

THE COURAGEOUS WRITER

HOW TO GROW IN CONFIDENCE
AND NURTURE YOUR CREATIVITY



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Introduction

Welcome to *The Courageous Writer*.

I nearly called this book *The Fearless Writer* ... but the truth is, I don't think any writer is truly fearless. And I don't believe we need to be.

Courage isn't about never feeling afraid. It's not about being blissfully free from self-doubt. Instead, it's about moving forward with your writing, even when you have moments when you feel far from confident.

When you write, you're putting a little part of yourself into everything you create. Maybe the main character in your novel shares some of your weaknesses, or their backstory echoes the trauma in your own past. Even something as deceptively simple as your word choices or the metaphor you use for an engaging blog post introduction will reveal something of yourself to your readers.

Writing with the intent to share your work can feel like you're sharing your vulnerabilities and insecurities with the world. What if someone criticizes your writing, or leaves you a one-star review? Having your work rejected can feel like a rejection of you – of who you are and what's important to you.

No wonder writing feels daunting, or even impossible at times. But you're not alone if you feel that way.

Quotes from Writers on Self-Doubt

“Writing is finally about one thing: going into a room alone and doing it. Putting words on paper that have never been there in quite that way before. And although you are physically by yourself, the haunting Demon never leaves you, that Demon being the knowledge of your own terrible limitations, your hopeless inadequacy, the impossibility of ever getting it right.”

– **William Goldman** (novelist, playwright, and screenwriter)

“[L]ike everyone else in the room, I feel waves of self-doubt on a regular basis. It comes through if I second-guess my first draft writing and let my internal editor start work before I finish the draft.

It gets particularly bad when I am about to publish a novel or when I'm asked to speak or give an interview about my fiction. It gets especially bad at writing conferences when I can't help but compare myself to other authors.”

– **Joanna Penn** (fiction and non-fiction author)

“In my case, I was convinced that there would be a knock on the door, and a man with a clipboard (I don't know why he carried a clipboard, in my head, but he did) would be there to tell me it was all over, and they had caught up with me, and now I would have to go and get a real job, one that didn't consist of making things up and writing them down, and reading books I wanted to read. And then I would go away quietly and get the kind of job where you don't get to make things up anymore.”

– **Neil Gaiman** (science fiction and comic book author)

All these writers felt self-doubt. They were lacking in confidence – and I'm sure they felt far from fearless. Yet they are still highly accomplished writers.

You need courage to keep writing, and that's what we're going to be looking at in this short ebook. My focus is going to be on helping you build your confidence as a writer and on helping you nurture the creative part of yourself. After all, you would probably be confident if you limited yourself to writing bland business-like emails and nothing else ... but you wouldn't be getting much creative fulfillment out of that.

At the end of each chapter of the ebook, I'll suggest an exercise to try. You can write your answers in a document, an app, a physical notebook, or anywhere else that suits you.

We're going to run through ten different ways to build your confidence and to nurture your creative self. As you read through, pick at least one idea that you could try out this week.

Chapter 1: Give Yourself Credit for What You've Already Accomplished

Whatever stage you're at with your writing, you've already accomplished something.

Since you're here, I know you've at least managed, *"find a writing blog, sign up for a free ebook, and start reading it"* ... that's more progress than plenty of other people have made with their writing dreams! You're taking concrete action towards what you want to achieve.

Chances are, you've probably already done a bit of writing, too. Maybe you've managed one of these:

- Completed a piece of writing, like a short story, poem, or article.
- Shared something you've written with a trusted friend.
- Entered a writing competition (just entering is a huge step – don't worry if you didn't win a prize or get shortlisted).
- Published a piece of your writing online, e.g. on a blog.
- Completed some of these other [writing milestones](#).

Even if these steps seem small, they still absolutely count. In fact, when it comes to courage, those early steps are the biggest.

The first time I stood up and read a piece of my writing-in-progress in front of a writers' group, I was shaking at the knees. They were a lovely, kind, and supportive group, too!

The first time I pitched an article to a magazine, just posting the letter felt really daunting. (This was over 20 years ago, when email submissions weren't yet ubiquitous.)

