



# FEAR NOT!

## CONFIDENCE-BUILDING



INSIGHTS, TIPS &  
TECHNIQUES FOR  
**FREELANCE  
WRITERS**

**BY CAROL TICE**



**EDITED BY ANGIE MANSFIELD**

# **FEAR NOT! Confidence- Building Insights, Tips, and Techniques for Freelance Writers**

**By Carol Tice**

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# INTRODUCTION

Why isn't everyone a freelance writer?

After all, the lifestyle is awesome—you get to be your own boss, set your own hours, and write interesting projects. No more waiting for a skimpy raise that may never come, or worrying about being laid off! Your earning potential is limited only by your drive to put it out there.

And yet, many people who dream of living the freelance writer's life stay stuck in their day jobs, year after year.

There's one big reason why: They're shaking in their boots.

Freelancing feels risky. Asking for a gig. Turning in a draft to an editor and hoping they'll like it. Publishing a piece of writing and waiting for the reaction.

It feels like so much could go wrong—and you could end up embarrassed, or screw this up and see your freelance dream come crashing down.

The good news is, there are plenty of strategies you can use to push past your fears and take action to claim the freelance career you want. This e-book is a collection of the best fear-beating posts from my Make a Living Writing blog, culled from over 700 posts that have gone up since 2008.

I hope the tips in this e-book help you to move forward and launch your freelance writing career—or if you're already writing, to grow your writing income!

Enjoy,

Carol Tice

***NOTE: Some links in this e-book are affiliate links. That means we earn commissions if you buy products through those links. It won't cost you more, and we appreciate your giving us credit for referring you to these useful resources.***

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Carol Tice**



I'm a longtime freelance writer and former terrified singer-songwriter. Since 2008, I've been a passionate advocate for fair writer pay. I've authored or co-authored [two print books and six e-books](#) for entrepreneurs and freelance writers, including *The Pocket Small Business Owner's Guide to Starting Your Business on a Shoestring* (Allworth Press 2013) and *Freelance Business Bootcamp*.

I've earned a full-time living from writing since the mid-90s. I write the award-winning [Make a Living Writing](#) blog, which appears on the 2014 and 2015 Writer's Digest Top 101 Best Websites for Writers, and is a three-time winner of Write to Done's [Top 10 Blogs for Writers](#) contest. My freelance writing clients have included *Alaska Airlines Magazine*, *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur*, Dun & Bradstreet, Lending Tree, Costco, *Nation's Restaurant News*, and many more.

In 2011, I founded [Freelance Writers Den](#), the community where writers learn how to grow their freelance income—fast. It now has over 1,200 members. My new coaching program for mid-career writers, [Den 2X Income Accelerator](#), launched in spring 2015. Along with Linda Formichelli of The Renegade Writer blog, I teach writing and marketing for freelancers at [Useful Writing Courses](#).

I'm an L.A. native who's lived on an island near Seattle for the past 20 years, with my husband, the 2 kids who're still at home, (the grown one is my social media manager now) and Rex, the wonder dog. You can get in touch with me on [Twitter](#), or drop me an email at [carol@caroltice.com](mailto:carol@caroltice.com).

# ABOUT THE EDITOR

## Angie Mansfield



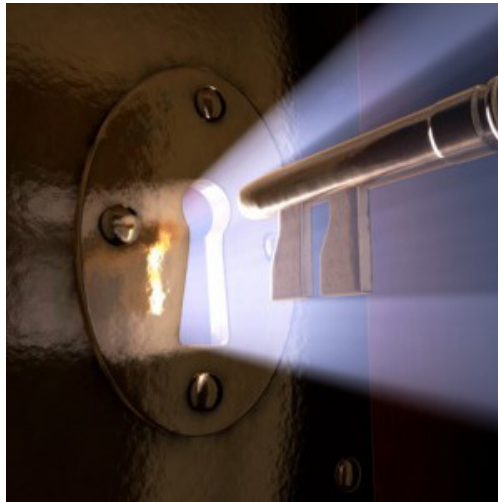
I've been freelancing for about seven years. I started out in the dreaded content mills when I got laid off from work. I've since worked my way into real clients, with no small amount of help from Carol and her Freelance Writers Den.

I now focus on writing [case studies and white papers](#) for my B2B clients. I joined the Den moderating staff in 2013, and now act as Moderator-in-Chief and weekend troubleshooter. In my spare time (ha!) you can find me on [Twitter](#) or revamping my [TranquiliGeek](#) blog.



# CHAPTER 9: FEAR-BUSTING STRATEGIES

## Unlock Your Writing Potential with the QTIP Method



When you start a new freelance writing gig, are you full of hope? I know I am.

