

Okay, good morning everyone! I tend to get a little shaky when it comes to presenting in front of people, so just bear with me through this.

I'm an English student here at SFU, and this semester I am taking a creative reading and writing class. We spent the first few weeks focusing on how to give a voice to your writing, and a piece of writing by Lydia Davis, *Thirty Recommendations for Good Writing Habits*, has really stuck with me through everything that I have written this semester, including my blog content. As the title suggests, Davis gives thirty very detailed pieces of advice to writers. Rather than sharing all thirty items here with you, I have put together my five key pieces of advice for new writers. Hopefully, you can take some of these tips and apply them to your blogs, and any other writing that you do.

Note-taking is one of the most important skills that you will develop as a writer. Take notes about everything and anything, because I promise you that you will use them. I have a note on my phone that I just constantly add to when I feel inspired, and I also like to keep some kind of physical notebook. Take notes about your observations, your feelings, little anecdotes, literally anything that makes you feel something.

Re-read and edit all of your work, all the time. Skim through your notes daily, and see if you can create anything. Review your blog posts a few times a week, is there anything you can tweak to make them better? You never know when inspiration is going to hit, so create space for it.

Don't just create content, consume it. I find that for this class specifically, this is really important. Take advantage of the list of URLs and explore each other's blogs! I've gathered a lot of inspiration from some of you in this class, and it's really cool to see how everyone expresses their creativity. Consume all kinds of content. Read books, engage with social media sites, and have conversations with new people. Any kind of content will help to inspire your content.

Write what you want to write, not what you think you should write. At the beginning of the semester, I set a posting schedule for my blog so that I could stay organized and pre-write content to make it easier on myself, but I quickly found that if I wasn't inspired by the topic that I had chosen for that week, I didn't enjoy writing. Now I use that schedule as a general guideline of what I would like the blog to look like at the end of week 12, and I follow my creative instincts within those guidelines. Write from your heart, write about what fuels your passions, and write what you would want to read because you'll have a lot more fun that way.

Last, but definitely not least, don't ever stop practicing your writing. Writing is a muscle that needs to be worked. The more you practice, the better you will get.