

AROUSE

Your Writer Self:

3 Tricks. Nonstop Hot Action.

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THE 3 TRICKS

You want to write. You'd love to start that novel. You ought to be blogging. You need to finish your dissertation. You'd like to be a writer. You feel motivated. But you just can't get it up to sit down and write.

Before I started working with writers, I taught sexual health education. And before that, I worked in "the industry." In both sexual health and sex work, most people have the same basic complaint. They'd like to have sex, but in one way or another, they just can't get it up.

To me, teaching writing has always felt a lot like teaching sex. Professionals combat sexual dissatisfaction with helpful information, emotional support, and permission to fantasize. My tricks for writer arousal are almost the same:

TRICK #1: Learn the **secrets** of writing.

TRICK #2: Get **inspired** to write.

TRICK #3: **Indulge** in your writing fantasies.

These are the tricks of my trade, 3 hot ideas (with nonstop hot action to go with each) to get you turned on to writing.

How To Use This Book:

Read the trick. Each one includes a recommended hot action that will help you integrate the trick into your life and keep you aroused.

- Do the **hot action**.
- Try these **tricks** in order the first time. Each **trick** and its **hot action** builds on the previous one.
- Do it again. Anytime. Whenever you're feeling under-aroused as a writer, come back to these **3 tricks** and **hot actions** in whatever order you like.

What if you need more?

Maybe you won't. You might not need anything other than these **3 tricks**. I hope they send you on a wonderful, strange, sexy trip to becoming the writer you want to be or to finishing the writing project you want to finish.

And maybe you'll need more support because all writers benefit from learning and growing. I hope these tricks serve you as a writer now and whet your appetite for more **secrets**, **inspiration**, and **indulgences**.

One-on-one attention is easy and so much fun in a series of **private sessions** with me, and the first session is always free. We'll collaborate to invigorate your writing and attain your goals. Just fill out the [free taste form](#) on the Sexy Grammar website, and I'll reach out to get you on my schedule.

TRICK #1: YOUR DAILY SECRET

“Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration. The rest of us just get up and go to work.” – Stephen King

Your daily secret is no secret. Everybody knows it. All the famous writing teachers—Julia Cameron, Nathalie Goldberg, Anne Lamott—teach it: write every day.

Daily writing makes you a better writer because of practice. You don't have to work on your dissertation or blog every day. In fact, you probably should take a break from the deadline-driven stuff some days.

But do practice writing whatever comes to mind for a set period of time every day. This is a lot like keeping a diary or journal, only easier.

When you practice **your daily secret**, you also practice, writing freely. I call this **writing like a slut**. I mean **slut** in a fabulously empowered way, of course, so forget all the judgment society slaps on sluts and focus on a sense of freedom in your writing.

Whenever you write first drafts or practice **your daily secret**, you should **write like a slut**. That is:

Be easy. The writing should be as easy as taking dictation from your own brain. Don't think up, write down. You know you want to.

Go fast. When you write, write fast. Your hand may be tired after even a few minutes of slutty writing.

Don't stop. If your mind wanders, follow it and write about that new direction. Keep it up. No reading back or correcting allowed.

Go all the way. Let your writing drill down, uncover layers, go deep. Figure out what you really mean. No fair hesitating or holding out—you won't get to the juicy, good stuff.