The first time I wrote a paid piece for a blog, I agonized over whether or not it was good enough, and whether the editor would think he'd made a big mistake in hiring me.

I expect you've taken steps that feel similarly scary. And the impressive thing is that you took them anyway. Even if you're still gathering your courage for your next step, that's absolutely okay (and normal). Give yourself credit for everything you've done so far.

Try this:

Write down three things you've already accomplished with your writing. Keep this list somewhere you can regularly see and add to it!

Chapter 2: Get the Help and Support You Deserve

We all need support from others – and there might be times when you need a bit of extra support, encouragement, or guidance with your writing. This is completely normal!

Even extensively published, highly acclaimed authors don't write in a vacuum: they have a network of fellow writers, editors, and other professionals supporting them. Take a look at the acknowledgments section of the last novel you read and you'll see all these people being credited for their help.

Of course, you don't need an agent or editor (or lots of high-profile writing friends) to get the help and support you need and deserve.

You could:

- Join a writer's group (online or offline)
- Find a writing buddy for mutual support
- Buy writing-related books to help you develop specific aspects of your writing craft
- Go to professional conferences
- Read writing blogs (like Aliventures!)
- Listen to writing-related podcasts

- Swap work-in-progress with a writer friend so you can give each other feedback
- Pay a freelance editor for advice on your writing
- Get extra help with a writing task that has stumped you (e.g. setting up a website)

Something that helped my own confidence hugely was taking an MA in Creative Writing. I got to work with lots of other keen student writers and learnt directly from some award-winning authors too.

That might not be an option that's open to you – but there are plenty of writing courses and classes out there that take a lot less time (and money) than a Master's degree.

Writing itself is a solitary activity, and many writers (not all!) are on the introverted end of the scale. We still need support and the companionship of other writers, even if only in small ways.

Reaching out and asking for help can take a lot of courage, but it can give you a massive boost to your confidence as you continue forward on your journey as a writer.

Try this:

Write down one type of writing support that you already feel comfortable accessing (e.g. listening to a writing podcast). Then, write down a type of writing support you'd like to engage with in the future.

Chapter 3: Set Aside Regular Time to Write (And Commit to It)

Some writers will produce one book, then write nothing for months or even years. But I think the majority of writers feel at their best and most creatively fulfilled when writing regularly.

However ... **you don't need to write daily.**

It's fine to write daily if that's what suits you and your creative process, but you don't *have* to.

I've come across plenty of writers whose personal preference is to write daily or near-daily so they tell aspiring writers that's what they should do, too.

Here's the thing. You could write 250 words a day, six days of the week, or you could write 750 words on Saturday and 750 words on Sunday. You'd still have 1500 words at the end of the week.

Neither method is "right". What's important is what feels like a good fit for you, your writing, and your current life circumstances.

Currently, with my fiction, I write for short sessions on a daily basis, but I also have occasional times when I write thousands of words in a single day. When I look back weeks later at my writing, I can't generally tell what I wrote in the shorter sessions and what I wrote during the longer ones. The length of my writing sessions doesn't impact the quality of my writing.

It is important that you have regular writing time, though. That doesn't need to be at the same time every day or on the same day every week ... but it needs to happen on a reasonably consistent basis, without being eroded by all the many demands of life.

Different things suit different writers, but you might like to try out one or two of these ideas:

- Writing for a short daily period at a time when you're feeling focused and motivated, e.g. 10-15 minutes first thing in the morning.
- Using your lunch break to write, even if it's just a few sentences.
- Setting aside one or two evenings each week as writing time. You may want to block these out on your calendar.
- Joining together with someone else for a weekly writing session. My husband and I occasionally do this on Friday mornings (he works on his academic writing and I either work on fiction or stuff for Aliventures – like this mini ebook).
- Blocking out a couple of Saturdays each month to write. Some writers really like binge writing sessions where they can focus on their writing for several hours at a time.
- Having a “back-up” slot so that if something goes wrong, you can still manage to fit in your writing time.

I know how hard it can be to stay consistent with writing – I've had months go by when I didn't write any fiction at all – but the more committed you can be to your writing sessions, the more confident and creative you'll feel.

