

# Confessions

A photograph of a white coffee mug on a desk. The mug is the central focus, with a white handle on the left. In the background, there are several sheets of paper, some with text and some with illustrations. A blue pen is visible in the foreground. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting a quiet workspace.

## of a Freelance Writer

an eBook by  
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**Confessions of a Freelance Writer**

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## Confessions from a Freelance Writer

*How I launched a successful freelance writing career and thoughts on how you can begin your own journey to freelance writing success.*

My first confession – I want to be an author.

I have always wanted to use words for a living and I spent most of my life dreaming of being an author. I wanted to craft stories that would capture the hearts of readers and force them to horde – and to share – because I think that is the ultimate goal of authors.

I wrote stories and plays growing up. I wrote letters to anyone not standing next to me. I shared words all the time. I found ways to give words away and enjoyed the reactions that came when others interacted with those words.

I wrote a short story with a specific magazine in mind. I had found the “writer guidelines” in one of the editions I had been reading and I knew it was my time. I made sure the manuscript was perfect and even made a copy just in case something happened to the original.

It took a few weeks, but the response soon arrived. “Please attach a release from a parent or guardian.” I think that’s what it said, but what I read included some snide remark about how it was not even worth the bother to try again because they would never publish it.

My imagination did not always work for the light side of things.

I took exactly ONE writing class in college and that was not a pretty experience either. I have never been one to crawl into a box, so I had a hard time trying to make my words fit in the one that the professor had constructed.

I came to the obvious conclusion that I had no right to write.

*Challenge One: What do you want? What is the reason behind your writing?*

My heart felt dream to write refused to die even if the motivation to pursue that dream had crumbled into dust. I now had to suppress those dreams about being an author. I had to find a real, reliable path. It hurt me to look at my annuals because people had written about me being an author one day. I packed them away and pushed forward.

My love of words found an outlet. I started pursuing words again as a paying hobby. It paid little, but it did pay. The more I did the more I found I could do. I began pursuing a freelance writing career and before long I was bringing in enough income to support our home.

The accountant labeled me a writer, mainly because I refused to accept the idea of being an author. But I couldn't take the label no matter what her form said. I had my first novel – incomplete – hiding in my desk drawer. It had been started on a typewriter before that first rejection letter showed up in the mail.

If I wanted to break free then I had to do something and I knew what I had to do. I sat down and transposed the typewritten pages into my computer. The characters came to life again and I wrote some more words. Every day I made time to write some more words into that long ignored manuscript and before long it was complete.

I wrapped up my new treasure and I sent it to the one agent I KNEW I had to have representing me. Weeks passed without a response. Months passed without a response. The letter finally came. "Oops. Your manuscript was lost in the slush pile for a year. I like the story but I am not sure about the tense you chose."

It was another rejection letter and it was full of false hope and possibility that could easily turn out to be nothing more than a shimmering mirage. I pondered for months about whether he would take me on if I rewrote the book from a different tense. I considered ignoring his advice and pressing on in my "never settle for in the box" journey – even if he was one of the industry's TOP literary agents. After all, he had no idea who I was and what I was meant to be . . . I was supposed to be an author.

I heeded the advice of others that wrote and listened to that agent. I set about the task of rewriting the entire manuscript from a different tense (which is not as easy as it might sound). The editing took longer than writing the manuscript because there were still so much jumbled up tenses – yes, my novel was too tense.

I never sent the manuscript back out to the agent. Part of me worried about him bashing the novel. The other part of me had no desire to wait another year to see life come to the manuscript. I did my due diligence and discovered the rise of the “Indie Author.”

My first novel was published in 2012, and I have followed it with additional novels, non-fiction and devotional books. Every time I finish a story, I get a little giddy. As long as I continue to feel that excitement and joy then I will continue to share the words.

It was one thing to write the words, although finishing that first novel was more of a challenge than I ever imagined. Once I had it under my belt, completing more seemed like a cake walk.

The trouble – especially for my husband who was trying to be supportive in this leap – was the return on investment for each word I produces. I was putting out a lot of words but the results were not filling up the checking account.

I turned to the internet to expand my writing income possibilities.

This leads me to my second confession – I am not an expert, but I write like one on the internet.

I can blame my husband for this gift. I started writing for regular income by creating forum posts. I was paid a total of \$.15 per post I wrote. I made sure that I only chose topics that I knew upside one side and down the other, but that limited my income. My husband watched me one night and made a comment that hit me like a ton of bricks. “You can learn enough to write 20 words about anything.”

He was right. I had been sticking to my comfort zone because I wanted to be certain to give information that would help the reader. I thought long and hard about what he said. The only reason I could write

about the subjects I was choosing was because I had learned. I decided that I could invest a little time and learn about others subjects as well.

