

Jungle Red



*Julia
Spencer Fleming*



*Hank
Phillippi Ryan*



*Lucy
Burdette*



*Hallie
Ephron*



*Rhys
Bowen*



*Deborah
Crombie*



*Susan
Elia MacNeal*



Jungle Red Writers

7 smart and sassy crime fiction writers dish on writing and life. It's The View. With bodies.

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2012

Whose Idea Was THIS?

HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN: That's why they call it a cursor, right?

Because that little thing on your computer screen flashes at you, saying "Well, what are you gonna do now?" And there are moments in all of our lives—if you're a writer or a reader or a teacher or a lawyer or a mom or all of the above--when we think: whose idea was THIS?



One of my first pals in mystery world was **Daryl Wood Gerber**, who is smart, vivacious and inspirational. She's non-stop. She writes under two names (the other is Avery Aames) and has so many wonderful ideas that they just—bubble over at every moment.

So what are her tricks for staying positive? And creative? Today on Jungle Red—take a moment for reflection.

Being a “Creative” Can be a Challenge

by

Avery Aames

Being a creative person isn't easy. Author, actor, musician, artist, *fill in the blank*. You have new ideas streaming through your head all the time. Along the way, you choose your profession, and then (unless you're one of the lucky few who are discovered at the age of five to fifteen, i.e. Justin Bieber, Judy Garland, Lassie) you face rejection. You put yourself out there, with your ideas, your talent, your heart on



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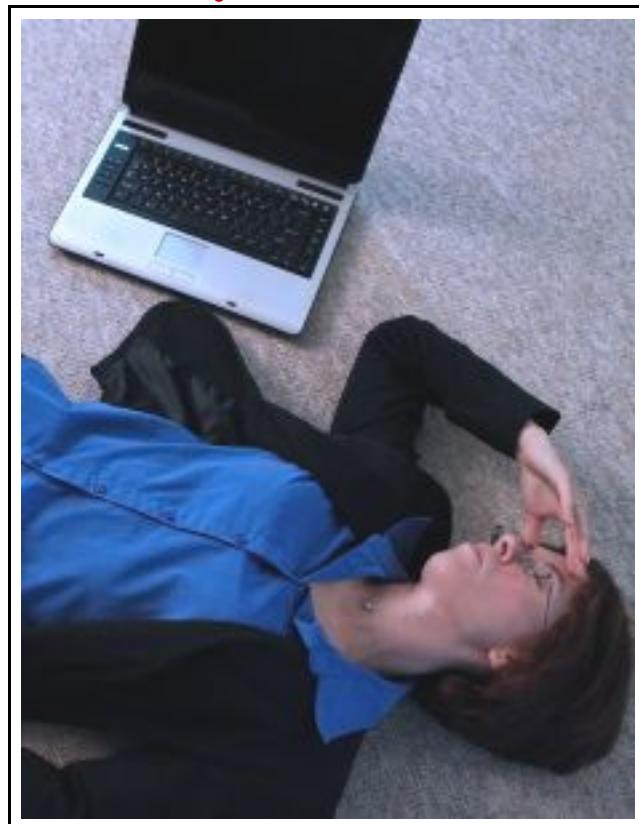
your sleeve, and you pray someone will say you're good enough.

And even when you do find success, because you've faced rejection ninety percent of the time, you find it hard to pat yourself on the back and say you're good enough *this time*.

You face a new project, and you wonder if you've fooled someone the other ten percent of the time. You tell yourself that your success was just a fluke, a one-time deal. This time, they'll see. *They'll know.*

This self-doubt is a twist on the moral of the *Emperor's New Clothes*. You know the childhood story, a Hans Christian Andersen classic. The vain emperor orders tailors to fit him with a new outfit. They convince him they've woven the most beautiful clothing, except they've woven nothing. They convince him that those who don't "see" the clothing are idiots. Except now, as a creative person, you wonder if you are not only the weavers but the emperor, as well. You fear that you're vain if you think your work is fabulous, and you fear that you're one of the tailors who have woven something that is sheer fabrication, worthless, and not fit to be seen.

How do you overcome this? You don't. But you can press on.



Or how about this:

1. Set two first draft writing goals: a short-term goal (words per day or hours per day) and a long-term goal (how many days, months, years to completion) and stick to those goals. **Be reasonable. Make achievable goals.** Don't convince yourself that you can write 5,000 words a day or write a 500 page book in 8 weeks. You will probably fail.

