5 Stages of Writing an Awesome Blog

A while ago I committed to writing a blog a day for 40 days. (Link)

I wanted to build my archive, get my ideas out and create the habit of regular blogging.

I gave up after about 12 I think, and i learnt something about myself in the process...

I get bored easily and easily distracted by the next fun thing.

However, i did also learn some epic habits tips for writing blogs fast, without compromising my style or my voice.

If you want to write more frequently, but struggle with getting it “perfect” or seem to have lost your voice, these stage will set you on the right track and get you writing again.

Stage 1: inspiration

This is contemplation. You might have the tickle of an idea in your mind. This is where you dedicate some defined “sitting” time to mull it over.

I like to curl up in my sofa by the window. I take a pad and paper to jot notes. And i allow myself thinking time.

I usually have the topic in my mind, so i ask myself “what do i know about XYZ”

I sit back and let the thoughts come to me. i jot down ideas that pop into my mind. List, notes. Sometimes I’ll get a phrase or perhaps a title.

This is no time for editing or fleshing out ideas. It’s just a brainstorm. Creative time.

Stage 2: Draft

AKA: just write badly.

When it’s time to write, I’ve found it MOST helpful to set a time limit, like 30 minutes. Sometimes even 20.

You might feel like you need all the time in the world to relax and be creative, but in reality, the best creativity comes from pressure and restrictions like deadlines.

When i know I’ve got to get all my ideas out in 20 minutes, i don’t stop to edit or mull over a particular word or get the thesaurus out.

I just write. I use words like “good” and I’ll use the same word over and over. Repition. This is not the stage for editing or making it pretty or showing off your vocabulary. This is ideas stage, this is for getting in flow and getting your ideas on paper. I find that if i stop to go back and edit the previous sentence, i lose momentum. Just keep going, no matter how crap that previous sentence was. Hot tip: Don’t reread your previous sentences - it slows you down!

Stage 3: fleshing out

This stage usually flows on from the deadline, or at least later that day. Pretty soon after.

I find that after about 20 minutes of writing badly, I’ve cleared my conscious mind and my unconscious mind wakes up and comes to play. This is where the good stuff comes out and i get into flow.

I often find the later half of my draft is way more cohesive and interesting, so it’s easier to edit.

Once I’ve got it all on the paper, then i can go back and edit it.

Here you spend the biggest chunk of time. I generally don’t set a time limit for this, unless it’s like “due by Friday” sort of thing.

I make sure my ideas follow a logical order, that I’m telling a story, that i’m using interesting language and have stopped repeating “good” all over the place.

I spend more contemplation time, I’ll get the thesaurus, I’ll find the links I’ve mentioned and insert them. I might move paragraphs around, choose sub-heading titles. And probably choose the main title too. The title might have come to me during my stage 1 inspriation, and sometimes that helps to guide the flow of the article, but later on I’ll usually come up with a better way to phrase it.

Stage 4: Reflection

Once I’m happy with it, I’ll leave it for a few days.

I’ll save the final draft somewhere i can access it easily, like the notes app on my phone. I’ll reread it constantly, and make little changes. Upgrade a word here, move a sentence around there. Delete what’s not relevant. Find another typo.

I find that the more often i go over it, the better the final will be. Your brain is powerful and it keeps working even when you’re not actively attending to something. Every time you read, you’ll find something more to upgrade.

This isn;t to say that it’ll never end, but I’d give yourself a few days to contemplate it and upgrade some words before you publish the draft. If not, you’ll find yourself rereading it online a few weeks later and wish you’d changed a few bits, or spot another typo!

Stage 5: Expansion

When you’ve got the final draft, you can publish!

Aside from your website or whether you host your blogs, this piece of absolute gold content can now be repurposed for many other things.

I love to take the blog and split it into social media snippets. I highlight individual ideas, or use a quote, or create colourful quote cards, and sometimes even do a video discussing the topic.

You really can (and should) use each piece of content you create more than once.

These stages are not limited to blogs, I’m sure. Articles, website pages, emails, you bio...

And in the interest of helping you, I’m going screenshot/save each stage of this blog so you can see my process. Right now I’m writing the draft (stage 2) and I;m pretty sure it sound crappy because it’s 4:30am before I head off to my shift at BHP. (This sentence probably won’t be included in the final version, but you’ll see!)

Even though I didn’t;t stick to the 40 blogs in 40 days, i learnt heaps, developed my writing system, found a good flow for my voice/style, and discovered these stages i can share with you, to hopefully inspire you and help you on YOUR journey!