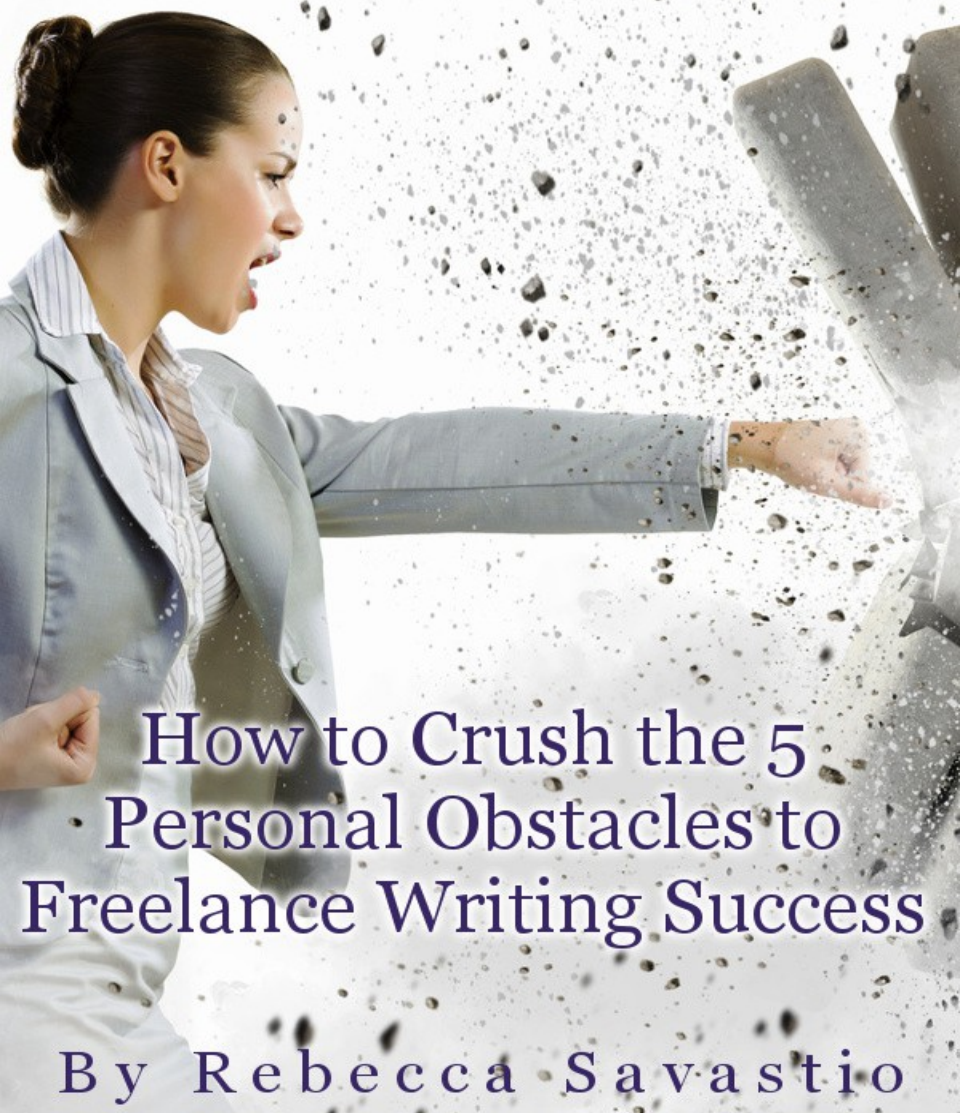


Freedom With Writing

## The Writer's Battle



How to Crush the 5  
Personal Obstacles to  
Freelance Writing Success

By Rebecca Savastio

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## From the Editor

One of the easiest things to say is “anything is possible.”

However, not everything is easy. In fact, some things are so hard they seem impossible.

Let's face it: It can be hard to become a successful freelance writer.

Our mission is to make it as easy as possible for you.

This book is a short guide to one of the biggest battles every freelance writer will face: The one that exists inside of us. The ego battle.

The format of the book is based on a scientifically validated decision making process called *mental contrasting*. This method works by asking you to face your fears directly so you can create concrete plans for overcoming them.

The first step in the *mental contrasting* method is to make your goals come alive. Spend some time dreaming. Imagine the success that you want.

Before we face any battle worth fighting, we should spend time thinking about why the fight is important. I invite you to do that right now.

The second step in the *mental contrasting* method is to think of the obstacles in your way, and to create a plan to overcome them.

This book presents 5 obstacles nearly every writer encounters. And it gives you an action plan for each and every one of them.