2. Visualize the end result. **I close my eyes and envision** a movie of how people will react positively when they receive and read my work. I replay this movie often in my head.

3. Give yourself a reward when you reach your long-term goal: chocolate, the time to read a good book, a nice dinner out, a good firm



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 Hallie Ephron
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18 Aug

She's writing like a demon and sharing her insights Hank Phillipi Ryan @JungleReds tinyurl.com/oglz8l5 and... fb.me/tPFz9EM7

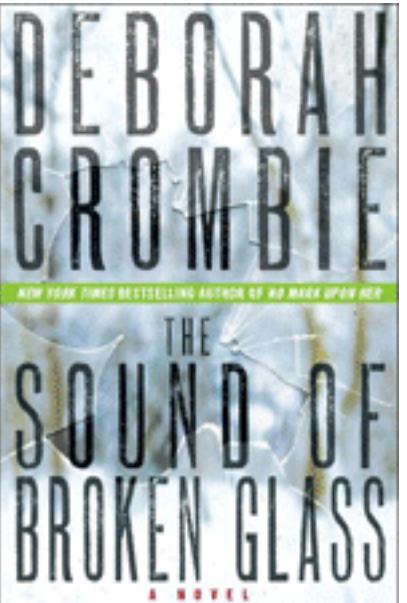
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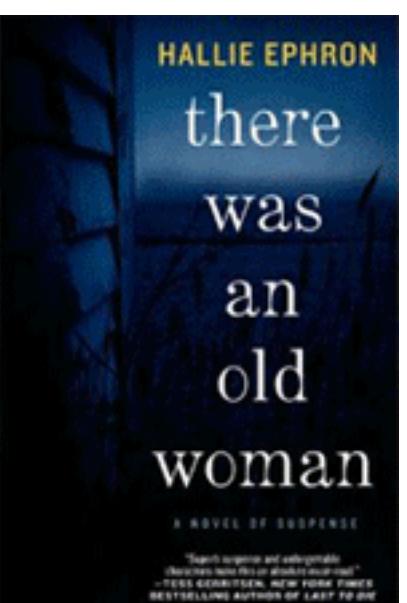
13 Aug

WHoo hoo! Look! @HankPRyan 's WHAT YOU SEE on @MacmillanLib Fave list for Oct. #Libraryreads! @LibraryReads99

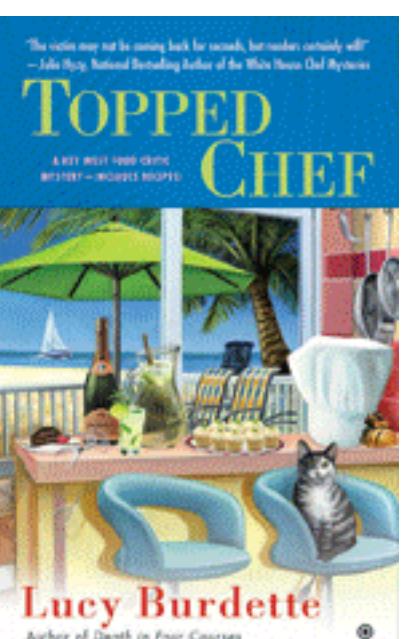
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Deborah Crombie