You might find it helps to put your writing sessions on your calendar and treat them as you'd treat any other appointment: you'll stick to them unless you really do need to postpone or move a session.

What if You're Unwell or Something Urgent Comes Up?

It can be really frustrating to miss a planned writing session, especially if you were on a roll with your writing. But just like any commitment in your life, there may be times when you really can't do your writing as planned.

Perhaps you're not well, and it doesn't make sense to push yourself to write. It's much more important for you to rest and recover.

Or maybe there's a truly urgent problem that you need to solve, or something you have to do for a family member or friend. If it can't wait, then you may need to save your writing for later. And that's OK!

What matters is that you're consistent as much as you can be: that you don't put off writing because you're "not in the mood" or because something needs doing that could, really, wait till after your writing session.

Try this:

Look at your calendar for the next month. Where can you block out at least one writing session each week?

If it's hard to find a chunk of time on a weekly basis, could you find a shorter period of time (even just 10-15 minutes) each day?

Chapter 4: Allow Time to Experiment With New Areas of Writing

You might find it helps you build your writing confidence to work primarily in one area of writing: you'll get to know the conventions of that kind of material, and you'll likely find that it becomes easier and easier as you write more of it.

But it can sometimes feel a bit creatively stifling to stick to just one thing. You may feel the urge to try something new, or you may actually end up feeling less confident if it seems like you can only write in one style or by following one particular formula.

To be a fully-rounded writer, it's great to have at least a little bit of time to experiment with new areas of writing.

That doesn't mean you need to write a whole novel in a completely different genre, or start writing poetry when you've only written articles before ... but it could mean giving yourself some space to explore something that's a bit different.

Some options you might want to try are:

- **Writing short stories in a different style or structure from usual.**

I love the short story form as a way to experiment with voices or viewpoints that would be too much (for both me and the reader!) in a whole novel. I've written short stories from a "you" perspective, for instance, or with each short section of the story starting with the same short line of dialogue.

- **Trying out a new genre.**

That might not be for a full novel – again, this is something you could experiment with in short stories.

Perhaps you generally write science-fiction novels but you'd like to have a go at a sweet romance short story, or your novels are all for adults but you'd love to write a short story for children.

- **Accessing a different voice for your writing.**

This could be for an audience or just as an experiment that no one else will ever see.

My voice on Aliventures tends to be calm and encouraging ... but that's not the only voice I have! Sometimes I write in a much more direct and punchy way when I'm guest posting for sites with that kind of style.

- **Turning your hand to a completely different kind of writing.**

When I started freelance blogging in 2008, almost all my previous writing had been fiction. But after experimenting with starting my own blog, then guest posting for some others, I found that I really loved writing short online articles.

You might try something for the first time and find that you love it. Perhaps it'll be career changing, like it was for me, or just something you enjoy as a break from your regular writing. It's still worthwhile!

Try this:

Choose one area of writing you might like to explore. It could be just a little different from what you already do ... or it could be something entirely new.

Could you allocate some of your writing sessions for this exploration?

E.g. if you write 3 evenings per week, could you spend one evening every week or every couple of weeks doing some experimental writing?

Chapter 5: Break Challenging or Scary Writing Tasks Into Little Pieces

Some writing tasks can feel especially daunting. If you're struggling with your confidence, it's easy to give up on these (or perhaps indefinitely postpone them) for weeks, months, even years.

Most challenging or scary writing tasks don't have to be tackled in one big, desperate attempt, though. You're not sitting an exam here. You can take your time and slowly find your way into the task.

Let's say you've just started your blog and you want to write a guest post for a big blog that you read, so you can get a link back to your own site and hopefully get some new readers. Guest posting can feel very daunting, especially if you're approaching a blog you've admired for a long time.

But you don't have to go through the whole guest posting process all at once. I don't, and I've been guest posting for 16 years! When I'm approaching sites, I'll split this into smaller, less daunting steps like:

- On one day, list a bunch of possible sites I *could* guest post on (I don't have to commit to anything).
- On another day, go through these sites, decide which to prioritize, and come up with some ideas.
- On a third day, draft the pitches for several sites.
- On a separate day, actually send those pitches to the editors (for me, this is the most daunting bit).