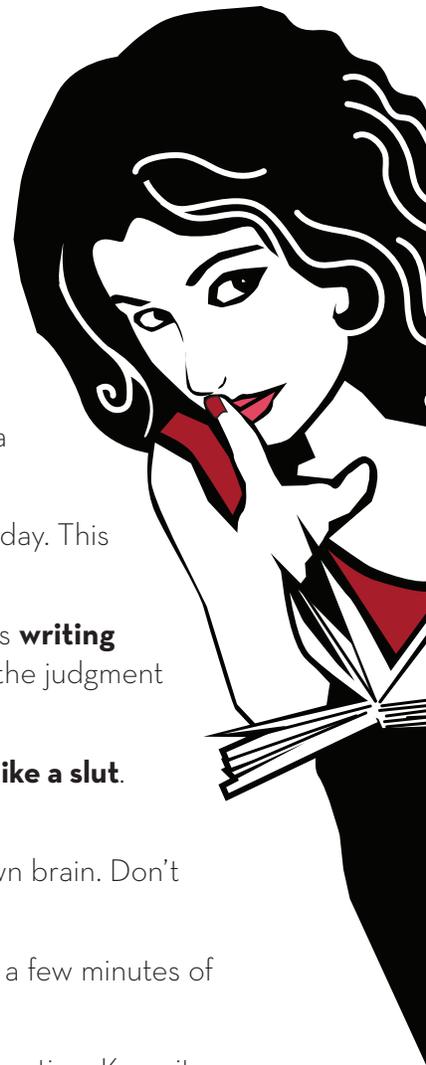
Let loose. Relax your body and mind and get down with whatever comes up.

I think those who master writing freely are the sexiest writers. Writing that flows like this is the easiest writing, the happiest writing. But it does take practice.

Your daily secret is your chance to practice **writing like a slut** every day. When you get good at **writing like a slut**, first drafts will come easily because you learn not to stop and criticize every sentence. You learn how to swiftly and efficiently get your ideas down onto the page.

Julia Cameron calls this practice “Morning Pages” and wisely prescribes 3 pages, handwritten, every day. I like her approach and use it myself, but that's not the only way to do it.

I propose a quick-and-dirty version. Flexibility and habit drive **your daily secret**. And there are just 2 rules:



Rule #1: It must be daily.

Write every day. Aim for roughly the same time, same place, and the same tools, for some specific length of time or number of pages or number of words.

You don't have to write forever. Find an amount of time or a length, like one page in your notebook, that works for you. Choose an achievable goal.

The specific number fools us on the lazy days. We can say to ourselves, "C'mon, baby, just fill your two pages and you can go back to bed." It works.

And you don't have to handwrite. If you feel more comfortable on a keyboard, do it on your laptop. Do it on your phone.

It doesn't have to happen in the morning either. Do it at bedtime, on your lunch hour, on the bus, in your car in the parking garage at the end of your workday. Anywhere, anytime, do whatever it takes to get your daily dose of writing time.

Rule #2: It must be secret.

What you write must enjoy total privacy. This is the only way to be truly, wildly slutty in your writing.

Put a journal by your bedside, or set up a locked document on your computer. Do whatever makes you feel safe to write anything—and I do mean anything—that crosses your mind.

The stuff you think nobody wants to hear—dark thoughts, worries, negative thinking, feelings you fear expressing—will show up in all its gorgeous, gory glory.

Give voice to those secrets, and all the other writing in your life—work email, blog posts, your novel—will flow much more easily. This is why daily writing makes you a better, happier writer.

The Bottom Line

Just being convinced is not enough to make **your daily secret** happen. Just intending to follow the 2 rules won't do it either. You have to do the writing.

First, use the worksheet on the next page to plan how to make **your daily secret** happen. Choose your location and the tools you will use. Think ahead about how to keep your sluttiest writing private. Define your daily writing goal. Even define "daily" for yourself.

Once you've filled out the worksheet, take **action**. Set yourself up with the tools, the space, and the time you'll need to write every day.

And you might need something to write about! If you're already hot to take **action**, begin your daily secret right away. If you're feeling empty inside and need some **inspiration**, go on to **trick #2**. You'll suffer no shortage of stimulation after that.

