

## Writing Help And Morning Pages

Reading Julia Cameron's "The Sound of Paper" is like revisiting an old friend. For more than fifteen years, her morning pages have been my daily writing help, the friend that coaxed me out of fear and inertia about putting words on paper and like the Nike slogan, urged me to "Just Do It!"

Why is it so difficult to write? Writing is an activity removed from direct experience. Writers have often mourned the loss of words to describe an event and this is probably because rendering what happened in words involves a completely different set of neural motor skills. Freud in "Civilization and Its Discontent" sees writing as technology; both he claims act as "prosthetics" to the body, functioning as an appendage or addition. Even the word "prosthetics" is ambivalent, carrying both the negative connotation of loss or compensation and the positive sense of extension. After all, writing is a later development of the human brain and signals not only the beginning of recorded history but also the evolution of the highly specialized and compartmentalized intelligence in the prefrontal cortex.

In "The Sound of Paper", Julia Cameron reiterates what she has so poignantly elaborated in her previous books--the creative self is buried so deep in our psyche, we have to develop ways to let it out. And morning pages, like solitary walks or runs, done consistently on a daily basis, form the "pivotal tool of a successful creative life (2)." The difficulty we experience in writing comes from the specialized voice in our head: "We write grudgingly and under half steam, resentfully and uphill. 'Who cares 'and 'This is stupid' are our companion thoughts (25)." It is usual, when the inner voice is struggling to find a place in the outer world, that the censor places it under a scalpel. Without the writing help of morning pages, most voices remain unheard.

The easiest form of writing is the trade school type that disseminates information. The writing that engages our authentic being, our fears and passions is the most difficult to execute. It demands a different kind of writing help-- rigorous and open self-acceptance, a visceral catharsis of our "self" on paper and unless we have built a conduit of safe passage for this inner voice, the water can be treacherous indeed. Many writers have been drowned by voiceless inundation.

The morning pages, like the daily walk or run, is a means to engage this voice. Writing first thing in the morning allows you to evade the censor. "Spilling out of bed onto the page" (as Julia Cameron puts it) helps the writing self side-track the critic. The repetitive nature of the morning pages assures your psyche safe passage on your journey. Securely ensconced in a routine, it will spill its guts out--and that's what you want.

Without this spillage, the daytime writing that you do will never quite have that ring of authenticity that is the mark of a writer who has made the plunge into her instinctual being. Because these morning pages are not meant for public scrutiny, they are your means of internal housekeeping, letting the little woman (or man) have her say about things in the house. And the more she is allowed her say, the stronger your trust in your gut instinct and the more resilient you are to the opinion of others.

It's like building a set of muscles with running. On most days, I do not feel like running. But what I have found is that the simple act of lacing my running shoes, getting out into the pavement or treadmill, beginning the motion of running will trigger a visceral engagement that changes the entire experience. More often than not, my best runs have been on days when I least wanted to run. Had I listened to my head, I would have missed a fabulous engagement with my legs. The head seems always at odds with the body and writing help that works with the body somehow straightens out the head.

Both morning pages and running take time, but as with everything else, an investment of time and effort is in order for the miraculous to take place. We expect miracles to fall from the skies, part of our belief that we should be getting something for nothing. This sense of entitlement is the one of the most debilitating myths of the self help industry. Ask and it will be given--yes--ut we must also do our share of moving in the right direction.

Writing help like morning pages takes no more than twenty minutes; you are spilling your guts onto the page, not deliberately crafting words. Running or walking can take up forty minutes or more. Is it too much to ask for an hour a day to invest in physical and psychical musculature?

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

A runner for 27 years, retired schoolteacher and writer, Mary is helping people reclaim their bodies through nutrition, exercise, positive vision and creative engagement. You can visit her at <http://www.GreatBodyat50.com> or learn how she lost her weight at <http://www.greatbodyproteinpower.com>