This gig is going to be great. We're sure of it. This is the sample that's going to really take the portfolio up a notch. It's a game-changer. Exciting!

Then, things start to go wrong, and often, writers go straight down the emotional drain. For instance, take this recent comment from a Freelance Writers Den member (I've condensed it here):

*"Recently, I joined a freelance team developing an annual report for a local medical group. This is one of my first copywriting jobs, and I've never worked in health care.*

*"The first writer left, and I became the main writer. I had already done a little writing for them, and the project director loved it. So I was feeling good about this promotion.*

*"Now, after producing multiple sections for the report, my confidence has taken a beating.*

*"The project director has rewritten much of what I've turned in. I asked her earlier about her changes to see if I could get some feedback and improve, but she assured me the changes mostly reflected political considerations and subtleties of tone.*

*"I need reassurance that this is normal. Is there some way of knowing if the problem is all on my end?"*

*"I was thinking this experience might provide a way into future healthcare copywriting gigs, but now I wonder if I'm really cut out for it."*

Doubt creeps in, and the next thing you know, you think you don't have what it takes to be a freelance writer.

Why does this happen? It's due to a key error that writers seem to be prone to. You can fix it with my QTIP approach.

## **It's not about you**

Writers have deep-seated fears that we aren't really talented enough to do this for a living. If things go wrong, we jump immediately to the conclusion that it's our shortcoming.

But in my experience, most writers who are trying to do this for a living are perfectly competent wordsmiths.

What we often aren't is self-confident.

When I read the story above, I immediately thought of other possible reasons why this writer's copy is being rewritten. Maybe this manager...

- **...is a poor communicator**, and knows it. When they see what they haven't explained, they're embarrassed to go back to you for rewrites and just do it themselves.
- **...has too short of a deadline** to go back and forth, so they're just doing their own rewrites.
- **...is a control freak** who needs to rewrite everything, just to feel they touched the project.
- **...hates the blank page**, and researching and interviewing. They really just want you to create that first draft, and then they're good.
- **...needs to leave on vacation ASAP**, and doesn't have time to take you through what they need tweaked
- **...isn't feeling well** and isn't up to explaining what they need.
- **...has an evil boss above them** who always wants tons of revisions, and your manager wants to shield you from his irrational rage.

- **...are jealous that you're 'the writer' and they're not**, and need to prove to themselves they're talented.
- **...thinks rewrites are routine**, since they are, with many copywriting gigs. They've no idea you find this upsetting or stressful.

I could go on and on here, but that gives you a strong sense of how many other reasons there could be for the rewrites besides "you're not a good writer."

## Look at the facts

If you find your confidence sinking during a writing project, consider all the many possible reasons things might not be going as you expected.

Put on your detective hat and consider the facts. In this case:

- After doing a little writing, this writer was hired to do more.
- Another writer had already washed out — it's a tough crowd.
- Feedback asked for after the rewrites was positive.

**Conclusion:** This writer is doing great. The client is dysfunctional, but happy. Rewrites are normal, and don't reflect any lack on the writer's part. It would be a mistake to extrapolate from this one experience and make any conclusions about whether this copywriting niche is for you or not.

What went wrong? This writer forgot to QTIP. That stands for Quit Taking It Personally.

Most of what happens in the world of freelance writing is not about you. It's about your client — their time constraints, their budget, their situation, their personality.

The decisions your clients make are business decisions, and a million factors go into each decision. Not knowing what's going on behind the scenes shouldn't lead you to conclude that you're the problem.

Ask questions, if your client doesn't seem happy. Learn all you can, and do the best you can.

## Make this change

Beyond that, the key thing to do is reframe how you view your career. Believe in yourself, and don't be ready to fold your tent and give up if you have a setback.

Think of every client and gig simply as a learning opportunity, or maybe as a crazy adventure. It'll be easier to get over the lumps and bumps that come your way with that outlook, as opposed to walking around thinking you're inadequate and just waiting to get busted for it.

When you QTIP, it's a lot easier to stay confident and keep pitching more clients, no matter how weird any one gig turns out.

# Stop Doing This Now to Explode Your Freelance Writing Income



I've got a question for you: How's your freelance marketing going?

Not so good? I know many writers who, when you press them, finally admit they're not doing any marketing at all.

What's happening is, writers go to market their services, but then they don't. Something stops them. Something inside their heads.

## Talking yourself out of it

It seems that when many writers sit down to make a marketing plan and start sending those query letters or letters of introduction or making those cold calls — or whatever you do — a bunch of toxic thoughts crop up.