Hot Action:

YOUR DAILY SECRET PLAN

SETUP

How—I like to write with:

- notebook & pen
- desktop computer
- laptop computer
- tablet
- smartphone
- other_____

Where—my daily secret location:

- at my desk
- in bed
- in my car
- other_____

What—in my daily secret location, I will need:

- writing supplies (see above)
- timer
- refreshments
- lighting
- other_____

Secrecy—To keep my daily secret a secret, I will use:

- a hiding place
- a password
- a lock
- other_____

Duration—I will write:

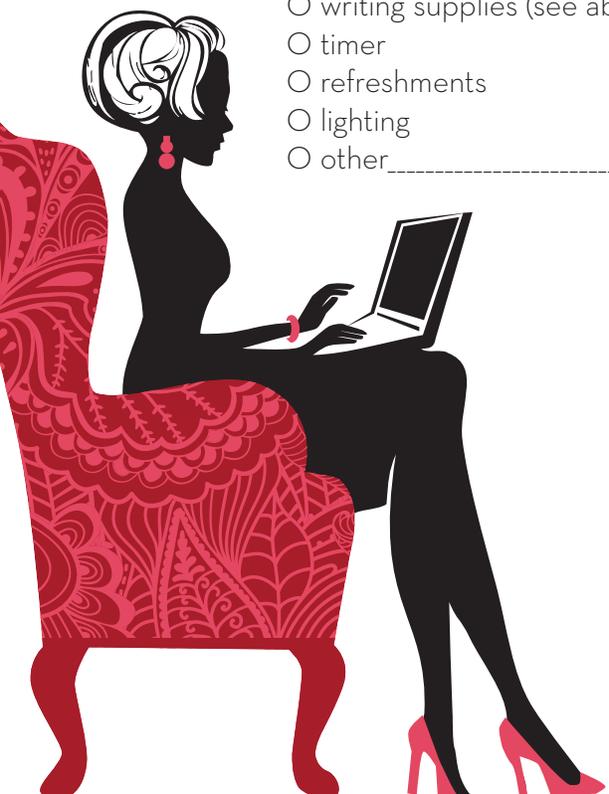
- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 30 minutes
- or
- 1 page
- 3 pages
- 5 pages
- or
- other_____

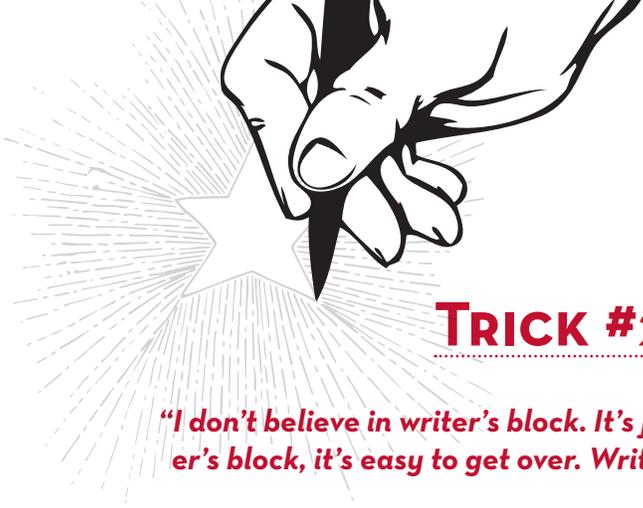
Frequency—I will write:

- daily
- every weekday
- other_____

Time of Day—the best time for me to write every day is:

- wake-up time
- bedtime
- other_____





TRICK #2: GET INSPIRED

“I don’t believe in writer’s block. It’s just not real. If anybody out there suffers from writer’s block, it’s easy to get over. Write about the writer’s block.” – Augusten Burroughs

Your Internal Writing Queue

I have this vivid anti-fantasy: My writing projects are all standing in line in my head, waiting their turn. There are endless numbers of blog posts, short in stature and easy-looking. They crowd in front of the e-books I should have finished last quarter, who all look slick and intimidating. My six novels in their various states of undress usually lounge aimlessly at the back of the line. They all feel entitled. They all want their turn.

“Write me!” the blog posts demand.

“Pay attention to me!” the novels whine.

But there’s another character in this anti-fantasy, a spark, a pain, great joy, or deep sorrow that is heavy in my heart. She stands in line, suffering in chains among all the other projects I must write, among the demanding blog posts and the whiny novels. She is often shy, this emotional spark, so she gets shuffled to the back of the line.

I attend first to the projects with external deadlines. I ignore her, and the pain of her inexpression festers.

Another week goes by. The blog requires a new post. Query letters have to go out for one of the novels.

