

Welcome to the May Ezine edition for
"The Creative Penn"!



May has been a big month for me at the day job and also doing weekend speaking as well as attending conferences. I have probably overdone it and this week had a 4 day migraine to pay the price. Basically my system stopping me from doing anything else I think! I have just finished 50,000 words on my novel though, so have also managed to squeeze in some writing! **How has your writing month been?**

This ezine is a monthly dose of **information** and **inspiration** on Writing, Publishing options, Sales and Promotion... for your book. You can see [all the backlist here](#). Please do email me joanna@TheCreativePenn.com with suggestions for any topics to cover.

My Dialogue Sucks: Tips for Improving Dialogue in Your Novel

I have just submitted the first few chapters of my thriller novel, Pentecost to my writing group for critique. The responses have been great on plot but truly, my dialogue sucks! So here are some articles and links that I have been reading to try and improve my dialogue so hopefully they will help you too.

- **"Dialogue is not conversation"** from Robert McKee ['Story'](#). Conversation is boring, repetitive and concerns inane things. Dialogue moves the plot along, reveals character and every word is necessary to advance the story. As Alfred Hitchcock said, 'a good story is life with the boring bits taken out'.
- **Dialogue breaks up monotony** of paragraphs of exposition/description and **makes the story move faster** ([JA Konrath](#)). It is better to reveal story elements in dialogue than exposition. It should be natural, but not too natural (as above, it is NOT real conversation). Avoid adverbs and dialogue tags where possible i.e. Jill said wryly. Reading it aloud helps.

[For 7 more tips, read the full article here](#), and check the comments for more ideas!

Writing Q&A: Finding Time, Finishing Work and What To Do After a First Draft

Here are some questions sent in by readers of the blog, and my answers.

On finding time to write your book:

This is one of the most common questions asked, and basically there is only one answer. There is not enough time to do everything, so [what are you going to give up in order to write your book?](#) I personally went down to working 4 days per week, plus gave up TV (I do download shows from iTunes but it cuts out watching crap!). I also have very little social life, but am a happy hermit! [Here are some more ideas for finding time](#). Here is a free audio on [Beating Procrastination](#).

For answers to the following questions, [read the full post here](#)

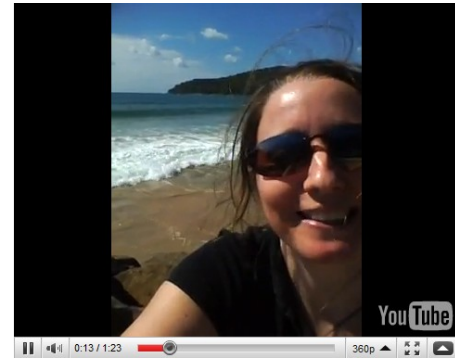
- What is your inspiration that keeps you moving towards finishing your book?
- I've almost finished my first draft, what do I do next?



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The Artist's Date: Take Time to Refill Your Creative Well

This idea comes from Julia Cameron's "[The Artist's Way](#)" which is a fantastic book. It is basically some **time alone** absorbing and refilling your creative well. It can be something entirely different, like a pottery class or a show, or could just be a walk or a new gallery exhibition. Anything that gives your brain some new stimulation and takes you away from your work in progress and your 'normal' life. It should be alone so you have time to reflect and can be an hour, a day or longer. [In this article and video, I talk about my own Artist's Date to Eumundi and Noosa, SE Queensland.](#)



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How Google Editions and New Google Search Affects Authors and Their Books

Google has launched their own digital publishing arm, Google Editions.

[This article from the Wall Street Journal](#) suggests that they will allow any retailers to add books to the store and they will be highlighted on their specific Books search page. Any device will be able to read them as long as the manufacturer allows it. So people can search with Google, find books and immediately buy them.

