

#5onFri: Five Ways to Rekindle Inspiration in Your Current Writing Project

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Writing a novel is a lengthy process, so it's understandable that our inspiration can start to drift along the way. Inspiration often goes hand in hand with motivation – when we're feeling excited and enthusiastic about our WIP the words flow more easily and the writing sessions fly by. Likewise, when we find ourselves feeling bored or stuck with our WIP, it can lead to procrastination and the temptation to give up or start fresh with a new project.

As soon as we start to get comfortable and familiar with our work-in-progress, our creativity turns to the next problem to solve – giving us new ideas that seem much more enticing than the project we're already committed to. This is shiny-idea-syndrome, and abandoning or switching projects doesn't fix the problem so much as moving it around.

If we actually want to finish the manuscripts we start (essential for our development as writers), we have to find ways to maintain our inspiration, reasons to keep writing and rediscover the joy we felt when we first started them.

1) Reread your highlights

When we're writing we often focus hard on moving forwards; writing the next scene, finishing that particular draft. This is a great way to avoid your inner-editor, but the problem with fixing our sights on the finished manuscript is that we can neglect how far we've already come. Add to that the sense of endless wading around that can weigh down the middle of a draft, and that finishing line can start to feel a long way off.

Switch up your mindset by having a quick reread of some of your favourite scenes. Some of it might be a bit rubbish (especially if you're in an early draft), but there is bound to be a bit of gold in there, too. Celebrate the little things that light you up about your story – whether that's a clever bit of dialogue or a revealing flash of description.

2) Recreate a favourite trope

Forget your outline for a moment and take a look at the genre you're writing in. Why did you choose to write this genre? What are your favourite tropes and cliches that you associate with it? Most of us write genres that we love to read, so it makes sense that we'll enjoy writing the things that make those genres what they are. Get back to basics and return to what you love by writing a scene or chapter that recreates a trope for your story. It doesn't have to stay in your finished manuscript, but it might just help you reignite some of that passion for your project and remind you why you started it.

3) Flash fiction

Feeling blocked or uninspired with your writing can also be a sneaky symptom of fear. If you're finding the idea of continuing with your WIP overwhelming, it might be time to try taking the pressure off. Staying with the characters and world of your story, seek out some simple writing prompts online and have a go at some flash fiction. It's a great way to see your story from a different angle and can help with generating some new threads to follow up with when you return to your manuscript.

4) Have someone else read it

Those early stages of writing are essentially a solitary endeavour, which often means it's left down to you and



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your will power alone to remain motivated and inspired. If you can, find someone you trust to read what you're working on (or parts of it). Make sure you're clear about how honest/brutal you'd like your feedback, and get them to pull out the lines and scenes they loved. Getting the chance to talk to someone else about the characters and world of your story really helps bring them to life and can provide a much needed confidence boost if yours is flagging a little.

Resources

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5) Don't feel you have to write your book in order

If you really can't face writing the next scene on your outline, jump ahead to something that excites you. Make it easier on yourself to get into your writing flow by choosing a scene that feels fun to get stuck into – it might be an action scene or a big emotional reveal, anything that you usually enjoy writing. Once you've got going you can drop back into your manuscript and fill in the scene you skipped. Even better, you could try and work out why that particular scene felt so uninspiring. Maybe there's a way to boost the tension or heighten the emotional stakes?

Ultimately, a lot of this comes down to remembering the reason we started our novel. What was it about that story and those characters that compelled you to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard)? It's easy for inspiration to seem like this flighty and unpredictable creature, a formless muse that floats in on a whim, but in reality we really do hold the power to reignite and maintain that sense of creativity and passion in our own work.



Rosie O'Neill writes contemporary fantasy for young adults who like untraditional romances and differently-abled heroines. She's also a book coach and writing mentor – helping writers find the magic in their manuscripts and get their books finished. Read her [blog](#) or download her [free workbook](#) with resources for building a more joyful writing habit, and connect with her on [Instagram](#).

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