



JILL BADONSKY WRITING RULES ©2012

1. There are no rules. If you don't like the prompt, write about something else. Write about your bad haircut, your stomach growling, or about not liking the prompt. This isn't school, it's creativity. Rebellion is good. Follow your intuition, not what some quirky woman with two cats and a disheveled hairdo says.
2. When someone finishes reading, we all will say, "Way COOL." I know it's contrived but after a while it makes the setting safer to share, it feels good for everyone, and it creates a sense of spirit.
3. Instead of going with your first idea, consider that your third idea might have more juice. It's easy to fall in love with the first ideas, but settling for the obvious keeps you on the surface, can be delusional, and is often simply lazy.
4. That said, sometimes the first hit is brilliant so again, intuition is your guide. Check your gut feeling. Don't overthink it. Use your judgment, and if you have no judgment, fake it.
5. Speaking of faking it. If you don't know what to write, just scribble anything. Make grunting noises that indicate "I am on to an amazing idea!" If asked to share just say, "I prefer not to at this stage, it's a fragile, astoundingly brilliant, and I'm letting it incubate."
6. Don't try to write something spectacular. In fact, don't even try to write anything "not bad." Go for TERRIBLE. Go for the crappy first draft. Just get words on the page. You can tweak them afterwards. Having fun is our main purpose. For editing fun: Try putting a middle sentence at the beginning and the first sentence at the end.
7. When you share, you don't have to say, "This sucks, but I'll read it anyway." We won't assume that you think it's great just cause you're reading it; we'll assume you're reading it because it's kind of fun to hear and share our words out loud. Doing this also helps in the editing process. You will not be pressured to read though. You can be as shy as you like.
8. Read it quickly to yourself before you read it out loud so you don't have to say, "Ha ha, I can't read what I wrote," or stumble when stumbling can be prevented.
9. Use large hand gestures when you read if you're nervous. It will distract people from your nervousness. Pounding the table does the same thing but try not to scare people.
10. Don't compare yourself to others.. Actually, that's a little unrealistic, it's just a thing we do as humans. If someone's writing intimidates you, think to yourself, "So what, I bet there's something I do better than them, or ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?" Or "I'm human, we compare ourselves with others, but I won't let it ruin my fun."

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