

The Writer Within – What Kind of Writer Are You?

Article Ten: Putting It All Together

By Janice Alonso

These columns began last September and if you have followed the suggested steps, you should have a better understanding of your writer within. If you've written one page per day since then, you have about 180 pages toward your book or ten 18-page short stories. These pages may only be a first draft, but they represent what your writer can do. You have gotten this far because you:

- tackled a large project through small steps (“What Is My Approach?” article 2)
- discovered your reasons for wanting to be an author (“Why Do You Want to Write?” article 3)
- showed up to write (“When Will You Write?” article 4 and “Where Will You Write?” article 5)
- settled on a subject (“What Is Nonfiction?” article 6 and “What Is Fiction?” article 7)
- had a visual image of who your readers are (“Who Is Your Audience?” article 8)
- learned which roads get you from start to finish (How Will You Write?” article 9)

Using “Turtle Steps” as an example, I will take you from idea to finished piece to illustrate my writing approach.

http://www.janicealonso.com/janicealonso.com/GWA_Connection.html

Early one morning while sitting in my office drinking coffee, I noticed a turtle crossing from a thicket of hedges toward my butterfly garden. On a note card I wrote the words “turtle” and “butterfly garden.” The following morning, I pulled out the note card and let my mind roam. I added, “The Tortoise and the Hare,” grandmother telling me story, fast/slow . . . any idea sparked from “turtle” and “butterfly garden.” These steps occurred during my *brainstorming* time.

During the week, I looked up “The Tortoise and the Hare” and reread it. I wrote down the moral of the story and began the bare-bones outline:

III – Slow and steady wins the race

II – Personal and professional examples

I – Personal experience of turtle and butterfly garden

Before I fleshed out the outline, I thought about the story's form and audience. I chose to write a devotional for adults. I selected several possible Bible verses to support the message, "Slow and steady wins the race." I then filled in the outline with details to suit my intended audience. These steps occurred during my *researching* time.

When the time came for me to write, I opened a word document and wrote my name in the top left hand corner (Step 1). I moved down the page and gave my piece a title. The title doesn't have to remain the title, but give your idea the respect it deserves by naming it. I wrote the first draft from first to last sentence according to my outline. After the first draft was complete, I rewrote, edited, and re-edited the piece. I let the piece rest. Then I rewrote, edited, and re-edited the piece several more times. These steps occurred during *writing* time.

While the piece was resting, I looked up possible markets for the submission process. I knew the form, length, audience, and subject matter of the piece, so selecting appropriate markets was a matter of finding matches. I narrowed my list to ten periodicals. These steps occurred during *researching* time.

I wrote a cover letter answering the two questions, "Who Am I and Why Am I Qualified to Write this Devotional?" I submitted the piece exactly the way each market requested. I made a copy of each letter for my records. I did this during *writing* time.

I created a folder for "Turtle Steps." In the folder I placed a page with all the places and dates I submitted the story. By each entry I left a space to make notes when the piece was returned or if an editor took time to give comments. I acknowledged any comments via an email to the editors. These steps occurred during *organizing* time.

Articles two through nine have prepared you to write. You now have something to say and a designated time and place to say it. I chose the title "What Kind of Writer Are You?" for this first series because I believe a writer must first know himself/herself and his/her work habits before the "partnership" begins. Would you go into business without

knowing the person with whom you'll be dealing? Then why would you set out on a huge project such as writing a book without knowing how the "writer within" you works? I've enjoyed writing these columns and hope something I've shared has benefited you and your writer within.

Remember – write everyday and sign your name to it.