Expanding my forum posts led to other writing opportunities creating full blog posts which led to larger content contracts with clients. I was writing despite the fact that my writing education consisted of exactly ONE poetry class. The more I learned the more I wrote and the more I wrote the more topics I was willing to test.

*Challenge Two: What can you write? Make a list of all the things you have studied (from secondary education to college courses); make a list of all the things you enjoy doing; make a list of all the courses you have taken; make a list of all the things that others ask you about; make a list of all the things you would like to learn more about. These lists are just the tip of the iceberg of the topics you can tackle.*

When I was at the peak of my content writing, it became a running joke that if you brought up a topic I had probably written about it on the internet. I wrote about weather for a travel blog, cremation services for a funeral home, and even Auburn football – and that is only brushing the surface of the topics that I covered.

Most of the writing that I did for others was ghost writing, but some of them provided a byline (I considered a byline bonus pay). I learned that most tech topics and other advance subjects were best left to the true professionals and experts in that field, but if I could come at a topic from a basic view or IMO slant then I was ready to tackle anything.

I found that I could invest some time researching the topic and then from that research I could formulate a solid article that was helpful for the readers but was unique from the other articles already available.

My magic formula for building monetary success with content writing was my ability to research combined with my willingness to try. Before too long I had built up a five figure income that allowed my husband to walk away from a job that was making him miserable.

Despite the success that I had as a content writer and even the fact that I had published books (one of which has been in the Top Ten on Amazon), I still struggled to live out my dream of being a writer.

People would ask me what I did and I would tell them I wrote, but I would never announce that I was a writer. It would be even tougher when I was facing people that had known me all my life.

“I am a writer” seemed arrogant and prideful. “I am an author” seemed like an impossibility (short of a publisher tackling me at a writers conference – which I still believed possible). It was better to say nothing at all than to proclaim something that was more than what I was.

I attended a writers conference and the keynote speaker was Vanessa Davis Griggs. She changed my life. She had all of us repeat these words, “I am a writer.” And she had us do it loud and proud. And she had us say it more than once.

The more I let the words out of my mouth, the more natural they became. I may not be a traditionally published author today. I may not be a New York Times Top Author today. I may not meet your definition of writer or author or professional but that is fine with me.

No matter what you say or do, the truth remains the same. I am a writer. I am an author. Your ideas or the world’s opinions will never change that.

My third confession – I AM a writer.

*Challenge Three: Go to the mirror and tell yourself – out loud – I AM AWRITER. Make a habit of saying it every morning and every night until you believe it.*

Despite having made that claim to others, on my website, and even on my business card, there are still times when I slip back into the “I am not good enough” stage.

Another writing friend recently shared, “I am writing words but those words are not producing the fruit I expected.” I get it. I live it. There are struggle moments in my journey when I live that flash of panic at least once a day.



I started pursuing a life of words ten years ago and that means that words are the foundation of my job, my ministry, and my journey.

My fourth confession as a freelance writer – I HAVE to make money.

I love sharing words – in print and in person. I get energized when I have the opportunity to offer words of inspiration and encouragement. Pouring out words to others – especially when there is a positive response – ignites my desire to pour out words.

Only, I'm not just an author or a writer but writing is my profession. Writing is what I do for a full-time career. I have to find ways to turn the words into an income without losing the integrity of why I share those words.

Writing opportunities have been up and down for me – some months I have several clients and some months I cross my toes and fingers in the hope that the bottom line will not overtake me.

*Challenge Four: Set a budget – do you know how much income you need to bring in to cover the supplies of your writing, the fees and costs of memberships and events; and ultimately pay yourself (to cover your monthly living expenses).*

There was a time when I thought that writing for others restricted my creative license. I was being forced to write about a particular topic in a particular way. I realized that even if I write “for myself,” I am still restricting my writing to particular topics in a particular voice. I am a client as well.

That understanding opened my eyes to the value that came from meeting a particular word count and a particular deadline. It also forced me to find new ways to say old things or creative spins on worn down topics. In other words, the more “in the box” I thought I was becoming because of clients, the more “out of the box” they were forcing my writing to become.

I have learned that writing for an income can be just as creative as writing for self. And let's face it, getting a check for the effort is definitely positive affirmation.

The driving force for my words is not the money – not on most days and not for prolonged spells. The worst times in my writing career came when the money was the top factor. I HATED writing because I felt I had to do it rather than I wanted to do it.

The money still is a factor, but it is not the most important factor. It is becoming more of a benefit that a driving force.

Confession number five of this freelance writer – I write because I have a heart to write.