So she stays there in line in my head, but her festering makes her grow. And the next project I tackle has trouble getting past her and out the door.

I see her there, but I don’t want to write her. She is too hard. She is too weird. She is not on a deadline, and the next project is even more difficult to squeeze by her.

She’s getting mad, big, and swollen, and soon, she is a block.

Romancing the Block

Your block is not sexy. Having writer’s block is not sexy. It’s not romantic. It may be seductive, but it won’t make you any more of a writer to say, “I have writer’s block.”

But your block is interesting. Remember, she started as that little spark in your heart, something that wanted to be written. To understand how to get it up for any project, we must first learn to dance with our blocks. Writing about your blocks is a great way to get yourself to write.

Your block is your inspiration.

Whatever is holding you back from writing, that is what you should write about. Or write upon it. Write all over it. If you can, describe it, literally.

My block is tall and wide. My block is painful. My block is impatient.

Ask yourself questions about the block. Is it ferocious? How so? Debilitating? In what way? Pathetic? Just exactly how pathetic is it?

The block is the thing that you want to write about but that terrifies you. So you find other projects. I've got to write this novel, this dissertation, this blog post. *I've got to write a letter to my grandmother, anything to avoid writing that scary thing, the thing you must write.*

You resist writing it down for interesting reasons. The stuff you're refusing to write and the reasons you are refusing to write it—those are really the most universal, fascinating stories. That's your inspiration.

Telling your most emotional secrets will draw readers to you—maybe later, when you're ready for readers. If you can get that inner terror onto the page, you can succeed and move people. But you will find a million excuses to write around it. And then it becomes the block.

Daily Writing

This is why **your daily secret** and **writing like a slut** are such pragmatic tricks. Writing daily, I flush out the quirky bits, the things I don't have to write but that desperately want me to write them.

And the festering feeling of suffering from writer's block doesn't happen because I'm not holding anything back. It's a relief and a release. Things that must get written do get written, and there's always room to explore the topics in my heart.

The Bottom Line

Many writers relate to inspiration as if it were a mystery. We go out looking for it in our environment. We hope it will light upon us like a spirit. Even the word inspire implies that we should inhale it from outside ourselves.

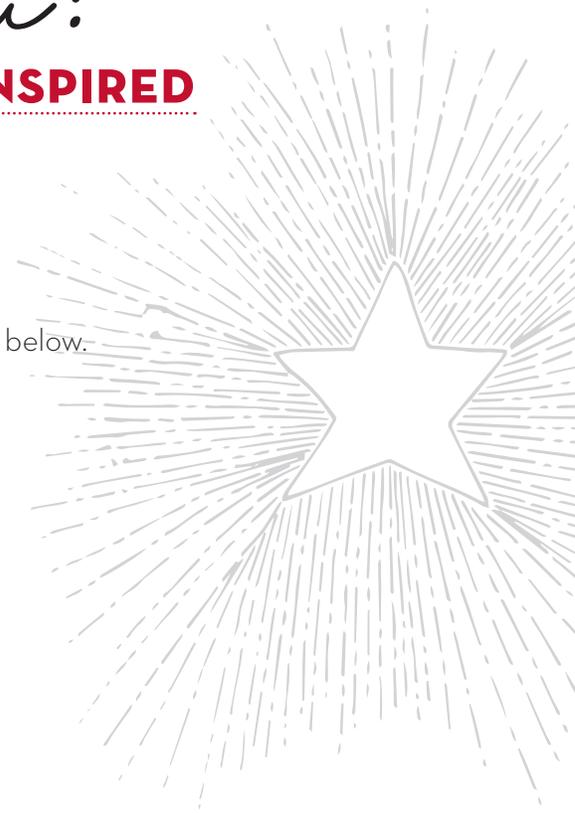
It's no mystery. Even if you don't feel blocked, you can find inspiration inside of you, maybe something that you hate, maybe something you love. It might feel like darkness, anxiety, or worry, or it might feel like a dream. Write about it. Unfurl it, and see how beautiful it can be.

