

One Year of Winning at Writing



You Can DO This!

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Alone In A Room With Invisible People

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Intro

The entire process of setting New Year's Resolutions has failure baked right in.

The New Year's Resolution Process (NYRP) fails to identify achievable goals, fails to set achievable steps, fails to build your Reason Why — and creates an ever-lengthening history of bleak failure that leads you deeper into feelings of futility and despair every year you try it.

I don't set New Year's Resolutions anymore, because there was only one — EVER — that I actually accomplished.

And I didn't accomplish it **because** I set it as a New Year's Resolution.

I accomplished that resolution—Starting and finishing my first novel before I turned 25, because I accidentally supported my resolution with a list of steps that allowed me to make it happen. I succeeded **in spite of** the stupid New Year's Resolution.

SO...

This workshop will **not** show you how to achieve a *New Year's Resolution*.

It **WILL** show how to *intentionally* take the exact steps I accidentally discovered, steps that will let you accomplish what you want in your life.

You'll need to listen to the podcast while using the worksheets.

One little note: IF you are physically able to do so, print the worksheets and handwrite your answers. I've discovered physically writing answers gives me different Right-Brain/ Left-Brain results than typing. (In my case, usually **better** ideas.

Defining Virtue

Virtue sounds stuffy, Victorian, and old-fashioned. It isn't something most folks go looking for in their everyday lives.

But for every person who has ever set a New Year's resolution and then failed to achieve it, defining and understanding **your own virtue** as it relates to what you want out of your life is STEP ONE.

To create YOUR virtue, you will:

- **Make choices** that you find powerful and meaningful
- **Aim your life in your defined BEST direction**
- **Build simple actions** toward **your** goals
- **Obtain** clear, objective, measurable **results**
- **Give yourself your best possible life**, as defined by YOU.

That's your goal — to live every day of your life doing what brings you joy, fulfillment, contentment, and a sense of achievement and earned pride.

Virtue requires you to see the value of your own life.

Virtue requires you to seek your meaning.

THEN...

Virtue Demands Action.

In the first section of this workshop, you will brainstorm and build the actions that will give you each piece of the life you want to live in simple, small bites.

Each BIG goal (write a book, publish a podcast, build and maintain a website...) gets its own set of sheets. **I recommend starting with just the ONE goal you need to accomplish first.** There's no point in building an author website, for example, until you're writing and publishing books.

VIRTUE: _____ DATE _____ P# _____

Virtues are actions, not results. So... **WHAT ACTION** do you choose to take?

WHY is this action a virtue for you? (What makes you want to do this?)

Stare into your desired future and see yourself working toward your objective. WHAT does this VIRTUE look like in your everyday life. Show each SMALL, achievable action you're taking in *best-guess* order. **Print extra pages if necessary.**

I_AM_DOING: _____

I_AM_DOING: _____

I_AM_DOING: _____

I_AM_DOING: _____

I_AM_DOING: _____

I_AM_DOING: _____

Defining Pride

Like virtue, pride can only be earned, and it can only come from successfully completing actions you choose to take.

For example, I cannot be proud of being a woman. I had absolutely nothing to do with the sperm hitting the egg or with anything that came afterwards. I can be — and am — *happy about it*. But I did nothing to earn it, so I cannot be PROUD of it.

I cannot be proud of my Scots ancestry. Again, when my stark-nekkid blue-painted Celtic forbears came screaming down out of the north, blood frothing from their mouths, and scared the crap out of the Roman invaders, stopping the Romans' northward conquest and forcing them to build Hadrian's wall, I wasn't there. The survivors made the people who made the people who eventually made me, but I get no credit for any thing awesome that my ancestors did because **I did nothing to affect it**. So I can love the story of the Celts and Hadrian's wall, but it isn't MY story. *I earn no pride from having that as part of my history.*

HOWEVER... when I was a 90-pound 14-year-old girl standing alone at a public bus stop in San Jose, Costa Rica, and a full-grown adult male perv sneaked up behind me, grabbed me, and started groping me and rubbing himself all over me, making creepy, disgusting noises, **I can be (and am) proud of the fact that I went to war against him**. I growled and snarled, stomped on his instep, smacked the back of my head into his face, and then turned when he let go of me and attacked him with my umbrella, and when he ran, I chased him until he escaped, **KILL** being the only thought in my little kid brain.

(I was wearing six-inch platform heels and bell-bottoms, so he had a major flight advantage, while *I had the advantage of not catching him*, which —had I succeeded— probably would not have ended well for me.)

When that happened to me, I'd had no training in self-defense, no previous experience, nothing that would have prepared me to deal with that attack. That response was just **me. IS me**. In that moment, I discovered part of who I am.

And I am proud of being that person, who responded to that attack with furious, ferocious, totally violent, absolutely appropriate action.

You earn your pride from actions you take.

And then, to reward yourself for actions taken, you keep records of the things you can be proud of, and commemorate the actions that make you who you are.

- I am proud to have been a fourteen-year-old warrior girl, attacking and triumphing over a bigger, stronger, adult molester.
- I am proud to be the creator of many, many novels and shorter works of fiction that I worked my ass off getting right — stories that satisfied my deep need to create; stories that my readers enjoy.
- I am proud to be the creator of many, many writing classes that have helped my fellow writers achieve some of their own dreams, and that have helped foster the creation of new, original, good fiction for other readers.

