



CREATE & RAISE WITH US

WRITING &
PERFORMING TIPS

the UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

VIRTUALLY UNUSUAL CREATE-A-THON

*Get inspiration and tips for
your creative process*



WRITING AND *PERFORMING* TIPS

WRITING TIPS

1. The simplest ideas always make for the best stories.
2. Outline your story scene by scene, chapter by chapter, and whittle each part down to one sentence. After each section is outlined, ask yourself: "and then what happens?"
3. Storytelling is about connecting people, saying "I've felt this way or experienced this and I need to know if you have, too."
4. Make your writing space your own: disconnect from the internet, turn off your phone, keep snacks nearby, and avoid a public space if possible (coffee shop writing is overrated).
5. Use a 1 to 5 ratio for timing. For example, if you set aside 5 hours to write, 4 of those hours will be used for figuring out what to write and only 1 hour will be actual writing.
6. Listen to the voices in your head. Writing is the only time where this kind of psychosis should be fully embraced.
7. When creating a character, make a profile and ask them: "what is your greatest wish? Your biggest fear? Do you have a secret? Do you have a habit? What's your motto?" You'll be surprised what they say!
8. Carry a notebook with you at all times (this could be an app in your phone, a small pad of paper, etc.) so that you can jot down ideas when inspiration strikes.
9. Write something you'd want to watch. Know your audience, but also trust them. In the words of the late, great improv guru Del Close: "Treat your audience like a genius, and lo and behold, they will become one."
10. Never fall in love with a first draft. Or a second. Maybe not even a third.
11. Don't try to edit while you write. It's nearly impossible! In fact, when it comes to writing and editing, our brains can only do one thing at a time. So write first, take a step back, and then edit.
12. Writing is easy. Rewriting is tough. Don't be afraid to let go of words and characters and parts of your writing that you really, really love, but ultimately don't serve the story.
13. Ask only people you trust and who you know will give you honest feedback for their opinion. From what they tell you, you will most likely only use 90% of their feedback and throw the rest away (hey, no one is right 100% of the time).
14. If you are having trouble getting to the climax of your story or are bogged down in the middle of the script, try writing the ending first. This way, you can go back and have a target to aim for that will connect the throughline of your plot.
15. Think of characters you love. Why do you think they are so great? Ask yourself: what would I want to have my audience connect to with my characters? Add that in.



WRITING AND *PERFORMING* TIPS

PERFORMANCE TIPS

1. Nervous? Just remember: the audience is on your side and nobody wants you to fail.
2. Check your breathing before you begin any performance. Take a moment just to breathe. During your performance, make sure to pace yourself, take pauses and beats when necessary, and come back to your breath whenever you need to.
3. Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse! Then, once you've done all the rehearsing you can do, let it all go and trust yourself. You got this!
4. Tips for creating a self-rehearsal workout routine: do your lines out loud for 40 minutes. Then take 2 hours off. Come back and work on it for another 15 minutes. Then take 2 hours off. And so on!
5. There is so much that can be said in silence. Don't be afraid to let your face and body do the speaking for you.
6. It's not about confidence, it's about certainty. Be certain in who you are, what you are doing, and don't back down.
7. From Rachel Bloom, when casting *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*: "All that matters is if you buy what you are saying and truly believe it...making the words seem new to you and like you just thought of them is really, really important."
8. Don't be afraid to reveal who you are instead of hiding behind a character. Every character has a bit of you in it, so play to your strengths.
9. Stop acting. Like, really, don't act. Let the camera do the work. You just say the lines. No acting. Just be. You are enough!
10. Only drink water when acting. Other beverages -- coffee, soda, milk -- can throw off your energy, put imbalances on your voice, or make you crash later on.
11. For each scene you do, there should be a moment of decision for your character, where they take action to get what they want. Find that moment because that's what the scene is about!
12. Acting is oftentimes about reacting. Stay present in the moment and be ready for anything to come your way, then roll with it. Improvisational actors have a motto: "Yes, and..."
13. If you are having trouble getting into character, try to imagine them as a part of nature: ice, water, wind, fire, etc. Try to physicalize what that element is. Walk around like you are very breezy. Move with the weight of rocks. Playing around with your physicality frees you up in your body to become the character.
14. Make a playlist of all the songs your character would listen to. Put it on repeat. See what kind of mindset it puts you in.
15. When acting on stage, you have to cheat out so that you can play to the audience. When acting on a screen, the camera is your actor and you play to it. That being said, never look down the barrel of the lens unless you are specifically addressing the audience at home.