[Google has also changed their search](#) to split out different categories and Books is now a separate way to search. Clearly, Google controls search and once they have a bookselling business they will show books that are in their program, not others. [Click here to read the full article and see how the new search will have an impact on how your books are found, including some actions you can take right now.](#)

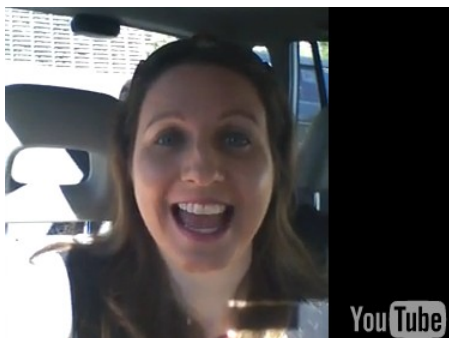
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I have completely revamped this online course and it now includes a 56 page colour ebook with everything you need to know about blogging, exclusive audio with 6 figure blogger, [Yaro Starak](#) as well as bonus audio from me on blogging. Plus videos on author branding, behind the scenes of my blog and how to use RSS. Plus a bonus teleseminar where I will answer your questions. Feedback has been extremely positive so far, so if you need to start a blog or improve your existing blog, give it a go!



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How To Prepare For Public Speaking

Becoming an excellent speaker is one of my goals because professional authors who can speak make more money than those who don't. They are also valued highly for the Festival circuit (which I love!). So in my quest to become a (highly paid) professional speaker, I recently spoke at the [Gold Coast Writer's Association](#). It was a full day workshop with 17 people on Author Branding, Blogging and Marketing using the internet.

[In this short video taken before the event](#), I explain how I prepare for my public speaking because a lot of people have asked me about it. The post also includes text overview for those who don't like video.



Book Publicity: All You Need To Know You Learned In Kindergarten

A short time after venturing into book publicity at the gentle request of an author friend, it dawned on me that I had plenty of experience and skills that could be put to use as a publicist. What I realized was that publicity isn't rocket science. I could do well if I just kept in mind five foundational concepts learned a long time ago in a place called kindergarten.

1) **First, Learn Your ABC's and 1-2-3's**

When my first client hired me, I didn't panic; I started reading. I knew I needed to learn some basics about book publicity; I needed to learn my ABC's. So I read everything I could get my hands on about publicity. Twitter, Google, and the library were all great playmates for this adventure. And the best part? Most of that stuff was totally free, which was really great since my lunch money was limited.

Flickr CC: [Jade X Justice](#)

For the rest of the lessons, [click here to read the full guest post](#) from Eleanor Van Natta.

22 Websites Every Writer Must Use

Your computer's fired up. Your printer's filled with paper and ink. Red pencils? Check. Cup of coffee? You have that, too, along with multi-colored highlighters, sticky notes, and a block of free time to create. So what do you need now, beside these basic writing tools?

In the computer age—when trends and information can change in the span of an hour—you'll also need the internet. From brainstorming through publication, writers of all genres can rely on these twenty-two websites to help navigate the writing process and make their work shine like gold.

[Click here to read this very useful guest post from Melissa Tamura.](#)



Writer's Retreat in Bali: Interview with Robin Sparks

[Robin Sparks](#) organizes writing retreats and workshops all over the world, and this October I am the speaker at her [Bali writer's retreat](#). Many writers would like to make time for this type of break, so I thought you might like to hear more about Robin and Bali.

[You can read the full interview with Robin including information about the Writer's Retreat Oct 1-6th here.](#)

Free Audio Podcasts: Remember that podcasts are just audio files distributed on the internet. You can listen online or download to a PC or player. You can also [Subscribe on iTunes here](#). By popular demand, I will be doing transcripts of certain podcasts so you can read if you don't want to listen.

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- [Using video for book promotion with Gideon Shalwick](#) (includes transcript)
- [Advanced Blogging tips with the Blogging Teacher, Paul Cunningham](#) (with transcript)
- [First time novel publishing experience with Graham Storrs, author of 'Timesplash'](#)



Until next month then! All the best in your writing—and please do contact me with any suggestions!

Joanna