It is my sincere hope that this little book will help you find joy, confidence, and success in your writing endeavors.

Sincerely,

*Jacob Jans*

*Editor*

*Freedom With Writing*

Have you ever found yourself the victim of your own ego? I have, and putting my ego aside in order to be a successful freelance writer is one of the most difficult things I've ever had to do.

I've been writing professionally for the last four years, and during that time I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of other writers; some I have hired to work with me and some who I met through networking. I've noticed that we writers tend to have what I call "ego obstacles." The problem is, they can really harm your career as a freelancer.

That being said, there are ways to combat these obstacles and clear the way for the money to flow in. I used to have every single one of these ego obstacles, but after four years of writing, I've

learned how to not only manage them, but to obliterate them permanently, and ever since I've found out how to do that, my writing career has been going strong.

Since I learned the hard way (and that way included a lot of pain and yes, some tears!) I decided it would be best to reveal the most problematic ego obstacles so we can look them right in the face, deconstruct them, and banish them forever.

We're not just going to swat at the overgrowth with a stick; we're going to blast through the whole mountain and pave a new road.

Are you ready for a little bit of "tough love?"

5 Ego Obstacles for  
Writers, and How to  
Crush Them  
Permanently



# **Ego Obstacle #1: “That’s not my job”**

A writer I know has a seriously dangerous mental block. He feels that “it’s not his job” to market his book. “I’m a *writer*,” he says, “I don’t do marketing. That’s not my job! I’m an artist!” He refuses to acknowledge that today’s publishing game has changed.

Publishers fully expect their writers to do heavy marketing of their work. These efforts may include setting up speaking engagements, traveling, attending book signings, running a website, creating and maintaining a large social media presence, and engaging in online selling. Hiring

managers will tell you that the phrase “that’s not my job” should never be uttered in any workplace, and freelance writing is no different. It is our job to market our work, and the sooner we accept it, the sooner we can see success.

### **How to crush it:**

- Accept that marketing is a natural and organic part of a writer’s job.
- Set aside one hour per day to learn about marketing techniques.
- Join at least three online or in-person writer’s groups to network with other writers and discuss marketing.
- Take a sales course.
- Set aside a second hour every day to apply what you’ve learned and actively market your work.

## **Ego Obstacle #2**

**“Lindsey Buckingham Syndrome” (also known as “I’m too brilliant for the world to understand.”)**

No disrespect to Lindsey Buckingham, but his ego has definitely kept him from achieving the level of solo commercial success he has always wanted. He has talked about how he feels that “people just don’t understand his music,” and how

Stevie Nicks achieved popular solo success because she was focused on giving the people what they wanted.

In her book *Storms: My Life with Lindsey Buckingham and Fleetwood Mac*, author Carol Ann Harris portrays Buckingham as an egomaniac and as a person who thinks he is a misunderstood musical genius. In interviews with Buckingham, it is easy to see his egotistical side shine through. He says of Rumors: "When "Rumors" went crazy, I just couldn't bring myself to feel that strongly about the album. At some point, all the stuff surrounding it started to become the main focus. There was a gap between what I felt was important internally --- what I had accomplished musically --- and the popular acclaim."

He was never satisfied with the success of Rumors because he never appreciated being popular for making a crowd-pleasing album. This represents one of the major problems many artists face: the

line between what we view as “selling out” and staying true to our art. Sometimes there is a disconnect between what we think is important and what the public wants to consume. However, if you want to make a living as a writer, you have to produce what the public wants to read. I’ve been through Lindsey Buckingham Syndrome and come to the conclusion that it is o.k. to write about Miley Cyrus and to make money from doing so. I can still write about important things too, whether people read them or not.

### **How to crush it**

- Give yourself permission to write for a wide audience.
- Realize it’s not about people not understanding your work; it’s about people wanting to be entertained, and that’s o.k.
- Commit as much time to your artistic, deep, genius projects as you do to your commercial pieces.

- Banish “selling out” from your vocabulary. There’s no such thing. You can satisfy the masses *and* write the next artistic masterpiece.

## **Ego Obstacle #3: “My editor ruined my story!”**

Imagine pouring your heart and soul into a piece and submitting it, only to get it back all chopped up, rearranged, and shortened. The first time this happens, your heart will just drop.

Your editor has butchered your piece! It is not a good feeling to submit something you think is perfect and get it back changed significantly. I suffered from this ego obstacle for a couple of years, until I realized that the editors knew the audience better than I did, and that they were actually polishing my story to perfection for that

audience. They also knew search engines better than I did, and a lot of what they were doing was crafting my piece to perform better for the SEO “spiders.” This ego obstacle is an absolute must to overcome or you will waste a lot of time feeling terrible for no reason.

