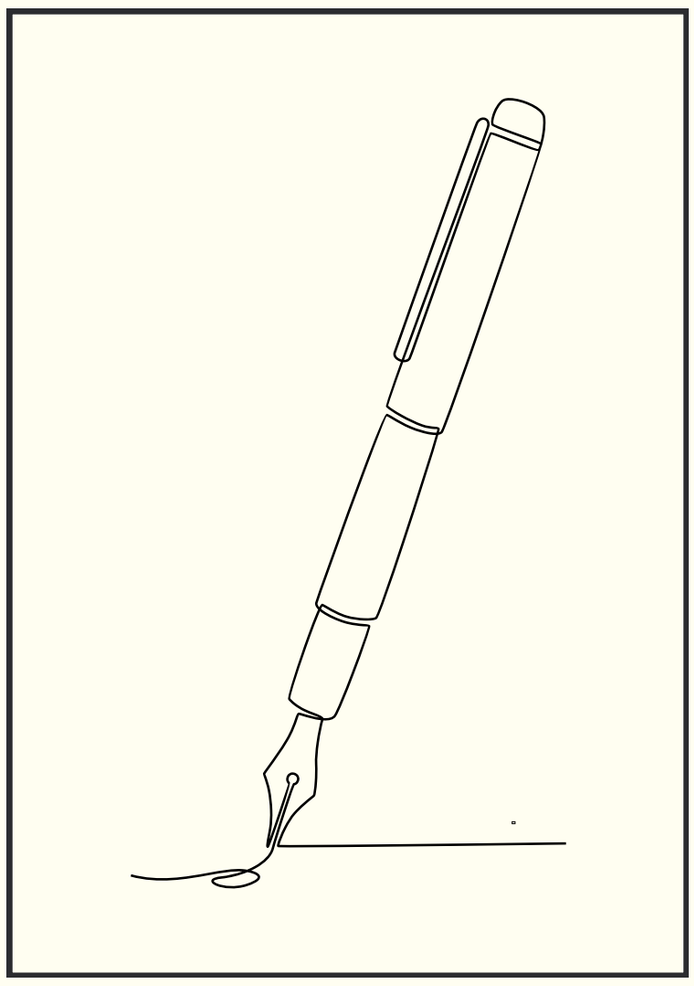


JUST WRITE

10 IDEAS TO FINALLY START

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About the author

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INTRODUCTION

YOUR SACRED CALL

We all are born storytellers. Every encounter, any exchange tells a story of who we are and how we perceive the world.

Some of us, however, have stronger storytelling genes than others. That might show up in a variety of ways. One person will use language directly and talk a lot. Others might operate with pictures, music or find their own forms of expression to share their personal experience with the world.

And then, there are those, who feel this longing for expression through written words.

It doesn't matter if it’s a five-hundred-page novel, or a diary entry. Writing is our way – or one of the ways – to articulate, what lives inside of us.

As soon as we set off to not only write for ourselves though, but bring our texts into the world, the challenge often begins.

We stare at the white page (or the white screen) and feel completely blocked.

Questions or thoughts arise, like:
* Can I even do that?
* Who am I to think I have anything to say?
* My thoughts are unimportant.
* I'm too old.
* I have no time.
* Everything has been done before.
* I surely am going to fail, and everyone will witness.
* ... etc.

We type a little here, improve a sentence there and in the end have: Nada.

Which is incredibly frustrating and can lead to pressure, discouragement, and self-doubt. These guys and all their little dream-wrecking friends, are all too well-known to writers in my surrounding, including myself.

But as I'm convinced, that the urge to write comes as a kind of sacred call to our soul (or whatever word or image you want to use) plus I'm equally convinced, that your voice matters, I want to offer you ten ideas on how to let that voice flow with ease.

These exercises have helped my clients tremendously over the last years, allowed their critics to step aside and actually: write!

CHAPTER I

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

“The universe doesn’t make mistakes."

“When I first read this sentence, it was as if something deep within me started to relax. How often had I secretly thought that all people have things to say and are okay, just as they
are. All, but me.

When I looked within myself to find out, what I had to share, I found nothing but a white noise, like a broken TV screen. At the same time, there was this inner urge. So many thoughts I wanted to express, but no real internal permission to do so.