Hallie Ephron



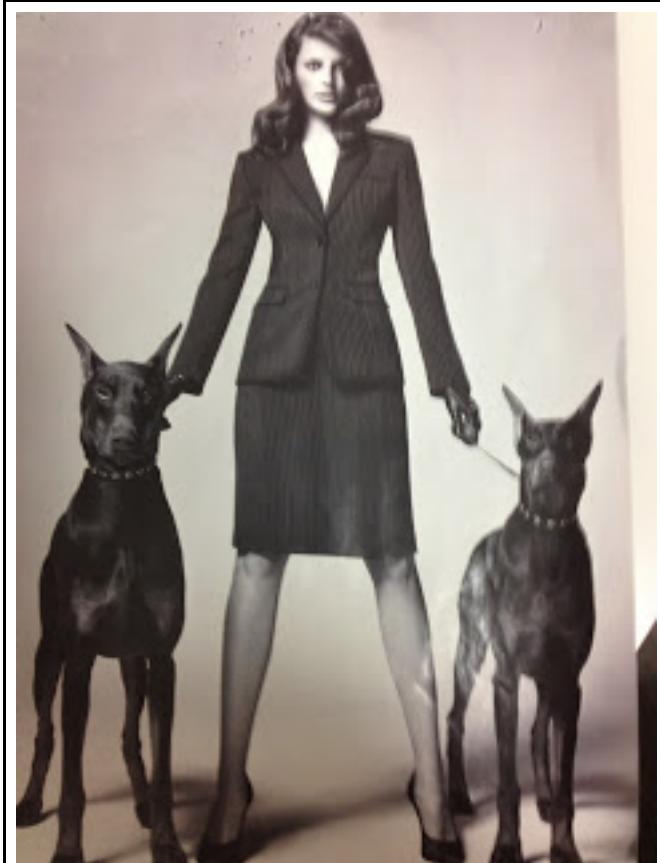
pat on the back for a job well done. **Okay, you can give yourself rewards** for mini-goals, too. Sometimes you need those.

Lucy Burdette

As an author, I sit down at my computer each day and try to fashion something new, unique, fun, challenging, or enlightening. Not everything I write is good. In fact, most days I think it stinks. I've been told by my husband that I always feel this way until the entire manuscript (short story, screenplay, blog) is complete and I've sent it off. And then I start all over again, at the beginning, questioning my talent and my worth.

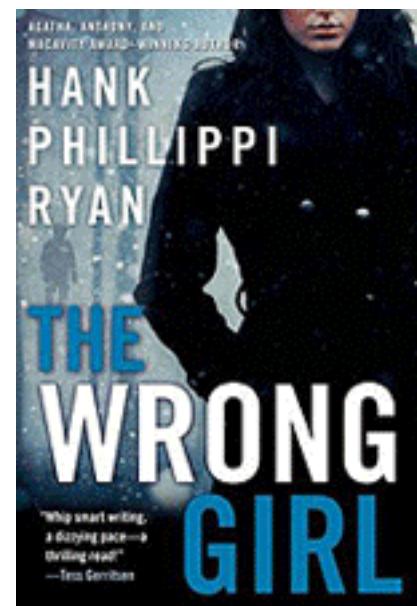
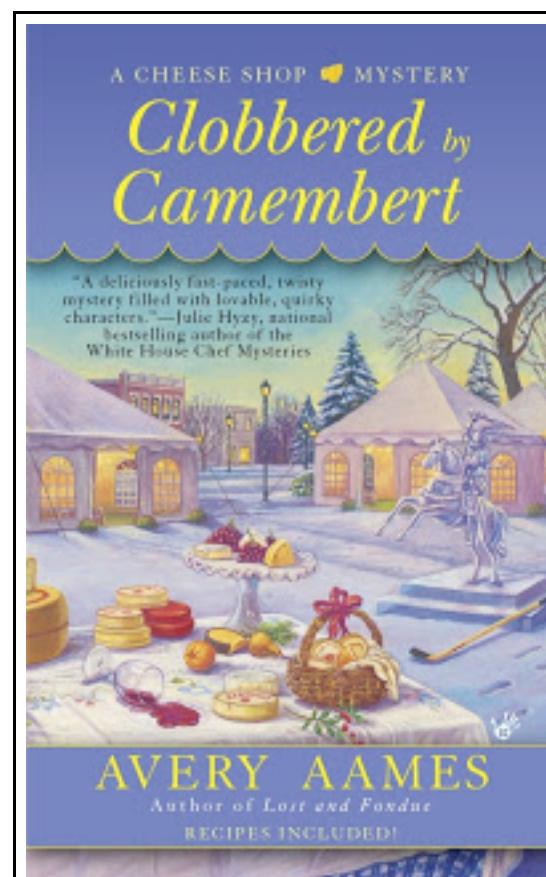
All I can say to you is believe in yourself. Because you are your own worst enemy, you must be your own best cheerleader. Believe in yourself. Find sayings each day that will spur you on. Turn to a friend or a loved one for positive feedback. Call on a higher power if that will help. [It helps me.]