Whatever kind of writing task you're facing, you could break it down in a similar way. Maybe you want to write and submit a short story to a competition – but you've never entered any kind of writing competition before. You could break this down:

- Research some writing competitions to enter.
- Choose one competition to focus on (*ideally with a deadline that isn't too close or too far away – you don't want to feel rushed, but equally you don't want to lose momentum*).
- Come up with three or four possible ideas for short stories, maybe outlining some potential characters or scenarios.
- Choose one idea to flesh out a bit further: you might start drafting a little bit of the story, or develop a plot outline.
- ...and so on.

You don't need to choose a competition and write the whole story at once. In fact, you'll probably come up with a better story if you let your ideas develop over the course of a few days or even a few weeks.

If you've broken down the writing task and the first step feels too scary or you keep resisting doing it, then break it down even further. Maybe your very first step is “create the document” or even “turn on my laptop” or “open my notebook”. Any little step that moves you forward is valid and worthwhile.

Try this:

Is there a writing task (or story idea, etc) that you've been putting off? Write down the first three or four steps that you'd need to take to make progress with it.

Find time for the very first step in the next week or two: if that feels too difficult, make the first step smaller.

Chapter 6: Enjoy Lots of Different Types of Writing as a Reader

I believe that to really get the most from writing, you need to be a reader. It's hard to write if you're not taking in plenty of writing — whether that's reading novels, blog posts, magazine articles, memoir, poetry, scripts, or anything else that takes your fancy.

To foster your own creativity, it can help to broaden your reading horizons.

Perhaps you normally tend to stick to one or two genres, or you have a handful of favourite authors, but you find it hard to branch out beyond those. You might want to pick up something very different from what you'd normally read. It could feel like a strange or even uncomfortable reading experience at first ... but it could also introduce you to new genres or forms of writing that you might enjoy.

Giving yourself the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of writing can help you get a sense of the possibilities out there. You don't necessarily have to start writing in a whole new genre. Instead, you could bring techniques or ideas from a quite different type of writing into your own work.

Even if you don't enjoy something you read, trying out different books, genres, styles, and voices as a reader can help you to pin down what you enjoy the most. (What you enjoy reading is probably a good clue to what you'll enjoy writing.)

Remember, you don't have to finish everything you start, as a reader. You might begin on a book that you're just not getting into, even after 30 or 40 pages. It's fine to give it up. Don't feel you have to plough on forward with something that's simply not working for you.

Try this:

Choose something to read that's quite different from what you'd normally read.

How about a selection of contemporary poetry, [one of The Guardian's "long read" articles](#), a celebrity autobiography, an [18th century novel](#), or a young adult book?

Chapter 7: Change Your Internal Soundtrack (Inner Critic)

Most writers have an “inner critic” — that discouraging voice that says things like, *well, there’s no money in it or you’ll never be good enough or how can you call yourself a writer when you mangle a sentence like that.*

Sometimes, this internal voice is so ever-present, it can be hard to actually pick it out and notice what it’s saying. Instead, it just becomes a sort of discouraging static in the background. If you feel tired before you even sit down to write, or if the idea of writing seems like a heavy weight on your shoulders, it may be because that soundtrack is playing on and on in the background of your mind.

The good news is that you can change your soundtrack: you don’t have to keep on listening to the same old, horrible words of your inner critic.

One way to think about changing things is to shift your inner critic into something more like an inner coach: an encouraging and supportive internal voice. Your coach may still make suggestions to help you improve – but not in a negative, critical way. I wrote more about this idea on the Aliventures blog here:

[Turning Your Inner Critic into an Inner Coach ... and Growing Your Writing Confidence](#)

You might also find it helpful to think of your internal voice in a broader context. I really like Jon Acuff’s book *Soundtracks* for this. Acuff goes through lots of practical ways to start to rewrite that inner

voice, along with a written example that you can use. It might feel a little awkward at first, but deliberately changing your inner voice can make a huge difference to your confidence, creativity, and courage as a writer.

Try this:

Come up with three positive things to tell yourself at the start of each writing session (or at the start of each day, if you prefer). Here are a few you might want to try – feel free to modify them to suit you:

My writing is important.