“The Universe doesn't make mistakes", opened the idea for the first time really, that who I was could be relevant. That I didn’t need to become: Better, smarter, more eloquent, funnier... in order to belong, but that I was actually okay right now, with all my questions and imperfections.

What a revolutionary idea!

The further I let this sentence sink in, the clearer I felt, the truth in it.

The Universe, Life, the Great Spirit, the Source, God, Goddess, the Forces of Nature... whatever we want to call it, doesn't make mistakes.

Like every flower is unique and perfect in her own way, so are we.

If the daffodil made herself small, because the rose next to her seems more impressive, she would miss the chance to show her own full radiance.

The same counts for each one of us.

If you decide to dim your light or try to be / write like somebody else, your unique voice will be missing in the world symphony.

What a tragic waste!

Don’t wait around, to become. Just write!

And if the first thing you produce is a shopping list? Well, then this is your starting point.

Life doesn’t begin on some far away day. Life is now! And we need your unique voice, just as it is!

CHAPTER II

CONTINUITY

We still often have this romanticized idea of the forever inspired writer, magically pouring impressive words on paper. Full of excitement and creative power. Whose inner fire never ceases to burn. The embodiment of the word passion. Always in company, effectively parleying, or in their own inner realms, floating through the night under the influence of expensive whiskey and blue smoke of cigars. The self-destructive and borderline, yet brilliant illustration of an obsessed creator.

Quite seductive stereotypes, but: They’re not the truth.

Repeat after me: WRITING IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A PROCESS THAT LIVES FROM DOING IT.

Not in one intoxicating typed through night, but every freaking day.

It's quite easy, to write yourself into a frenzy or to give your all, in a kind of sprint. But when it comes to longer texts or even a novel, you might meet your limits. Writing is a marathon. You don't win in the first few meters by powering out all your strength, but by deciding to sit down every day and do it.

Regardless, if you feel inspired or not. “Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working”, Pablo Picasso said.

And yes. Writing – or creativity in general - is first and foremost a process that lives from the fact that you do it.

Inspiration is nice, but if you want to get your writing done: Don't wait for it.

That would be like only cooking dinner, if someone hands you a particularly outstanding, rare truffle.
It could happen, but also – and more likely - not. You might tragically starve to death while waiting for the truffle to appear.

Writing means cooking the goddamn dinner, with or without truffles. Putting words on paper. Everything else are nice ideas in your head.

In other words: Decide on a period of time that you will be writing in EVERY DAY! Even if it's 15 minutes. The important question is: Can you hold up doing that on the long run? Select the best time, ideally always the same, for each day.

A great moment could be the early morning, right after getting up. And: BEFORE you turn on your phone!

In this phase, we still are strongly connected to our dream-consciousness. Insights or thoughts might emerge, that we wouldn’t notice once the daily tasks and requirements take over.

You found your time? Set your alarm clock and then: Do it! Every single day.

P.S.: A sentence about children or other reasons, why this supposedly won’t work: Those are excuses. (Are you getting angry? Good. Then we hit a point.) If you really want to write, get up half an hour early every day, close yourself inside the bathroom for 15 minutes, ask friends for help, write while sitting on a bench at the playground or whatever.

But don't let those limiting believes in your head shape your reality!

CHAPTER III

SETTING FOCUS

If you know, when and where you want to write each day, then this is your sacred space.

Just like you (hopefully) wouldn't check your Insta Feed while making love, your phone, emails, websites, doorbell, or any other form of interruption must stay outside! Close all social media or use programs, that keep them shut for you. Inform your loved ones of your plan, ask them, to support you and remind them with a note on the door, if necessary. Use ear plugs or WHATEVER ELSE!

No windows will be cleaned, no band name researched, no coffee made, no pens sharpened, no lost socks retrieved for screaming children, no quick YouTube check done. Not even some fluff pulled from your sweater. Nothing!

And not, because you are that bad-tempered boss forcing you to sit down, but because you set yourself first, like an enthusiastic lover. This is your dream, don't let any voices or disruption get in the way!

