



The Writing Life

Get your writing in gear by preparing to be creative. How? Glad you asked!

- ✓ Read about the art and craft of writing. The Internet is an inexhaustible source on plotting, characterization, dialogue, etc. Build up a library of good books and articles on writing.
- ✓ Join a writers group. There is no better way to keep those creative juices flowing than being in the company of other writers. Not to mention the opportunities to network and learn. Do what suits your needs, but I recommend that you join a national writing group in addition to your local group. National groups like Romance Writers of America, Sisters In Crime, and Novelists, Inc. have newsletters and magazines filled with industry news and writing tips.
- ✓ Read. Read the kind of books you want to write. Read books you enjoy. dissect why the plot, characters, etc. work so well. Read books you don't like and dissect why the plot, characters or whatever don't work. You will learn by doing both.
- ✓ Take a writing class, but be sure it will meet your needs. For example, if you are working on a mystery novel a class on writing literary fiction will most likely be an exercise in frustration. If possible, talk to the instructor or people who have taken the class to get more details. Sometimes course summaries are too brief to give you enough information to make a decision.
- ✓ Attend writing conferences. Conferences not only offer helpful workshops but you can meet editors, agents and published authors. These folks love to network and talk shop. You can learn from them. Choose conferences carefully to make sure the topics being presented will meet your needs. Another great feature of some conferences is editor/agent appointments. You get to meet with them for up to ten minutes and pitch your book. I got my first agent and sold my first book this way. Be a sponge, and learn all you can. Overcome your shyness and talk to the other attendees.
- ✓ Last but definitely not least write. And write some more. And more. Period. Think of your writing skill as another muscle. The more you exercise that creative muscle the stronger it gets. Let it lie around doing nothing for a long time, and it gets flabby.