HANK: Sigh. I have a motto on my bulletin board: "What would you attempt to do if you could not fail?" **On the other hand, I've also posted this photo which I tore out of Vogue.**

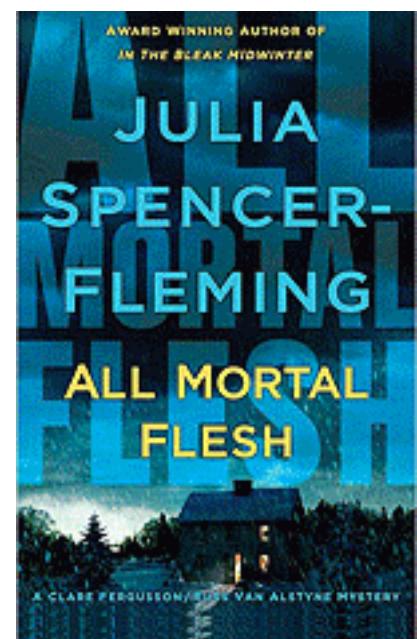


**What's your secret to staying positive?
A copy of Clobbered by Camembert,
Avery's newest, to one lucky
commenter!**

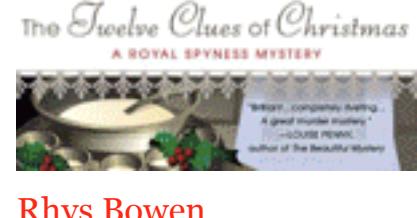
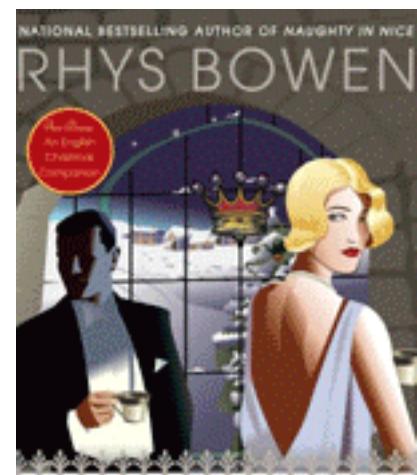
So I use what I need.



Hank Phillippi Ryan



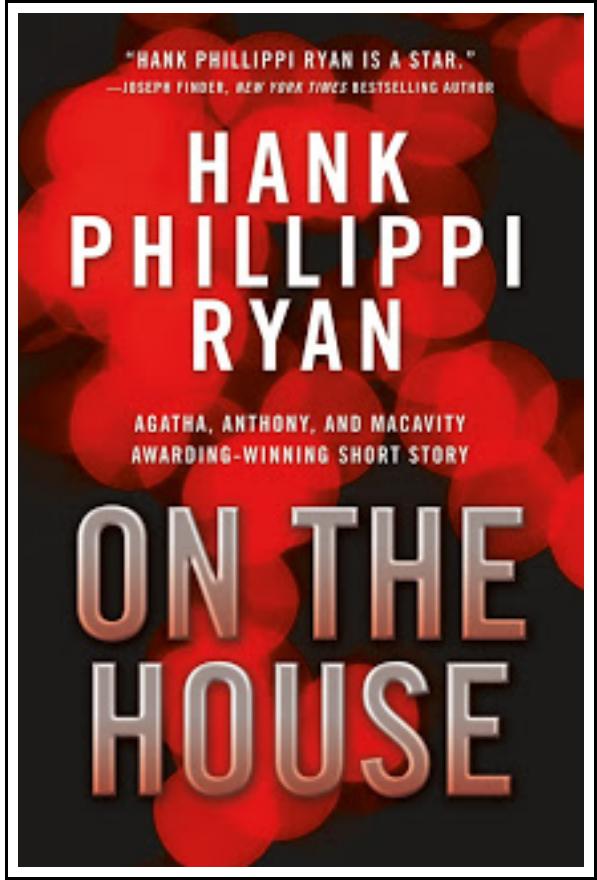
Julia Spencer-Fleming



Rhys Bowen



Susan Elia MacNeal



Don't forget my offer of a Kindle, nook, or \$100 gift certificate to the bookstore of your choice! Click here for details!

