



Liz DeJesus, Author of "Nina"

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Twenty Simple Rules A Writer Should Follow by Liz DeJesus

1. Carry your notebook everywhere. This is something people forget to do. Seriously if I could carry my laptop with me everywhere I would. But a small notebook that you can toss in your bag helps when inspiration strikes in the most unexpected places. Don't forget your pen. Can't do much without one. I sometimes forget to bring one with me. So I toss a handful of them in my bag.
2. Stop watching so much TV. It rots the brain. Stops the creative flow. Dulls the senses. I don't know about you but it makes me feel like I just wasted an entire day of my life that I will never EVER get back. Besides, you can always catch reruns of The Hills, Rock of Love 2...etc...etc. the list just goes on and on. Turn the TV off, there's nothing really good on anyway.
3. Go places that inspire creativity. Museums. Art galleries. Bookstores. Listen to music. Or go someplace quiet if that's what you prefer. Like the beach, or the park. When I can't go to any of these places I open my art books and just look at the different works of art. My personal favorite is Vincent Van Gogh. His brushstrokes and usage of color are just amazing. Do whatever you think will work for you.
4. Spend time with people that share the same interests as you. Sure you can meet people over the internet, but sometimes it's good to connect with people that live close by. Join a writing group or just hang out with a few of your close writing buddies. Take turns reading chapters of each others work.
5. Give and receive criticism gracefully. Not everything you write ends up being perfect the first (or second) time. And when you read someone else's work, actually focus on what you're reading. Don't just say 'It was nice' or 'I just didn't get it'. That's not an answer, that's a cop out. Show people that you do know what you're talking about.
6. Write! Even if it's a sentence, try to get something done every day. Eventually that novel that's hiding somewhere in the back of your subconscious will pop right out. You want to get to that point that you're begging your muse to give you a mental break.
7. Practice writing query letters. If you can, try reading it aloud to a friend. Query letters are extremely important...they are a pain in the butt to write because you really have to sell someone your novel in two or three paragraphs.
8. Do research before submitting to an agent or publishing company. If possible find the authors that have been published with that company and email them. Ask them what it's like working with that particular publishing house. Writers are people too!

Keep yourself informed. Your book is an extension of who you are and it deserves to be taken care of.

9. When you finally get around to mailing your query letter, make sure you follow the guidelines. DOUBLE CHECK. Have someone look over it just in case. You can get a rejection letter just because you misspelled the agent's last name. Also...don't call or email the place you submitted to asking questions. That's just annoying. You'll get a response. Publishers and agents get hundreds of submissions on a regular basis. Be patient. This is the part I like to call 'Hurry up and Wait.'

Back

10. Read. Sometimes you need something to help replenish your creative juices.

11. Explore different genres. If you like romance and fantasy, try mixing both genres and see where it takes you.

12. Don't treat writing like a get rich quick scheme. Write because if you don't get your thoughts down on paper your head will explode.

13. Writers block? Write about not being able to write. Describe how it feels. Pretend your muse is tied to a rock or something.

There are ways you can get yourself out of that state of mind. It's like riding a bike; you don't forget how to write sentences or how to use grammar? Right?

14. Eavesdrop on people's conversations whenever you can. (this is the only time this is allowed) People talk about the craziest things when they think no one is listening. Trust me. I do it all the time. Find a place to include snippets of conversations into your story. Dialogue is very important. Characters aren't mute, you know... unless you have one that actually is mute, but I think you get my point.

15. Go outside and explore. Pretend something strange happened to you on the way to the supermarket. Or that you fell down a hole in the middle of the woods. Write about what you would do in that situation. The more unbelievable, the better.

16. Rewrite a poem.

17. Rewrite a scene from a book. Challenge yourself 'I can do better than insert author's name here and see where it takes you.

18. Go places that inspire you to take action. Sometimes you need to walk outside (yes, even if it's cold out) to get oxygen flowin' into that brain of yours. Being locked up in your office only makes you seem like the creepy hermit-like person that mumbles and writes all the time...no one really likes that person.

19. Watch people, study movements, gestures and facial expressions. Don't make your characters just smile or frown. There's a whole bunch of facial expressions you can give to bring better flow to your story. Most people use their hands when they talk.

There are lots of books on body language, check them out. Maybe that's why

you're stuck.

20. Read poetry. Explore using metaphors in your writing. They help create rhythm and flow. Just the facts make stories a little...boring.

Anyway, so I hope these tips are helpful to some of you. May your muse always be by your side and may your pens never run out of ink. *wink

You can check out Liz's site by going to <http://liz-dejesus.livejournal.com>