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### Seeking Advice

I have been talking to people who have been on this path of a writer's life or who help others on the path. What I have been learning from the interviewing process has been fascinating. I learn about how people view writing. It helps flesh out what's important to me about writing. I flinch at different points at what I'm hearing, and get excited by simple comments.

"How does creative self-expression fit into your writing?" "It doesn't."

"It's not necessary to write every day to be a good writer."

"Read good stuff to inspire your own writing."

"Find out what you like about someone's writing and try imitating them."

"Experiment to find your own voice."

"This is a hard path, even for those who have talent and have been doing it for awhile."

"It takes persistence and patience."

"You need to have a track record before you do a column."

"Is there any joy in writing?" "No."

"Writing is not about being a romantic."

"You don't need a writing coach to find your voice."

"How motivated are you to be a writer? What changes are you willing to make?"

Some of these bits of advice were sounding like Gremlin voices. The big ugly, overbearing voices that say, "It's got to be hard, you have to do it this way, don't even try going down this path." I wondered where the part about joyfulness and ease comes in. And whether everyone in the writing business has these same voices masquerading as the Voice of Reason. I'd like to believe that there is still some magic left to practicing this art. Not the magic of selling lots of books. But the magic of the process of writing. When you don't think too hard and the words flow out of you, delicious and yummy, like a fountain of chocolate.

I asked one writing coach for metaphors that represented the different roles that she plays. Like a good coach, she turned the question back on me. "What metaphors are you envisioning?" "Guide, sounding board, and court jester." I explained the court jester image was about pulling forth laughter, because after I write something, I get tremendous pleasure from reading the funny parts again. She was not amused. The interview was not going well.

And like a good salesperson, she asked what was stopping me from signing her up as a writing coach. I hate that technique. "Well, you haven't told me about your fees yet." I told her about my process of interviewing four people before deciding. She was curious to see where she stood.

“What type of person are you looking for, aside from someone who can give you tips and tricks and tools?” Someone I clicked with would be nice. I was honest with her. “On a scale of 1 to 10, I’m at a 5 in terms of being attracted to your energy.” Her moment of coaching brilliance came out when she said the unspoken. “I guess I’m not the one.” She gave me one last gift. I asked her what she was sensing about my journey. “You seem to be tentative about this new path and in need of growing your confidence through the support of a coach.” Hmmm.....maybe she wasn’t too far off. With that one last comment, I was finally seeing the value in these conversations.

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