<http://hankphillippryan.com/newsletter-7-12.html>

Avery Aames is the pseudonym for [Daryl Wood Gerber](#). As Avery, she writes the nationally bestselling **A Cheese Shop Mystery Series**. The first in the series, **The Long Quiche Goodbye**, won the Agatha Award for best first novel. The series is set in the quaint, fictional town of Providence, Ohio, and features Charlotte Bessette, a feisty cheese shop owner with a colorful extended family. Daryl writes short stories, the latest, "**Palace on the Lake**" has been nominated for numerous awards, and she has a new mystery series debuting in July 2013, **The Cookbook Nook mysteries**. This new cozy mystery series features Jenna Hart, an avid reader, admitted foodie, and owner of a cookbook store in picturesque coastal California.

POSTED BY JUNGLE RED WRITERS AT 1:00 AM



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LABELS: [AVERY AAMES](#), [CHEESE](#), [DARYL WOOD GERBER](#), [FREE BOOK](#), [MYSTERY SERIES](#), [MYSTERY WRITING](#), [SETTING GOALS](#), [WRITING INSPIRATION](#)

43 COMMENTS:



[Edith Maxwell](#) said...

I am blessed with the positivity gene, so it's easy for me. Which is not to say that I don't have those emperor feelings along the way!

I like the visualization tip, Daryl/Avery. I also know that when I make time to sit in meditation every day for even as short a period as 15 minutes, it keeps the rest of the day on a much more even keel. Of course, I rarely make the time...

Can't wait to read Clobbered! Such a great series, and I look forward to your new series, too.

[JULY 27, 2012 AT 5:46 AM](#)

Gram said...

I remind myself how lucky I am and why I feel that way! Dee

[JULY 27, 2012 AT 5:58 AM](#)

[Susan](#) said...

Most posts are just ok..This was Different..The Nitty Gritty of what You all go through .. Yes Authors are our Rock Stars..I always appreciate the Honesty..Now HPR..I think the Vogue pic is interesting .. I thought for sure you would include Shoes as well...Thanks Avery/Daryl..So many hats that you wear...

[JULY 27, 2012 AT 6:06 AM](#)



Kaye Barley joins us the first Sunday of each month!

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Jungle Red Writers has been named one of the top 50 mystery blogs by [CourtReporter](#) and one of the top 100 creative writing blogs by [Best Colleges Online](#)

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Lucy Burdette said...

Great post Avery/Daryl! you can become a sports psychologist if the writing thing doesn't work out--just kidding because you are fabulous!

By the way Reds, Avery's book cover was flashed up on THE CHEW last week--hurray, such fun to see it there!

Hank, the picture is hysterical:). I love all those tips--short term REASONABLE goals--yes! long-term BIG goals--yes, but then put those aside and don't try to think of them every day. For instance, I had the new york times bestseller list posted on the wall behind my computer forever! but if I thought about that every time I sat down to write, I'd be paralyzed!

thanks for coming Daryl--can't wait for the new series!!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 6:37 AM

 Kaye Barley said...

Yippee! Avery/Daryl, Hey! How fun to drop by here this morning and see your beautiful smiling face!

I love your attitude.

I think I'm a fairly positive person - at least most of the time. One thing I do to help me with this is try to keep negative people out of my life. If I can't keep them entirely out of my life, I do a damn good job of keeping them pretty far away.

Hank - I love this picture!!! I want to be that woman. And Harley, I'm sure, wants to be one of those dogs.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 6:53 AM

Kathy Lynn Emerson said...

Great post ladies. But surely you have your Agatha teapots in plain sight!!! I know I find mine reassuring when I think my day's work is crappy. It doesn't even matter that mine is for nonfiction and I'm struggling with the next Kaitlyn Dunnett mystery.

Kathy/Kaitlyn

JULY 27, 2012 AT 7:36 AM

Joan Emerson said...

This is some of the greatest advice on the planet . . . thanks so much, Daryl/Avery, for sharing your wise thoughts.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 7:50 AM

 Linda Rodriguez said...

Great advice, Daryl! I think the only difference between prolific authors and those who can't seem to finish anything is the ability of the successful writer to use techniques like these to keep the self-doubt at bay.

Hank, I love your photo! That's a powerful woman! xoxo

JULY 27, 2012 AT 8:04 AM

 Hank Phillippi Ryan said...

Dee, that's brilliant. And very wise.

Susan, thank you! Yeah, it makes me realize we have power.