Now for the **hot action**. Court **inspiration** by tackling the writing prompts on the next page. They will dare you to play with your blocks and write.

Hot Action:

PROMPTS FOR GETTING INSPIRED

1. Choose your #1 favorite writing prompt from the list below.
2. Choose your #2 second favorite prompt from the list below.
3. Choose your #last least favorite writing prompt from the list below.
 - Why can't you write?
 - What terrifies you?
 - What do you wish you could write about?
 - What are you ashamed of?
 - What are you afraid to write about?
 - What lies have you told lately?
 - What is blocking you?
 - Whom do you hate?
 - How big is your block, and what is it shaped like?
 - If your block were a book, what would its premise be?
4. Before you read the rest of the directions, commit to your choices of #1, #2, and #last.
5. Set a timer for 5 minutes, and **write like a slut** from your #1 favorite writing prompt until your timer runs out.
6. Now set your timer for 10 minutes, and **write like a slut** from your #2 second favorite prompt until your timer runs out.
7. Now set your timer for 20 minutes, and **write like a slut** from your #last least favorite writing prompt until your timer runs out.



TRICK #3: INDULGE YOUR FANTASY

“I hate writing. I love having written.” – Dorothy Parker

Indulgence gets a bad reputation, but it’s not as shallow or frivolous as you think it is. You must find joy in your experience as a writer, a way to love writing, not just the idea of writing or the experience of having written. You have to keep your writer self very happy. You have to **indulge** your fantasy of being a writer.

The Writer and the Cafe

Writing in a cafe makes me feel like a writer. I sit alone, looking chic, ankles crossed under the table, elbows upon it. My pen rests at the uplifted tip of my chin while I think, smile to myself, and then pounce on my open journal to write something clever. Beside my journal sit my delicate cappuccino cup, my nibbled cookie, and perhaps a few books.

Instead of disliking the Chatty Cathy at the table next to me, I study her speaking pattern or steal her drama for a story idea. I enjoy the musical Russian roulette of someone else’s music choice. I delight in the sounds of a cafe, the espresso machine steaming, the coffee grinder clanking, and the baristas hollering out drink orders.

I write. For I am in writer heaven.

There is something about writers and cafes. One well-known Bay Area coffee roaster’s mission is to fuel the writers of San Francisco. Coffitivity—a 4-star-rated app that plays ambient coffeehouse sounds—claims to boost creativity. All those American expatriates in Paris in the 1920s hung out in cafes to write.

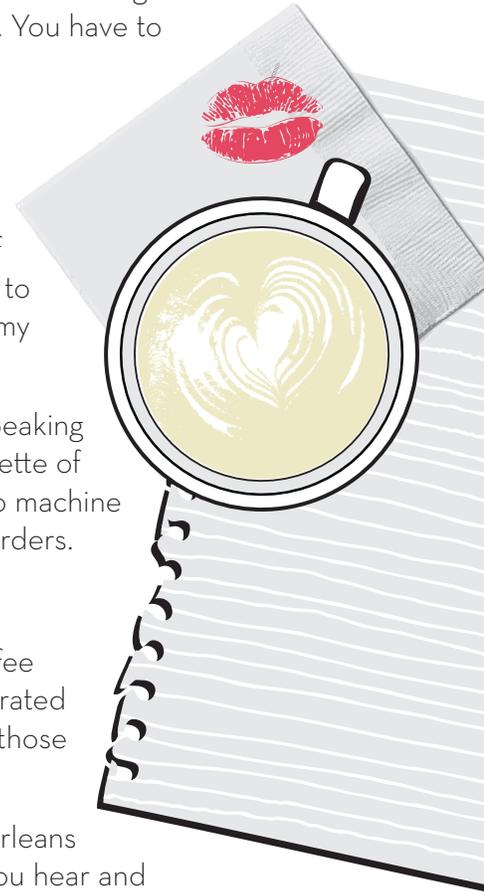
Writing in a cafe, you cannot avoid inspiration. As a friend from the New Orleans Writer’s Marathon taught me, “If stuck, just look around and record what you hear and see.”