In this holy timeframe, nothing counts, but you, your inner realms, and the paper in front of you. That's all.

You're worth it!

CHAPTER IV

YOUR SPACE

Some people write best in total silence at home at their desk and in front of their computer screen. Others find their stories when they sit in a café and handwrite in their notebook. Some might need an office or co-working space, dictate their ideas into their phone while running or go to a library. Whatever works best for you is your ideal writing spot.

Find out, where and how that best-possible place for you might be found. That can also change. But be aware here! It makes a lot of sense, to create a no-brainer and not having to think about the space and mode every day depending on your mood. We tend to waste way too much time going over details like: do I feel like going there today? Instead of simply doing the thing.

You have your space and tools? Let's go!

As an extra trick, buy the prettiest notebook you can find and a special pen that writes and feels exactly as you like it. Clear your desk the evening before! Put flowers next to your computer, or an inspiring picture. The subconscious loves beauty!

Treat this space as if it was your most sacred temple. Because this is, where the magic happens!

CHAPTER V

CREATION VS. CRITICISM

One of the biggest downfalls is to have your delicate creative self sitting next to your inner critic.

We dare to start into this biggest of adventures: To open our inner world and transform what we find into words or stories. We let those fine threads rain onto the paper. Thoughts begin to weave together or exit their shell for the first time ever. And after just two sentences, the critic smashes it completely, stating: This is SO bad!

Not the most encouraging scenario, right?

Therefore, it is essential, to separate those two!

The critic doesn't have anything to say during the first round of the creative-intuitive process.

A writer I know calls the first draft "vomiting" words onto the paper. Not the loveliest, but a fitting image.

Let it flow out, without censoring any of it! And this for a certain timeframe, or a pre-planned number of words.

After that, you can thank your creative self for the great work – and just then, with a little distance or on the next day invite your inner critic to read and review your text. But only if he promises to be respectful!

I sometimes change my writing spot for this, put on a different outfit or a special hat. Anything that helps not to confound the two, or get them in conflict with one another.

The critic can be a helpful guy, once he (or she) is invited and behaves.

As soon as he jumps in the way of creation however, he'll become the chief destructor of tender seedlings.

That is to be avoided with by all means! You – or your higher self – are sitting behind the steering wheel, telling the critic to fasten his seatbelt and NO, he's not allowed to choose the route. Not even the radio station. But once it's his turn, he's wholeheartedly invited to share what he's gotta say.

You keep what makes sense to you (little hint here: It never sounds in any way like "You suck!") – and throw the rest into the next gas station's bin.

CHAPTER VI

LET IT SUCK

The idea, to sit down and produce grand prose right away is not only wrong, but also stands in the way of the process itself.

You want to find YOUR voice. To get to know your characters and their world. To dive into your text, your language and attitude. To openly and curiously explore what wants to show up.

To get there, you need to start and write. Without expecting it to be perfect, great or even good at all.

Let it be bad.
Let it make no sense at all.
Let it be trivial.

The editing process (in close collaboration with said critic) is the next step. Then, you can throw away, change, or improve anything you want.

But first: WRITE!

CHAPTER VII

USE YOUR BODY

Most writers sit in front of their screen for hours, their shoulders pulled up to the ears, their forehead frowning, trying to squeeze the words out as little disrupted as possible.

In the end, they have migraines, back-ache, and a clenched jaw. Which is the tribute one seems to have to pay for the art.

But what, if it was possible to not write against or despite of the body, but WITH your body?

That could mean, breathing deeply into your belly or pelvis during writing.
To move your lower body or even let words emerge from there.
It could mean standing up before or during the writing process and breathe out loud sounds.
To shake your body.
To dance.
To write while standing.
To practice the “lion” asana, when frustration hits (open your mouth, stick your tongue out, breathe out with sound).
It could mean to hit a pillow, while feeling the anger of your protagonist.
To scream.
To gently tap along your body with your hands or fists, in order to feel alive.

Anything, that supports you to not just write from your head, but from the depths of your body will help making your art more intense, authentic, and intimate. And it keeps you connected to yourself.

Learn to listen to your body!

How does it react if you feel stuck?
Does it contract at a certain point of the text?
Where do you feel wide and free?
What is the difference – and what does this have to do with your story?