Yes, well, the teapots. I do pay homage every day, I must admit!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 8:47 AM

- November (29)
- October (31)
- September (28)
- August (31)
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 - Why writing is not an Olympic event
 - Never admit your road to inner peace
 - Your Name Here
 - Secrets of the Notebooks!
 - Whose Idea Was THIS?
 - Five ways to KILL Suspense
 - The Secret Notebooks
 - Reviewing the Situation
 - Drives You Crazy?
 - Celebrating Nora's Salmon Mousse
 - On Wearing Our Miles Well...
 - Police Procedure II: Making It Believable
 - Police Procedure: 5 Ways We Get It Wrong
 - The Two-Piece Lament... Or Just Say 'No' to the Ta...
 - Carrie Bebris and Jane Austen Make Mysteries
 - Can you walk and chew gum?
 - Flipping for Flops
 - The Mystery of the Missing Character: a guest blog...
 - Thrilling Weather, a guest post by Paul Doiron
 - Captain, My Captain, a guest blog by Megan Abbott
 - Gone Missing in Amish Country, a guest blog by Lin...
 - "Like an Eagle in a Dove-Cote" - Gregg Hurwitz on ...
 - Real Life Thrillers, starring - The Reds!
 - THRILLER FEST
 - GETTING TO THE END
 - JON LAND: STRONG VENGEANCE
 - JAMES ROLLINS: BLOODLINE
 - FAVE 4ths!
 - JEFF ABBOTT: THE LAST MINUTE
 - THRILLERS TO MOVIES
 - Give me a head with hair...



Tammy said...

Hank, I have the same motto on a paperweight. It's part of what inspired me to start writing fiction in the first place.

Daryl, good to see you here! I do a couple things to keep myself focused and keep the inner critic out. One is focus on baby steps, not climbing the mountain (like Daryl says, reasonable goals). The other is to chant "fix it later, get it down now," until the draft is done. At that point, I say "you did that much, you can't turn back now!"

I also remind myself of all the extremely successful people who doubt themselves and know that I'm at least in good company. Somehow knowing there's never a time when it'll be easy or feel good helps me carry on in spite of my doubts. "Keep calm and carry on?"

JULY 27, 2012 AT 8:51 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Oh, I love all these comments.

Edith, that fifteen minute meditation can be a lifesaver sometimes. I find that I can often do that while driving in my car. When I lived in NY, I would take that time on the bus. I would even listen to a meditation tape, just to clear my head. Great tip!

Dee, to remind yourself how lucky you are. Another great tip. It's like those lists we used to make: what I like about "him" what I don't like about "him". We need those lucky lists in our head. Blessings!

Susan, I love the term nitty gritty. We do have to face the nitty gritty, don't we? And when we do it's not so nitty and not so gritty. One day at a time. Did you ever see the movie "What about Bob?" I loved the whole idea of baby steps!!

~Daryl aka Avery

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:14 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Hank...the shoes. Susan's right. You are a shoe gal! Have you been watching Nancy Martin's posts on pink? I think of all my fashion savvy friends, like you, Hank, and wish there was time to go shopping. But then who needs a party dress at a computer? LOL

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:15 AM

Lucy Burdette said...

Tammy and Linda, you are so right! Kathy, for those of us without a teapot (yet), we can always find something positive to focus on--note from a fan? photo of something cool from the writers' life? something!

And if all else fails, use Hallie's best line ever: HOLD YOUR NOSE AND WRITE!

That's what I'm doing this morning:)

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:17 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Lucy, I'm blushing with the pats for becoming a sports psychologist. I play golf and I have to constantly be my own psychologist on the course...and there are days I fail!!! It's the same with writing...days I fail. I know what you mean about getting stymied if I looked at an NYT sign every day. I don't have one of those. That could truly freeze me. If...a girl can hope. But when? Nope, I can't count on that. :) Hugs.

Kaye - I like the idea of keeping the negative people out, but sometimes we can't do that, so I do focus on trying to give negative people a positive push and definitely keep at arms' length. :)

- June (29)
- May (31)
- April (31)
- March (31)
- February (29)
- January (31)

- 2011 (347)
- 2010 (262)
- 2009 (204)
- 2008 (169)
- 2007 (62)

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Kathy - yes, my teapot in plain sight. It's on a bookshelf between my kitchen and living room. I see it EVERY day. (For those who aren't sure what that is, it's the award handed out at the Agathas). Good writing to you!