I've seen a real epidemic of these negative ideas from [Freelance Writers Den](#) members lately. For instance, one writer targeting universities for copywriting work wrote:

*"I get ready to call, but then I assume they all have grad students or interns or a marketing staff."*

Or this one, from an experienced freelance writer whose income has been stymied by her lack of marketing:

*"I talk myself out of looking for clients because I figure 'no one will hire me,' or 'the market has changed.'"*

Another writer commented:

*“I just can’t imagine why a company would both hire and PAY me.”*

Finally, here’s an email I got:

*“Pay rates at my established clients have gone down... Companies I used to work with no longer do newsletters, annual reports, etc., or they’ve taken them in house. Other companies only want to work via content mills. Everyone wants work done well for rock-bottom rates. I’ve always been able to make a living wage as a freelancer. Now I question if this is a sustainable career after all.”*

It’s enough to get you feeling depressed and hopeless, hmm?

But you can snap out of this — and you need to, to grow your freelance writing income. To do it, I’ve got one big tip for you today:

## **Stay in reality**

The important thing about those first three thoughts above is that they do not represent reality. They’re just things you’re saying to yourself — that clients don’t need you, that you don’t merit compensation. That freelancing is a mirage, and couldn’t possibly be real. These are ideas that exist only in your head.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics would not be projecting that [freelance workers will outnumber people with jobs by 2020](#) if there was no living in this.

Also, in the case of that last one, beware of extrapolating that your very limited personal experience accurately represents what’s going on in the vast freelance marketplace. Your few clients who don’t pay freelancers well anymore are not “everyone.”

Yes, the marketplace evolves. Clients who once paid freelancers well decide to go another direction — I had one \$95-an-hour client decide to fire my editor and go with a multimedia agency for content instead, for instance.

But there’s always another side to that coin. Meanwhile, two other businesses decide they’ve had it with what they’re getting for cheapo rates and gets serious about commissioning truly quality content at professional rates.

I know, because my Den “Share Your Success” forum is full every week of stories of how writers at all career stages are getting raises, finding better clients, and earning more. Freelance writing is a real career, people. Not just for established writers like me, but for new freelancers, too. You can earn a living at this.

Of course, it’s easier to have a pity party about how your existing clients are no longer great than it is to make 100 cold calls, eh?

And that’s what this sort of negative self-talk is all about — finding an excuse to avoid marketing. It’s easier to insist there are no good-paying clients than to haul your butt to a networking event or conference and put in the shoe leather to find them.

Meanwhile, out in the real world, every survey done of companies reveals that they love using freelancers and forecast they will use more freelancers in future. There's also evidence that [freelance rates are rising](#).

There's one other thing to take to heart here:

## Clients need you

I don't care if you are fresh out of college or you've been writing for 20 years. No matter where you're at in your freelance writing career, there are clients who would love to have your help and are happy to pay for it.

When editors get together, do you know what they talk about? How they wish they could find more reliable, talented, responsible writers with fresh voices and ideas.

Remember, the vast majority of freelance writing gigs will never be advertised. They're hidden. You can't conclude anything about the market by reading Craigslist ads or checking the UpWork listings.

Instead, envision a magazine editor slumped over her desk, wishing she had time to grow her stable of good writers. A small business owner overwhelmed with the 24/7 demands of keeping his business alive, looking over his rudimentary website or abandoned blog in despair. These clients are waiting for you to reach out and show them the solution is a freelance writer.

They're waiting for you to get in touch.

## Stop the self-sabotage

Here's the key thing to do: When you're tempted to spin a bunch of gloomy webs that keep you stuck where you are, just stop doing that. Right away.

There's a simple truth in freelancing: Marketing leads to good clients. Not marketing leads to starving.

If you can stop sabotaging your marketing efforts, your income can grow exponentially. I've seen writer after writer dig into marketing and report back a year later that their income has doubled, tripled, or more.

Suddenly, you have your pick amongst the prospects you've attracted, instead of scrabbling desperately for whatever crumb a low-paying client tosses your way. More leads mean you can say "no" to losers and [keep only the great clients](#), which also results in better income.

## Take your foot off the brake

Imagine you're in a car and you're standing on the brake hard, all while saying, "I think cars no longer go. I can't seem to get anywhere! Guess it's time to give up and go back to using a horse-and-buggy."

This is the scenario negative-thinking freelance writers are trapped in. You've got to take your foot off the brake and put it on the gas to get down the road. Suddenly, you discover cars work just great.

I've yet to meet a writer who does consistent, effective marketing who doesn't get better clients. Stop the internal monologue that's keeping you from getting out there to meet the clients who need you.

**BUY THIS E-BOOK NOW!**