And when you write in a cafe, you literally and figuratively come out as a writer. You claim the identity by doing it in public. Your work may still be too raw and new to actually show it to anybody, but you can show up in the world as a writer.

What’s your fantasy?

Don’t limit yourself to writing in cafes. What makes you feel like a writer? What situation can you create that will make the act of writing feel less like a chore and more like your fantasy?

Some writers love going away for a retreat. I usually go to wine country with the wife for a quiet weekend by a hot tub. I feel indulged as an artist, and I always get a lot of writing done. Some writers love to get away to tranquil nature. I know a writer who rents a terrible hotel room in a gritty urban neighborhood and bangs away on an old-school typewriter, indulging a fantasy she has about what writing looks like. (Mainly, it looks like writing.)



Many writers indulge by finding community. My writing group—four queer women who meet inconsistently in a diner to read each other’s work—makes me feel like a writer. Exhibitionists might want to cultivate readers right away: choose gentle enthusiasts. Going to poetry slams, taking a class, or attending a writing conference, moving among other writers as one of them, works for many of us.

And remember to indulge your writer self with gifts: sumptuous paper, a shiny new keyboard, an inspiring painting for your wall—whatever feels like a real writer’s **indulgence** to you.

Working It

Some writing fantasies don’t work. The starving artist is not sexy. She’s just undernourished. The belligerent drunk writer isn’t getting anything written. Just as I’d urge you to play safe when you act out your one-night-stand sex fantasy, I invite you to practice your writing fantasies with self-respect and love for your own life.

This is about making writing sexy. Not a chore. Not a bore. Yes, it is work, but it should be work like hot sex is work. Work it when you write. Huff and puff. Fuck and suck your way to mutual satisfaction for yourself and your readers.

And remember, these fantasies will not work if you don’t write. You have to write when you go to the perfect writing cafe. You have to write when you order that bourbon in the ideal writing bar. Live your fantasy. And work it.

The Bottom Line

Behaving like a writer works because it transforms you into one. Writing in public works because you actively claim the identity. Writing in cafes works for me because it fulfills a certain fantasy I enjoy. Writing in a cafe **indulges** the writer in me.

You can design your own satisfying writing experience, a process that brings you joy in the doing. In fact, you must. Or you won’t do it.

So what do you need? A perfect cafe, an old typewriter, a bath, a black beret?

On the next page, indulge in both **hot action** fantasies, and watch yourself magically transform into an aroused writer.





Hot Action:

INDULGENCE MENU

Fantasize:

1. Set a timer for 15 minutes and write like a slut about your ideal writing life. What does it look like? What do you look like? Where do you go? What kinds of writing tools do you use? When do you write?
2. Read it.
3. Make a plan. What part of your fantasy can you act out? What part of your fantasy can you realize today? What about later this week? Schedule it. Later this year? Start saving up!
4. Do it. Remember, it's your fantasy. Wear what a writer would wear in your fantasy. Do what a writer would do. Write.

Go to a Cafe:

Even if your writer fantasy doesn't involve hanging out in cafes, it's sexy to take your writing out to where other writers are working. Take action with these tips:

- Travel light. You'll stay and write a couple hours, not for days.
- Make hourly purchases. Pay a little rent while the cafe fuels and houses your creativity.
- Indulge. Order a beverage you would drink in your writer fantasy. Day-dream.
- Listen. Inspiration is all around you.
- Write. You're a real writer!





3 TRICKS. NONSTOP HOT ACTION.

That's all there is to it. Write every day. Write about what's really on your mind. Live your writing fantasy. Those are the first 3 tricks to arousing yourself as a writer.

What will you do now that you're aroused? First, keep it up. Don't stop writing. Cultivate a practice of nonstop hot action. Next, try one of these:

- Complete an old, stuck project.
- Start something entirely new.
- Set a goal. Any goal.
- Get free support from the Sexy Grammar **blog**.
- **Download** another Sexy Grammar ebook.
- Get a **private session** with The Sexy Grammarian.