### **How to crush it:**

- Accept that your pieces will be edited
- Appreciate the hard work the editor is doing to tighten up your piece.
- Actively and sincerely thank your editors. You may not know it now, but they are your best friends in this business.



## **Ego Obstacle #4: Reader Comments**

This is a tough one. If you're brand new to the business and have not yet published a piece, let me give you a rude awakening before someone else does it for you.

Readers, for the most part, are great people. They're just like you and me.

Commenters, on the other hand, well now they are a different story, and a different breed.

Some commenters are just fine, wonderful even. They'll compliment your writing and make you feel great. But the unfortunate reality is that some

commenters are brutal. Not only are they brutal; they're vicious, degrading and nasty. They are outright bullies. Just recently, I had one of my writers be accused of plagiarism by a commenter. He also called her an "untalented hack."

Plagiarism is a very serious accusation and one we do not take lightly at the newspaper where I work. I checked the article on Copyscape, and lo and behold, it returned *zero* results.

Why do people behave in this way? Some experts feel it is because hiding behind a screen encourages people to lash out and makes them feel anonymous. In the case of this gentleman I have no idea why he called my writer a plagiarist. I had to go into the comments section under the article and defend her. I am also going to ban the commenter permanently from the site.

Besides false accusations, commenters are fond of saying an article is "poorly written" when they simply do not like the view or facts presented in the article. Rather than formulate their own thesis, they engage in ad hominem attacks on the author.

Whenever one of my writers gets a negative comment, especially my newer writers, they understandably get upset. Getting a terrible comment would hurt anyone and it is perfectly natural that this is a big ego bruiser. For this obstacle, there are measured steps you must take if you're going to mentally survive in this business.

### **How to crush it:**

- Place strict limitations on the number of comments you read. I allow myself up to five per week and no more.
- Allow yourself to respond to up to three negative comments per week and to do a “back and forth” argument up to two times only.
- Do not return to the story after you have completed your allotment or look at any additional comments.
- Reach out to your senior editor, spouse, friend or family member for reassurance.

- Stick to this “comment diet” fastidiously or you will waste way too much time embroiled in very stressful fighting with people who do not deserve your attention.
- Re-read positive comments and respond to as many as you can. You may end up forming a new friendship or making an important business connection.
- If a negative comment is valid, take the feedback and learn from it without getting upset, then thank the person for the constructive criticism. For example, when I first began in the newspaper business, I wrote an article about a study but I neglected to identify the exact study name and where it was published. A reader wrote in and pointed it out. At first I was upset, but he was absolutely right. I wrote back and thanked him, and it turned into a very positive experience.

## **Ego Obstacle #5: “I deserve more money.”**

You do deserve more money, but you know what? Everyone deserves more money, or at least that’s what everyone says. This ego obstacle is especially daunting for new writers starting out. I recently had a writer say she refused to write for less than “x amount” per article.

Well, we don’t always get that dreamed of “x” amount, but when we publish, we’re doing something even more important than earning money: we’re building our portfolios. Money will eventually come, but the most important thing is to build a name for yourself and showcase your talents. I am by no means suggesting that anyone

should write for free, although in some cases that might be helpful at the very beginning of a writer's career so they can build up samples, but do be thankful that you're earning money writing. It's an incredibly competitive and tough market out there, and earning money from writing is not an easy feat. Don't jump into the ring with your guns blazing; take the time to build up your portfolio and know that as you grow, so will your income.

### **How to crush it**

- Research what the going rate is currently per hour, per word and per article. A good place to find out is on [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com). There, you can search for freelance writers and explore their rates.
- Set a limit on how many “low pay” jobs you will do in exchange for building up your portfolio, but don't discount them entirely. That one sample could be the key to impressing someone at the New York Times

or even the local millionaire blogger who pays big for content.

- Don't verbalize your feelings to your boss. He or she will only get annoyed. If you're in a position to ask for a raise, ask for one, but don't say you deserve more money on the second day of writing for a new place.

This is by no means a complete list of all of the ego obstacles you may face when embarking on or continuing your writing career, but by viewing these obstacles as things against which you can take action, they become much more manageable.

Getting past these obstacles was a crucial part of achieving one of my life dreams: becoming a successful full-time freelance writer. I never thought I would be able to do it, but I was wrong. I make a living as a writer, and you can, too. Don't let ego stand in your way. Crush those ego obstacles now so the path ahead will be easier and far more enjoyable.



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