

NOTES FROM TIM FERRISS AND NEIL STRAUSS INTERVIEW ABOUT WRITING.

....an hour long interview boiled down to the key points for quick reading.
This interview drops golden tips for aspiring writers everywhere.

[Neil Strauss](#) has 7 NYTtimes best-selling books, so he's well-versed in writing.

[Tim Ferriss](#) has best-sellers, and has a totally different approach to writing than Neil.

You can buy the whole series on CreativeLive [Here](#)

Link to watch 1-hour interview: [Here](#)

HOW DO YOU START WRITING? DO YOU SET A PAGE QUOTA?

Tim: I set my quota at only 2 pages per day. This way, I don't feel overwhelmed. Also, once I get started writing, I usually end up writing WAY more than 2 pages.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT?

Tim: Don't ask readers what they want, and just write that. Cherry pick from their suggestions, but don't always follow them completely.

Neil: All your audience knows is what you've done already. If you keep doing that, they'll get bored. So will you. I write what I care about most in that particular moment of my life.

Tim: If you really really care about something, you can make it interesting. There was an author who wrote about hand-carved wooden canoes, and also a book about oranges....and since he was so passionate about both, these otherwise boring subjects became amazing.

FIRST RULE OF WRITING:

Neil: I assume nobody cares about me or what I'm writing about. It's my job to MAKE them care. If you only write about "safe" subjects, it'll blend in.

"The insecure way, is the secure way."

BEST WAY TO WRITE A BOOK?

Neil & Tim: The only way to finish a book is to have a real-world deadline, with real-world harsh consequences!

Neil: If someone asks me to review a book, my FIRST question is, "When will you have it done by?" If they don't complete it by then, I refuse to look at their book ever. A harsh deadline is required, or you'll never finish.

HOW DO YOU DO RESEARCH FOR YOUR BOOKS?

Neil: Jot down EVERYTHING in notebook.

Tim: Jot down EVERYTHING on Evernote or Scrivner. I use Scrivner to write.

Neil: Start writing your 1st draft. It'll be terrible and unorganized. It's ok.

Neil: The way I write:

1st Draft = Just for me. No one ever sees this. It's rough and unorganized.

2nd Draft = Clean up, organize, remove useless content. Run by others.

3rd Draft = Read book out loud to friends, sees where they get bored, removes content.

HOW DO YOU STAY PRODUCTIVE WHEN WRITING?

Neil: I use a program on my Mac called "Freedom" that shuts off my internet for a certain amount of time. I ONLY write during that time.

Neil: I eliminate and automate ALL distractions. Make sure I have lunch BEFORE I start writing, and turn off all phones so I don't get distracted. I designate certain hours ONLY for writing.

Tim: Once I'm in the zone, I DON'T stop. I don't know if the same inspiration will come again in the next few days, so I run with it.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMETHING IS GOOD?

Neil: I read stuff out loud to my friends. If they start getting bored, I remove it.

Tim: I need a consensus to remove, but just ONE to love. So:

If one person hates something, no biggie, I leave it in.

If one person **absolutely loves** something, I leave it in.

If A LOT OF PEOPLE hate something, I remove it.

Neil: You need to be able to tell a captivating story. A story teaches better and engages better. "The brain learns from metaphor."

IF I WANT TO START WRITING, DO I FIRST START A BLOG, OR JUST WRITE A BOOK?

TIM: I'd write a blog first. If you can't consistently write one post a week....you DEFINITELY can't write a book. You'll quickly find out if you even LIKE writing that much or people like your writing.

NEIL: I like to keep my stuff secret and have a big release, so I don't blog about my projects. Basically, if you have sell 10,000 books, you'll get a book deal either way.

You can watch the whole interview on Tim's blog:

<http://www.fourhourworkweek.com/blog/2013/06/14/tim-ferriss-interviews-neil-strauss-7x-new-york-times-bestselling-author-on-the-creative-process/>

Thanks to Tim & Neil for doing this informative interview!

Neville Medhora