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Reading: Janet Berlo Chapter

What to discuss? Writer's block.

About writer's block in the middle of a book. Something I experienced this year.

We'll come back to this later. But we'll start with writer's block at the beginning of a project, or before a project even exists, first.

These exercises are great for when you're not sure what you want to write about, you don't find any of your ideas interesting, or you have no ideas.

Tools:

- Brainstorming
- Listing
- Mind map
- Free association
- Google search

Topics to Practice:

- A broken promise
- Red
- You're in the back seat of a taxi
- Road maps
- A pair of shoes

What to do with this stuff? Reading from *Every Day Creative Writing*

Resources:

- *Every Day Creative Writing* by Michael C. Smith and Suzanne Greenberg
- *What If?* by Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter
- *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron

2. To loosen up and get the pen (or keyboard) warmed up when the blank page is daunting.

Tools:

- Sound of writing
- Free writing
- Talking into a voice recorder
- Writing it in a letter or email
- Thinking and making file folders to collect your thoughts

Topics to Practice:

- A holiday memory
- Breakfast
- My dog
- In a cemetery
- Something you forgot

Exercise: Being Gorgeous from *Steering the Craft*

Resources:

- *Steering the Craft* by Ursula K. Le Guin
- *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg
- *The Art of the Book Proposal* by Eric Maisel

3. What to do when a project is stalled?

Deadline? Just do it. Even if it sucks. You can always edit it.

No deadline? Maybe the project is not ready to be written. Can you work on something else? Or can you work on a different part of the project?

A big project that is overwhelming, work on some small side projects so you're still writing while you are doing research or editing or just mulling over the big project.

Tools:

- Everything we've done already
- Outlining – not the 1. A. 1. a. kind, lists the information you want to cover; it's easier if you use a computer because you can rearrange things
- Index cards – write random thoughts on the topic that you can organize later
- Bird by bird – Pick a small part of the topic and write everything you know about it in no particular order and without trying to sound good, just do a brain dump on the page
- What happens next? Don't worry about the big picture, just write the next thing

Topics to Practice:

- How to wash a car
- Making a cake
- Folding laundry
- Vacation
- Your back yard

What to do with this stuff? Reading from *The Art of the Book Proposal*

Resources:

- *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott
- *Quilting Lessons* by Janet Catherine Berlo
- *The Courage to Write* by Ralph Keyes