I am looking forward to seeing what I write today.

I'm growing in confidence with my writing every day.

My words have value.

Chapter 8: Notice That Writers Succeed Without Being Perfect

You don't have to be perfect to be a successful writer, with readers who enjoy your work.

I'm in a science-fiction book group that meets every couple of months. We've read a wide range of books, and something I've noticed is that we don't always *love* the book (and sometimes members have different opinions on it).

It's very rare, though, that we don't enjoy a book. We're normally glad we read it, even if we recognise that it had some flaws.

Over the years the group has been running, we've read books where the characters were a bit flat and didn't feel like real people ... but the ideas in the story and the plot were engaging. We've read books that some members found too bleak ... but others really liked them. We've seen rushed endings, confusing plots, and passages of writing that were clumsy or rang false.

But we've still enjoyed reading! We haven't expected or needed the writers of these books to write perfectly. Instead, we've been glad of the stories, ideas, characters, and words that we've got to share in.

The same is true for your writing. Your readers won't be expecting perfection. They can still love your book even if it has flaws. (And the very act of trying to produce a book that's flawless might also produce one that's hard to love: you'll likely end up taking out all the idiosyncrasies that would make your book special and unique.)

As a freelancer, I'm sure my work isn't perfect. And that's fine: I'm not aiming for perfect. I'd like my work to be solid, competent, and definitely good enough to get me hired again. I'd like it to be clear and accurate, easy for readers to understand and get something from. But I don't intend it to be life-changing! And even if I phrase something poorly or have a typo in there somewhere, I know my article will be going through an editorial process.

There are best-selling authors out there who've seen incredible success ... despite receiving a lot of criticism from literary figures. Think E. L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey*, for instance, or Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. People mocked the writing style and storylines of both, yet the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series sold over 150 million books and *The Da Vinci Code* sold 80 million copies.

Try this:

Pick a book you've enjoyed recently and look it up on Amazon. Does it have any one- or two-star reviews? What do they say? Do you agree with any of their points? You may find that reviewers have picked up on imperfections that you didn't notice, that you didn't care about, or even that you personally liked or saw differently.

Chapter 9: Don't Ignore How You Feel (Whatever You Feel is Okay)

Sometimes, not just in writing, but in life in general, we feel that we need to push aside our emotions and “get on with it.”

That can be the right thing to do, in certain situations. As a parent, there are definitely times when I might be feeling annoyed or frustrated, but I need to carry on patiently with the task at hand. In the workplace, you may need to put aside certain emotions to carry on with an important aspect of your job.

But when it comes to writing, it's okay to feel however you feel. Maybe you feel scared about writing. You might feel upset by a rejection or by someone's critical words about your writing.

Some other common feelings are resentment, of the things that take up the time when you could be writing, and envy of other writers, whose success you might wish you could emulate.

It's okay to let those feelings in. You are bigger than your emotions. You can give yourself space and time to truly feel them – and maybe to write about them, working through what might lie behind what you're feeling.

You probably want to avoid simply dwelling on an emotion and ruminating on it endlessly, without progressing ... but if you're worried about that, why not set a timer (e.g. for 20 minutes) and give yourself that time to really focus on the feeling.

There's no "wrong" emotion to feel about writing (or indeed about anything in life).

Maybe you feel upset by a rejection and you keep trying to tell yourself "don't be silly" or "it's no big deal" or "just get on with the next thing". But rejections are disappointing, and it's okay to feel upset. Yes, rejections are a normal part of the writing life – but that doesn't mean you need to meet them with stoic equanimity.

Try this:

This exercise is inspired by a worksheet that my coach [Blake Stratton](#) uses in his [Automatic Upgrade community](#):

#1: Give yourself 2 minutes to truly feel the feeling.

#2: Write a sentence "I am feeling _____ because _____"

Example: "I am feeling envious because Jane Writer has just launched another book"

#3: Then, look for ways you could turn this perspective around.

Example: "I am happy for Jane Writer ... and her success gives me hope that I can be a successful writer too." Or, "I am feeling proud of the things I have achieved, even though I haven't published a book yet."