~Daryl aka Avery

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:20 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Joan, I'm not sure about this being the best advice on the planet...but it works for me. Glad to pass it on.

Linda, absolutely right. Keeping self-doubt at bay is the trick. There are days I post notes all over the house to battle self-doubt. And almost always self-doubt happens in the MIDDLE of a manuscript. Now, why is that?

Hank, I agree re: the picture. Great one.

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:22 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Tammy, love that. "Keep calm and carry on." Sounds like a song that will lead us into war, doesn't it? I'm humming.

Lucy: Hold your nose and write! That's good. I'm doing that, too. I'm working on a thriller in-between cozy book deliveries and I had gotten it "all" down on paper a year ago. Well, it stinks. So it needs a lot of work, but the characters are again coming alive and that is soooooo fun! But I need a nose clip for some of it. Ha-ha!

~Daryl aka Avery

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:24 AM

Deb said...

Hi Daryl/Avery (Do you ever get confused???) Such helpful advice, as I'm doing revisions on the book I just finished three weeks ago, as well as trying to set up reasonable goals that will actually get the NEXT book finished on schedule.

Funnily enough, the only time the self-doubt doesn't bother me is when I'm actually writing. I don't mean I think every word I'm putting down is brilliant--my mantra is Nora Robert's "bad words are better than no words"--but just that I get lost in the story and that keeps the wolves at bay, at least temporarily.

Hank, love the photo!!! Maybe you should send us all copies:-)

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:31 AM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

Yeah, we all need a good power-photo from time to time.

I'm in the cutting stages of the book! Which is fun, actually, because it certainly is easier to cut than to create! However. I need to cut 20,000 words. Can you believe it?

Even if I slash every "just" and "well" and "of course" that's not gonna be enough, I fear..

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:50 AM

Linda Rodriguez said...

Hank, I routinely leave all cutting for the end of mine and usually have to cut about 20,000 words. I treat the book as if it were a giant poem, going over it line-by-line. When you're revising poetry, every line, every image, every word has to earn its own way. It's a slow way to work, but I think it gives me a chance to make the language sing. Good luck! xoxo

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:57 AM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

Linda, so wise. Yes, I say to myself: Why is this here? What does it do?

Does it advance the story?

And if no--then it goes. And I never regret it. The shorter version is ALWAYS better.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 9:59 AM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Deb, yes, I get confused sometimes. But my husband seems to like being married to two women, except when I'm talking out loud to Avery...or Daryl...and he's not sure if I'm talking to him. Verrrrry confusing.

Hank, isn't it funny the list of words we KNOW we shouldn't use and yet they make it into a first and so on draft? Good luck. 20K That's a lot!

Linda, writing poetry...I never could do that. But looking at your finished MS like a poem, that's a fascinating study in discipline. Thanks for sharing.

~Daryl aka Avery

JULY 27, 2012 AT 10:05 AM

Julia said...

Great advice, Daryl. When I teach, I always tell my students, "Give yourself permission to write crap." Because a) if it really is terrible writing, you can always edit it into shape and b) the next day, you often discover it wasn't so bad after all!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 11:17 AM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

I've never seen it fail, Julia--you are so right! It's NEVER as bad as we think it is.

But since we clearly know that, why don't we simply believe it AS we write?

JULY 27, 2012 AT 11:19 AM

Deb Romano said...

Daryl/Avery:

Various sources have been recommending your books for a long time now. I have been unsuccessful in finding them! I will try again and if necessary will ask the store to order for me. I definitely feel as though I have been missing something good!

EVERYBODY can use your advice about positive thinking! I have been meditating for a long time now but often feel as though I haven't gotten anything out of it. Then someone will tell me "you are so much calmer than you used to be!" So I guess there are long term benefits to whatever methods we use for trying to become - or remain - positive. (I still feel like I need to work on it:-)

JULY 27, 2012 AT 11:28 AM

Deb Romano said...

Julia,

The book I won arrived. Thank you! I can't wait to get into it. Vacation starts a week from today and I will force myself to save it for then! I have no plans other than to work on my TBR pile!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 11:32 AM

Leslie Budewitz said...

"Because you are your own worst enemy, you must be your own best cheerleader."

LOVE THIS, Daryl! Many thanks!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 11:47 AM

Lisa Alber said...

