

Concept

a powerful, intriguing, inspiring, or perhaps odd idea distilled to its essential elements

It's Wednesday morning and you're at Starbucks staring at the glowing blank screen of your laptop. It has been... what?... three or four days since you've made any progress on your novel. Oh, sure. You rewrote that scene with Mackenzie and Grey in the art gallery, and you thought about the speech you'll give at the book signing. But you know, deep down, in that dark walk-in freezer of fear, that you haven't made any *real* progress. A novel? What folly! What conceit!

You look over at a woman sitting nearby enjoying her latte and reading a paperback. *She's* probably not consumed with writing a novel. Why can't you be like her, instead of sitting here every morning trying to make characters you've never met speak dialogue you've never heard?

Because... well... because you love this. You really do. When the words are working and the characters are coming to life and when meaningful human drama is playing out on your computer screen, you know there's nothing—*nothing*—you'd rather be doing. You can't stop. Not now. The only way to write a novel is to... well... write a novel. The writing itself tells you who your characters are, what they do, and whether the plot is working. You can't know that without writing.

You really can't.

So, you look back at your computer screen, take the last sip of your now-cold latte, and begin to write. Slowly at first. You feel the fear, the dread, the doubt, but you keep writing anyway. You keep writing and writing and writing. Eventually, the momentum picks up and without even thinking about it, you suddenly know exactly how to get Grey and Mackenzie out of the art gallery and up the mountain. You had no idea that is how the scene would progress. The words are now coming faster than you can type. How cool is this?

It's very cool.

Why do you write? people ask me. Because I'm not anywhere near whole if I don't.

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How to Write Your First Novel

You Know You're Thinking About It.



By Shari Caudron