Try it – and see what happens!

CHAPTER VIII

YOUR INNER PARTS

With my clients, I work - amongst other tools - with the therapeutic method of the internal family system. Working with our inner parts in my eyes is one of the most powerful and fast ways to get to know your own system, understand your personality and relieve the parts that are interfering or fighting extra hard to protect you. The best way to do this work is with the support of a trusted therapist or coach. Someone standing at your side, accompanying you to get in contact with those inner parts of yours.

If you prefer to explore your inner family system on your own, a first exercise can be, to identify them and realize that they're in fact only PARTS of yourself.

Often, we think: That is me. The blockage, the doubt or procrastination, the critic: All me!

But what, if the part that is doubting has been developed during our childhood, to protect us from the destructive criticism of our dad through detecting all possible inadequacies already beforehand. Or the part putting things off for too long is protecting us from finishing a project to not furiously fail (what as a child might have felt like dying).

„The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

This quote by the famous mythologist Joseph Campbell has been accompanying me for a long time and contains so much truth. In the depth of our fear, we often find the key to our personal treasures. It would be a pity, not to recover it.

Be curious, which parts might raise their head and acknowledge them as such. Ah, there obviously is A PART with strong doubts or one that makes me scroll endlessly, when I really want to write.

And then, ask that part, what he or she might need to not intrude that intensely.
Maybe an assurance that you're not in danger?
Maybe a conversation or an embrace?
Maybe half an hour for a walk in nature?
Be open for what presents itself, because it'll lead you closer to yourself.

And more than all: Learn to love your parts!

Because in the end, all of them, as destructive as they might appear, they just want one thing: To keep you safe.

CHAPTER IX

STAY CURIOUS

It would suffice to write this point and stop.

The biggest enemy of creativity (or any relationship) is the idea, that we know something for sure.

There are many things that we know, of course. And so many more we don’t have a clue of.

Writing is not the act of explaining, but of searching to understand a bit more. About yourself, the world, connections and whatever else.

Therefore, it is a good idea, to start with a question and write until you get closer to an answer. Or not.

„The route is the goal”, a much-quoted saying.

Let the journey of your writing be just as important – or more important – than the result. Stay open for what shows up and more than all:

Don’t forget to be amazed!

CHAPTER X

DON’T TAKE IT SO SERIOUSLY

Yes, you should take your writing seriously. Writing demands discipline, continuity, focus and a good portion of self-consciousness. In the sense of the word: I am conscious of myself and take myself so seriously, that I give space and time to what is striving to come out and am bold enough, to share it with the world.
Your longing is serious.
Your quest is serious.
Your time is serious.
And at the same time: Take it easy!

Your writing, like your life, is a beautiful playing field. If you miss this perspective, you might become very tense and bitter, if the result doesn’t reflect your ideas.

Be fully focused – and if a bird starts to sing in front of your window, take the time to listen.

Don’t miss your life while hunting for a goal or a certain number of typed words.

A wise woman once told me: „The goal of life is to rejoice in it.“

In that sense: Get going! Write until your fingers bleed.

And: Don’t forget the marvel!

Love your texts.

Celebrate your wins – and your losses.

“You win or you learn. You never loose.“

It might sound cheesy, but that doesn’t make it any less true.

Be proud of yourself!

You dare to write, where others just dream of it.

I celebrate you in any case!

And I can’t wait for you to add your voice – or words - as a much needed tone in the big symphony of life!

Thank you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sarah Schill

Already as a child, Sarah dreamt of becoming a Storyteller. It took her some detours, to follow her dream and choose writing as her profession. When she did, it was as if a dam broke, and the wild waters of storytelling finally flowed freely. Since then, she never stopped writing, from scripts for cinema and television to her non-fiction book “Anständig leben” (Decent living”), short-stories, journalistic observations, a musical libretto up to children’s books and a historic novel, she’s currently working on.

Apart from writing, Sarah hosts her Podcast “Collecting Sparks” and supports writers as a creative mentor to find their personal authentic voice.

If you want to work with Sarah, you can find all information about her offers on her website www.sarahschill.com

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