Hi Daryl,

Thank you for your words of wisdom! I also love the line about being our best cheerleaders. That's key, it seems to me.

Unfortunately, I wouldn't say I'm naturally optimistic...I get really down sometimes. But I have a quote from a workshop teacher (Elizabeth George) hanging on my bulletin board in which she told me I had talent...

Also, I revel in the little compliments that come my way. I don't take them for granted. The latest example: a writer friend who read my first three chapters to provide feedback and afterwards asked if she could read the entire manuscript as a reader--just cuz she'd like what she'd read so much. Now that was a compliment!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:25 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Julia, sometimes giving yourself permission simply to write can be a challenge, don't you think? Thanks for chiming in!

~Daryl aka Avery

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:39 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Hank, great question. Don't you think that this is a result of bad programming over the years? If we were too confident, we would be egotists. ;)

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:41 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Deb, you can go to my website and find all sorts of places to get my books on the "books" page. And, yes, you might not FEEL the results of meditation, but others will notice. Keep at it. Life is a process.

Hugs

Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:43 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Leslie, you bet!! Hugs

Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:44 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Lisa, that is great!! Always when someone wants to continue reading makes an author feel great. Love it.

Go, girl!

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:46 PM

Linda Rodriguez said...

I think if we felt our stuff was great "from the get-go," as my grandmother would say, we'd be some of those sad folks who are publishing their first drafts and getting in public, online fights when reviewers don't like their books.

Part of what makes us good writers is that we know it can always be better--and it's never as good as it was in our minds when we first conceived it.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:46 PM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

Hank to meditation teacher: Am I doing it? Is this right? Am I good? How good am I? Am I the BEST?

MT: It's all fine. No matter how you do it, just do it, its fine.

Hank: But I mean, there must be a RIGHT way, the best way. How do I do that?

MT: You'll find your way. Just listen to me, take it in, let it out. It's not a contest to see who can be best.

Hank: Huh? I've been doing this for TWO WHOLE DAYS and I don't feel any different.

MT: Just wait and see.

Hank: HOW LONG??

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:47 PM

Karen in Ohio said...

Edith, I think you're onto something, vis a vis the positivity gene. Some of us have it, and some are cursed with its polar opposite, it seems.

Luckily, I must have the positivity one, and have always expected the best possible outcome from every action. Maybe it is as much a self-fulfilling prophecy deal as anything else, but it works for me.

Daryl, I've seen you at a couple of author/reader events, and you always, always have a gigantic smile. It's hard to imagine you ever not feeling positive, with such a sunny outlook. Look forward to reading this next book!

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:56 PM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

Ah, Karen, I think one key to positivity is that you never know what's really "good" until later. So we just--see.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 12:58 PM

Leslie Budewitz said...

Oh, Hank, too funny. I think we have the same teacher. :)

JULY 27, 2012 AT 1:51 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Linda, Amen!!

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 2:21 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Hank, I'm rolling on the floor laughing. We are SO alike!!!!

~Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 2:24 PM

Linda Rodriguez said...

Oh, Hank, you just made me snort water through my nose! I think a lot of us are like that. I know I am.

A therapist friend who tried to teach me meditation once told me I had the common problem of the gifted

child. I always wanted to be the best one in the class/room, and no matter what I did, I always thought there was a way to be the best. "Sometimes there's no best, Linda. Sometimes there's just being." And in my head I'm finishing her sentence "... the best."

JULY 27, 2012 AT 2:28 PM

Lucy Burdette said...

Hank: I will be happy to take those 20,000 words. that's just about what I need. Now.

JULY 27, 2012 AT 3:19 PM

Avery Aames a.k.a. Daryl Wood Gerber said...

Linda, I think that "best vs. being" thing is common to creative people. I know I suffer (ed) the same syndrome. I had a friend in college who asked if I could just "be" and I truly didn't know (until much later) what she meant. I have always tried to do my best, much to my nervous system's detriment. :)

Daryl

JULY 27, 2012 AT 5:06 PM

Hank Phillipi Ryan said...

They call it "monkey mind." I have it.

Don't forget to come back tomorrow for more of John Curran! He promises to tell us more of Agatha Christie's secrets..and says he has special info just for us..

JULY 27, 2012 AT 6:31 PM

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