So now you're going to plan the pride you can earn, and build your path to earning it.

You're going to investigate the results of actions you can take to *earn justifiable pride*. You're going to ask yourself, "What would I accomplish if I...?"

And then you're going to start small.

"What would I accomplish if I wrote just 200 words a day, five days a week?"

You'll then imagine the outcome. For example, "In 260 writing days, writing only 200 words five days a week, I could complete the first draft of one complete novel.

Here's the math for that.

$365 \text{ days} \div 7 \text{ days in a week} = 52 \text{ weeks}$.

$52 \text{ weeks} \times 5 \text{ days per week} = 260 \text{ writing days}$

260 days x 200 words = 52,000 words, or one full-length novel first draft.

What does 200 words look like when you do it? It's roughly one page of typing with 1.25" margins all around, double-spaced type, and 12-point Courier print.

The excerpt below is 200 words long (as counted by my word processor)...

HOWEVER... when I was a 90-pound 14-year-old girl standing alone at a public bus stop in San Jose, Costa Rica, and a full-grown adult male perv sneaked up behind me, grabbed me, and started groping me and rubbing himself all over me, making creepy, disgusting noises, **I can be (and am) proud of the fact that I went to war against him.** I growled and snarled, stomped on his instep, smacked the back of my head into his face, and then turned when he let go of me and attacked him with my umbrella, and when he ran, I chased him until he escaped, **KILL** being the only thought in my little kid brain.

(I was wearing six-inch platform heels and bell-bottoms, so he had a major flight advantage, while *I had the advantage of not catching him*, which –had I succeeded– probably would not have ended well for me.)

When that happened to me, I'd had no training in self-defense, no previous experience, nothing that would have prepared me to deal with that attack. That response was just **me. IS me.** In that moment, I discovered part of who I am.

And...

If you write just that much and no more, five days a week, you can finish 52,000-word first draft novel in one year.

So...now you ask YOUR **What If?** questions.

In the following PRIDE worksheets:

Note that header looks like this:

PRIDE: DATE SET _____ **DATE ACHIEVED** _____

When you start each new Pride worksheet, write in date when you fill it as your DATE SET.

Don't do a bunch of sheets at once. Just do two or three at a time, keep them small and light and doable, and stay focused on achieving your "I will" outcomes.

Start one NEW pride sheet when you complete a previous one, so that you always have a couple sets of small objectives you're working on.

***Always Only EVER* include outcomes you can actually control on your Pride sheet.**

For years, I had, "Hit NYT Bestseller List" as one of my objectives. Problem is, there is nothing in the world I can do to make that outcome happen.

And for years, the fact that I had "failed" at something utterly random left me feeling as if I had genuinely failed, in spite of the fact that I was publishing commercially with big New York publishers, was writing full-time for a living, was paying every single bill out of my writing income, and was at home with my kids as a full-time mom.

When you complete each separate result, mark a little date beside that result.

When you successfully earn each Pride element on a sheet, fill in the DATE ACHIEVED

FIRST: Ask yourself **what would happen** if you took a specific action, for example: built a fiction world, wrote one story a month, revised my trunk novel, etc.

***WHAT IF I** build a world to set short stories in?*

SECOND: Give a specific example of HOW you would use the outcome of this action.

***HOW:** I could use the world I built to write short stories about telepathic secret cat overlords.*

THIRD: You ask **WHY you would pursue this particular action** rather than others that might be equally tempting, like watching all the episodes of *I Love Lucy* until you can quote the dialogue from each one.

***IF I** wrote a series of Secret Cat Overlord stories, I could work on selling them or self-publishing them, and I would create a body of work that readers could discover.*

FOURTH: You define exactly and specifically the RESULT you will obtain from your action — **the element(s) of pride** you will earn from taking this action, and how doing this will change your life. **Include only direct results of your actions** in your RESULT.

***I will** be able to define myself as a real writer.*

***I will** be able to point to real stories I have actually written.*

***I will** be able to start gathering rejections and feedback (even negative feedback teaches me about this work).*

***I will** gain experience from each story I complete and revise.*

***I will** move myself closer to other goals of mine, like writing and publishing longer fiction, quitting my day job, and making a living from my creativity.*

PRIDE: DATE SET _____

DATE ACHIEVED _____

WHAT IF I _____

HOW: _____

IF I _____

I WILL: _____

DATE _____

I WILL: _____

DATE _____

I WILL: _____

DATE _____

I WILL: _____

DATE _____

FINALLY... You're Not Alone...

And while you'll have to do the sheets by yourself, and hold yourself accountable for doing the work and reaching your goals, you can share your struggles, your skinned knees and frustrations, and you're **YES, I DID IT!** successes with other writers who are doing this same process right along with you... no matter where you are, no matter when you start.

YOUR year starts the day you say, "I'm going to do this, starting right now."

You will be welcome any time.

Listen to the episode [HERE](#):

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/WORKSHOP-One-Year-of-Winning-at-Writing.html>

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Log in. Then...

Participate in YOUR Year of fiction writing — start anytime, list your goals, and get support and help here:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/class/WORKSHOP-One-Year-of-Winning-at-Writing-FORUM.html>