Chapter 10: Challenge Your Limiting Beliefs About Yourself & Your Writing

Do you have beliefs about yourself and your writing that might be holding you back from feeling as confident and creative as you'd like to be?

There are so many limiting beliefs or even “rules” I've seen people place on their writing. Some common ones are:

- I'm too old to be a writer.
- I'm too young to be a writer.
- If I write X type of book, I'm selling out.
- If I don't follow the market, I'm wasting my time.
- I'm wasting my time on writing.
- I'm wasting my time if I'm not writing.
- I'm not educated enough to be a successful writer.
- I can't write a book until I've done X (e.g. taken another course/class).
- There's no money in writing.
- I should do X (e.g. write every day) / If I don't do X, I'll fail
- I can't write unless I've finished my to-do list / done the household chores / etc

You might not even realise that some of these ideas are lurking in the back of your mind. And sometimes, by bringing a limiting belief out into the light of day, you can see why it's simply not true.

Let's dig into an example: *"I'm too old to be a writer."* However old you are, is this really true? Plenty of people succeed with writing later in life.

Coming to writing as an older writer has plenty of benefits. You'll have more life experience to draw on, including first-person knowledge of multiple decades in the past – rich material to write about. You'll likely have more time and flexibility than younger writers: perhaps you're retired, or an empty-nester now.

Instead of saying "I'm too old to be a writer," how about:

- I have so much life experience to pour into my writing.
- This is the perfect age for me to start taking my writing seriously.

(Of course, coming to writing in earlier life is absolutely fine too, and shouldn't limit you either! You may face different doubts or challenges to older writers, but you absolutely can succeed at a young age.)

Here's another example, which was one of my own limiting beliefs for years – "I never finish anything."

Perhaps you could turn that into:

- I'm full of so many ideas that I'm excited to work on.
- I'm good at letting go of writing projects that I've stopped enjoying.

Michael Hyatt calls this a process of turning [limiting beliefs into liberating truths](#), which I think is a great way to look at it.

If you're a fiction writer, another framing you might like to use is thinking about a key limiting belief as the "lie" a character (in this case, you!) believes. If you might find that a useful approach, K.M. Weiland has a great post on [how the lie shows up in your protagonist's story](#).

Try this:

Choose a belief or "rule" about your writing that's holding you back. Write it down. Then, look for the truth that counters it, or the positive side of that belief, or a way to free yourself from that rule.

How Setting Writing Goals Can Build Your Confidence and Creativity

Goals are fantastic – and I love setting mine at the start of each year, then making gradual progress towards them. I definitely accomplish more of what I want to accomplish that way.

I'd originally thought about starting this short ebook with a section on goals ... but I decided to keep it for the end, as I know goals can be tricky.

In some cases, setting goals (and struggling with them) can end up becoming a source of deep discouragement, guilt, frustration, or even anger at yourself.

You might have the idea that you need to set big, challenging goals, and then work really hard, trying to desperately achieve them. And that can be a fast recipe for giving up altogether, or trying to “start again” every Monday (like with a diet) only to end up with everything falling apart midweek.

Goals aren't just about what you achieve. They're also – perhaps mostly! – about who you're becoming. That means you want to set goals that support your confidence and creativity, not ones that make you feel stressed out (or that are so tough they make you give up on writing altogether).

There's no one “right” way to approach goal setting. Some people like to set one or two goals at a time and really focus on those. Others want to have a half-dozen goals that they're making slow but steady

progress on. Some people set massive 5-year or 10-year goals, and that vision inspires them. Others find that goals for the next week or month keep them focused and on track.

Some people are happy to set goals that they might not reach – they might set the same goal again for several years. Others feel a lot of frustration or even shame if they don't hit their goals.

So what will work for you?

If you're not sure, I'd encourage you to start small. Think about experimenting with a particular goal for the next few weeks, or perhaps over a couple of months.

Here are a few goals that might work for that timescale:

- Writing 100 words every day for two weeks
- Publishing a blog post every week
- Completing a short story this month and another one next month
- Writing for 5 minutes in your journal each morning for a week

These goals are still significant. By trying them out on a fairly small scale, you can see if they're working for you.