Keeping my heart as the driving force behind the words makes all the difference. I choose clients because I believe that I can write words to inform, educate, or encourage their readers. I choose topics because I believe that I have a unique viewpoint or voice to tackle those topics. I choose stories to share because those stories stir me as well.

The old writing saying goes something like this, “Writing is easy. Just open a vein and let the words pour out.” I understand that to some degree because writing, for me, should be a heart issue. I am pouring out an element of who I am and what I am every time I put words on paper.

The words will continue to spill out as long as the heart continues to be the focus. I will find a way to tell the story, share the topic, or define the goal when my heart drives the momentum.

The struggles come when I try to do things outside of my heart. I write for others, and sometimes those topics are so random it hurts. I have to force myself to get the words down and because it is a chore I avoid it until the deadline crashes in on me (which only makes me dread it even more).

I still write for other clients, but I try to choose topics that are close to my own heart or else limit the project time or amount for the random topics. I have to know my heart if I am going to continue to make a way for the words to flow.

*Challenge Five: Know your why – begin defining your focused purpose for writing – the heart reason that you are putting words to paper.*

Knowing self is important for all aspects of my freelance writing journey. Every person I encounter has a thought on how I should precede. They want to tell me what I should do (and usually what I have done that is wrong).

Even those with successful careers under their belts are not in a position to predict my journey. Sometimes I wish they were. It would be easier if someone could hand me the “ABC” manual or easy button- of course then everyone would be doing it. Everyone is not doing it, so there must be a little bit more to IT.

My sixth confession as a freelance writer – I have to take time to define success for myself. My journey is unique to me but I will never understand that journey if I never take the time to define it.

Each year I write out my goals – for the year, for the next five years, and for the next ten years. I do not ask others about those goals. I do not request “markers” for what is expected or accepted. I think about where I want to be and then I put that down.

*Challenge Six: Define your success – Write out a one to three sentence describing what success looks and feels like for you.*

I define my success – not the world or the industry. If I don’t take the time to do that – to define what I consider success - then I give that power away and I am ruled by the whims of others.

I don’t like being ruled by other’s whims. I don’t even like taking directions from my tablet.

I have defined my success and so I control my directives. Once I have my goals defined, THEN I look to others. I invest in online webinars, podcasts, Twitter chats, Facebook groups, conferences, festivals, community classes and other events to learn more about what I want to accomplish.

I take all the information I can gather and I look at how it will fit into my definition of success. Sometimes I have to twist it a little to make it fit and sometimes I have to let it go. The information and the thoughts of others enhance my own defined success instead of being in a position to direct it.

I learn from others. I lean on others. I connect with others. I rely on others. It takes a community to build writing success – some might even say it takes an army. I will never build a successful writing career on an island alone.

My seventh confession as a freelance writer – I am not alone.

Everything that I do in this life that has value begins and ends with relationships (and probably has relationships squeezed in the middle as well). I have to be willing to invest in others if I want to see my own success grow.

*Challenge Seven: Make a list of five to ten ways you can grow an existing connection, or utilize one of the following ideas. Commit to pursuing one of these ideas a day – just one each day – for the next thirty days. (Send a note or card to a contact. Meet for a coffee or a meal in person. Host a gathers. Comment with engaging content that adds to the conversation on another website. Share a post or article link in your content. Participate in an online chat.)*

I need to be trying to meet the needs of those that I encounter if I want them to value what I am doing. I have to be willing to invest in others without expectation of return if I want them to trust my motivations and efforts. When I invest in relationships then I grow up the support I need for my own journey.

The more that I build relationships – people invested in me and my journey as I am invested in them – then the more strength I will have to do what I believe I am supposed to do.

I need the support. There will be days when I struggle to keep going. There will be times when I compare my journey to your journey and I fall short and want to quit. The people that are around me – some on the same journey and some on parallel journeys – they help give me the boost I need to do one more thing or take one more step.

It is a long journey. The more people I can have lifting me up and urging me own the easier that journey becomes. But I have to be aware lest I fall in the trap of trying to follow others on their journey. I can learn from them and I can even gain momentum from their journeys, but my journey must be unique to me.

My eighth confession as a freelance writer – I took a stand to follow my own path. Others have said it would not work. Others have pointed to my stumbles and declared it was because I broke their rules. Despite all of that, I know that the only way I can reach my success is to follow my unique path.

*Challenge Eight: Define your uniqueness to designate your path. What makes you different from the rest of the crowd?*

I write content for others and that helps me find my own words to use in books and stories. I write in the morning and in the evening and in the afternoon but rarely all three on the same day. I love using a pad and a pencil (freshly sharpened) but I also write directly to my computer.

