

Fall in love with writing again

Six ways to rekindle the flame.

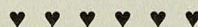
By Anica Mrose Rissi



Every writer in a long-term relationship with the work goes through it. Those times when you gaze at the page and have to admit: The passion that drew you together seems gone.

Weeks, months, or even years might pass when you and your writing are out of sync. When it feels like an obligation, not a delight. When you stare at the words and wonder why you started up with them in the first place. Maybe you've even gone so far as to declare yourself on a break, and you're uncertain whether you'll get back together. Perhaps you find yourself asking if it's all worth it.

If you once loved writing but are no longer sure you *like* it, don't walk away yet. Use these tips to reignite the spark, see your work in a new light, and fall in love with writing all over again.



Make a date with the page

If you and your writing have been in a rut – or avoiding each other completely – a change in routine can do wonders. Make a date with the page and treat that date like it matters.

Set the scene for something special: Light a candle, pour a beverage, and dress up in your comfiest sweatpants. Or take your laptop to a museum, a hotel, a new café. Prioritize and take pleasure in this time you've set aside for your craft and dedicate your attention to it fully.

Start slowly, perhaps rereading a sentence you adore. Sink into the parts of the process you find enticing and flirt with the possibilities before you. Ditch the daily drudgery and focus on having fun. Show up as your best self and see the best in the writing that greets you. Don't take its good sides for granted.

Bonus ways to turn up the heat: Take a long-term project someplace new and pretend you just met. Have a fling with a style of writing you've never partnered with before – mix things up and create something unexpected. Or make a double date with a friend and her notebook.

Compose a love letter

Write a letter to your work-in-progress – or to writing in general – filled with every little thing you love about it. What attracted you to it in the first place? What has it meant to you over the years? When does it make you proud? How does it bring you joy? What gets you through the hard times and makes the struggles worth it? What does your writing give you and you give to it? What are your wildest dreams for the future?

Shout it from the rooftops and fill up the page. Be generous, specific, and bold. Don't hold back. This is not a mere crush.

Declare your love in detail. Make promises you intend to keep. Woo your writing back and make it swoon.

Bonus points for romantics: Write the letter by hand.

Open up the relationship

Pair with another writer to exchange daily sentences, commit to goals, or even collaborate on a new project. Write a poem inspired by a sculpture, an essay in response to a film, a novel filled with

references to pop culture from your youth. Send a letter to a friend who'll write back. Ask an artist or musician for prompts.

Your relationship to your writing doesn't need to exist in a vacuum. Revisit the stories and essays that made you want to create your own. Be part of a conversation. Listen to voices and ideas that move you. Energize your work and ground it within a larger creative community.

Extra credit: Seek ways to support other writers and creators, from hosting a salon to boosting work you love on social media.

Nurture your creative life outside of writing

Writing might be your ride or die but don't expect it to meet all your creative needs. Look to music, art, movies, crafts, reading, cooking, movement, nature, and conversation to help fill your creative well. Attend a concert. Invent new harmonies. Download pottery podcasts. Play with modeling clay. Go on a hike. Notice the birds.

Whether you engage with outside sources of joy as a creator or consumer, the stimulation and inspiration you'll get from them will enhance your relationship with writing.

Grow and change together

You're not the exact same person you were when you first fell in love with writing. Your writing has changed since then, too. That's a good thing. Embrace it.

Staying actively invested in a relationship with writing means allowing space for change and growth – perhaps even pursuing it. Take note of your expanded goals and aspirations, and how

your needs are shifting. Don't let old habits stand just because they worked for you when you started. Examine your process, patterns, approach, and routines. Assess what you need from your writing right now and what it needs you to give it. Experiment. Adjust. Stretch and thrive together.

Don't let the industry come between you

To keep the flame alive, you must protect it from the wind, rain, and tsunamis of doubt that the business side of writing loves to offer. When you take your relationship public through pitching and/or publishing, you put yourself and your words in a vulnerable position. No matter what the world throws at you, stay strong – and stay together – by refusing to let forces outside the relationship determine what your writing is worth.

Keep your eyes on the page and your focus on the words, sentences, rhythms, and emotions. Zoom in on the exhilaration of solving the puzzle. Embrace the thrill of creating something new. Feel the satisfaction of deepening and expanding your craft. Ignore factors beyond your control.

Who cares what anyone else thinks? This isn't about the outside world – it's about you and your work and the beauty you'll create. When you're together, nothing else matters. 📖

*Anica Mrose Rissi is the award-winning author of more than a dozen books for kids and teens, including *Hide and Don't Seek: And Other Very Scary Stories and Love*, *Sophia on the Moon*. Her next book, the middle-grade novel *Wishing Season*, comes out in June. Find her online at anicarissi.com and follow @anicarissi on Instagram and Twitter.*



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