Perhaps you'll find that writing 100 words every day gives you a real feeling of momentum and confidence, and it's encouraging you to start thinking about how to fit in longer writing sessions. Or maybe you'll find that daily writing feels like yet another chore to get to, and that you much preferred it when you were writing just on Sunday afternoons.

Another approach, if you find it encouraging and inspiring, is to look ahead to the rest of the year.

Where would you like to get to with your writing by the end of this calendar year? (Or by another key milestone, like the start of the next academic year, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.) If you're reading this towards the end of the year, think about what you might want to achieve next year, or by next summer.

Maybe you want to finish the draft of your novel, publish regularly on your blog, grow your monthly freelancing income by 20%, or another big goal. If you find longer-term goals inspiring, by all means set one!

With any bigger goal, though, it's important to break it down into practical steps.

“Finish novel draft” is so easy to keep putting off week after week, especially if it's tricky to find much time to write ... and that can slowly knock your confidence.

“Write an average of 3000 words per week” is a clear, specific goal that may well be challenging, but that can help you build your confidence through writing consistently.

Setting a writing goal:

Write down one goal for your writing over the next month.

This could be a daily, weekly, or month-long goal, e.g.

Daily goal example: Write at least one sentence every day (“no zero days”)

Weekly goal example: Write 1,000 words per week

Monthly goal example: Write a short story, edit it, and send it off for a competition

If you have a bigger goal (for the quarter, year, or even longer), then your goal for this month can form part of that.

During this month, be aware of how your goal is affecting your confidence and creativity. Is it helping you to feel better about your writing? If your goal is making you feel bad, then it probably isn't the right goal for you, right now: I'd encourage you to change it.

None of us will ever feel completely fearless about our writing. But I believe we can all grow in courage, through the act of writing itself, through getting help and support, through celebrating what we do well, and through challenging some of our preconceptions and limiting beliefs about writing.

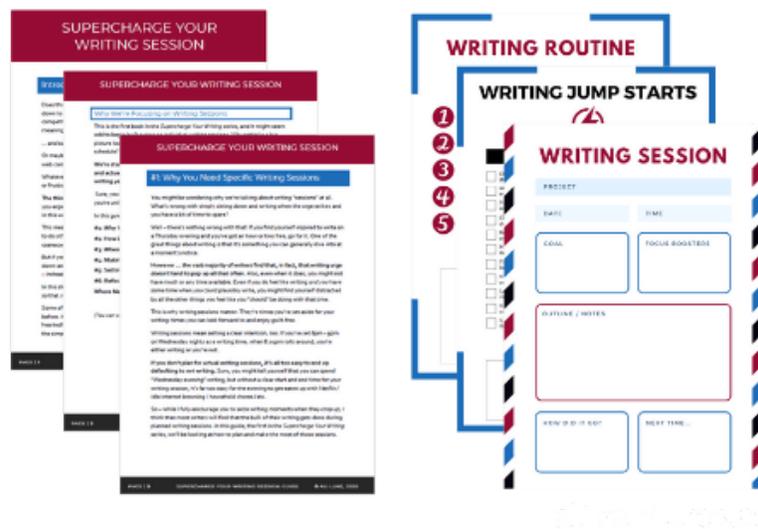
One last thing I want you to know: Your writing is important. Your writing matters. Even if no one else ever sees a word you write, your writing is still meaningful and significant, and it's very much worth your time.

Where Next?

I hope you've enjoyed this short free ebook. If you've got any questions or suggestions for things you'd like me to cover (in a future edition of this ebook or in a brand new freebie), do let me know at ali@aliventures.com.

I've got lots of resources for writers in the [Aliventures Shop](#), any of which might be a great next step for you. There's one I wanted to highlight here, as I think it's the most helpful if you want to feel more confident and creative:

[Supercharge Your Writing Session](#) (\$8)



[Supercharge Your Writing Session](#) is the first guide in my Supercharge Your Writing series. It'll help you to get set up for a great writing session, with tips on short vs long sessions, setting yourself up to focus, and more.

With it, you also get printables to help you develop a personal writing routine, plan your writing sessions, and get unstuck if you're struggling.

If you find it hard to sit down and write, or if you often feel unfocused, discouraged, or unconfident during your writing time, this guide will help.