I do what works for me – I just make sure that I do it on a consistent basis. When I do it on a consistent basis then it does work for me.

I also attend writing conferences, workshops, and social media events. I take notes and create posts from the notes and then I take the notes and posts and weave them into my own schedule and plan.

I learn from others but I make their information my own.

Because no matter how close it may seem, no two journeys are ever the same. You and I may have similarities, but we are still different. You and I may have the same goals, but the journey to those goals will be unique – that is why no publisher or agent has found the magic formula. There is NO magic formula.

I have to make my way and then I have to commit the recourse to pursuing that way and then I have to be so persistent, so diligent, and so hard headed that the silly world will never distract me from my way.

I am getting closer than ever before. Most steps move me along the path in the right direction. Some steps take me to the side. A few steps have taken me back so that I have the privilege of repeating part of the journey. But I am learning and growing and going and I know where I am going.

My ninth confession as a freelance writer – I have discovered my path to purpose.

I've met people that have done "it" – they've written best selling novels; they've written books that became movies; they've built blogs that draw thousands of new viewers every day. The list goes on. I have been blessed to meet experts from many niches and have had the opportunity to sit and listen to them share their journey and their tips.

Along the way, I began to take notes about what I expected, what I wanted, and why I was doing what I was doing. I began to map out my journey and along the way I uncovered my purpose.

*Challenge Nine: Hone your purpose – the core essence of your why. The more you look into your purpose, your gifts, your talents, and your path then the more you will close in on that laser focused purpose.*

It turns out each person is made on purpose for a purpose. Taking the time to make a writing plan helped me to unlock my purpose. Knowing my purpose makes it easier for me to choose what information to follow, what events to attend, and what steps will continue me in the right path.

I have been known to get in over my head in so many different ways. I get excited about a group and then volunteer to do all sorts of things before I realize what I have gotten myself into. Before long, I have my day filled with stuff and none of that stuff moves me down the path of my desired writing success. I'm moving away from my desired focus and designed purpose because I've given my resources to excitement and emotions.

Or I used to do that. The more I hone my purpose the easier it is to take the better and best steps.

Each step I take is getting me closer to where I know I want to be – but even knowing that was a little bit of a challenge. The experts were telling me what I needed to be a success. The people around me were telling me what I needed to be a success. The more I read and the more events I attended, the more ideas were offered about what success would be and should be.

My tenth confessions as a successful freelance writer – only I can get me there.

I have invested money in the course expecting magic results. I have invested time in the event expecting it to produce the answer. I have invested resources in the coach expecting her to make the way. I have invested energy in the group because they would give me the right boost. I have expected a lot – but I have gained little.

Until . . .

Once I began to take hold of my journey, and to take control of my steps, I began to see a difference. Once I took my success so serious that it became a priority – I began to see results. I began to take the actions – daily, with consistent diligence and laser focus – I began to see movement in the direction that I desire. As much as I would like for the publishing company, or guru, or the event to be the answer – the answer is me.

This goes back to the understanding that we are all unique so what feels like success to me may not feel like success to you.

I have to understand what I am reaching for if I am ever going to attain it – and what I am reaching for will be, at least in part, effected by my unique purpose. I have to take all that I learned and experienced and roll it into actions. It all works together.

Defining my success is essential because the world will try to dictate my journey and it does so by trying to box in my success. I have to choose to break free. I have to determine to break down the box. I have to set my finish line, my goal, my success and then I will control my destiny.

Are you ready to become a freelance writer?

It is a journey – one that will be uniquely yours – but if you are willing to map it out and take the steps then you can get there.

I am still on my own journey. I have had highs making five figures and lows making three figures and everything in between. I have been recognized for my writing, my speaking, and my website and I have been overlooked by people that should know better.

I keep going because I know that with every step I get closer to that desired goal that I have set up before me.

There will be road blocks. The world is moving and going and often throwing things in my path along the way.

There will be struggles. Things come up. Changes in the family schedule that limit the writing opportunity or financial crunches (expected or unexpected). The list is endless as to what can make it tough for me to keep stepping.

There will be naysayers. People will complain about what I do because I don't do it the way they do. People will "tsk" my ambition or my dreams. People will tell me it's time to get a real job.

It matters little about where I have been or even where they think I am headed – because my journey is unique to me. I am the only one that has walked it, which already makes things more of a challenge. Knowing that up front makes some turn away, but it makes others stronger.

I am more determined than ever to be all that I am uniquely designed to be.

I am still learning and I will continue to learn even as I reach my goal and set that next one. I am still trying because sometimes the only way to know if it will work is to give it a try. The only way to fail is to NOT try – everything else is just a learning opportunity.

You are the key to your writing success – now what will you do with that key?