

SIX WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF TO WRITE SONGS

by Cliff Goldmacher, songwriter [27/7/2013]

As passionate as we are about our songwriting, the reality is that sometimes it's difficult to motivate ourselves to write. Whether it's the fear of plumbing our emotional depths or just good old fatigue after a long day, there are often obstacles to overcome when it's time to write. While flashes of inspiration are great, we can't always count on the muse showing up on our schedule. Instead, we've got to make our own inspiration. I've put together a list of a few things that should help you keep your creative fires lit.

1. Set Up a Place at Home to Write

As simple as it sounds, having a place to go where you can focus and be creative can be motivating. Even if it's just a small desk and chair in a corner of your living room, the fact that you've dedicated it to your art will serve as that little push you might need to write. Keep your writing tools – rhyming dictionary, guitar, laptop, etc. – out and easily accessible. It's amazing what a difference putting your guitar on a stand versus keeping it in a case can make. Make things as easy as you can for yourself and you'll be much more likely to dig in.

2. Set Up a Time of Day to Write

Routine can be a good thing even for something as artistic and creative as songwriting. If, for example, you know that every day at 7pm, you're going to write for half an hour, then you're more likely to do it. They say it takes a few weeks of consciously making yourself do something before it becomes a habit. A daily time to write will go a long way towards the healthy habit of songwriting.

3. Keep a File of Unfinished Songs

One of the hardest things about writing is starting with a blank page. By keeping an organized file of your unfinished lyrics and rough recordings, you won't have to climb the mountain from the bottom every time you sit down. While sometimes it feels good to start with a fresh idea, don't forget to check your unfinished ideas from time to time. It's remarkable how a few days or weeks can add the perspective you need to see a partially finished song in a new light and finish it.

4. Find a Co-Writer

Nothing motivates more than accountability. If someone is counting on you to show up and work, you're more likely to do it. Not only that but halving the burden can make writing a much more approachable pursuit. This is one of the many benefits of co-writing. Other advantages include having someone whose songwriting gifts complement your own in such a way that you both get a better song than you would have separately. If you haven't co-written yet, this is as good a time as any to give it a try. Even if it's not a perfect experience, we all benefit from observing firsthand someone else's writing process.

5. Give Yourself an Assignment

Sometimes the idea that you can write about anything is just too much freedom. Often it's easier to write if you have some guidelines. If, for example, you tell yourself you're going to write a song with one chord you've never used or a song about a topic you've never covered, you'll find it's easier to get to work. Anything you can do to give shape and structure to what you're attempting to write will make the task that much simpler.

6. Tell Yourself You'll Only Write for Five Minutes

This is one of my all time favourites. On days where you're really struggling to make yourself write, tell yourself you'll sit down for five minutes. That way, if nothing is happening after five minutes, at least you've tried. It's astonishing how often those days are the days where the breakthroughs happen. Taking the pressure off of yourself may be all that you need to get on a roll. That being said, if it's just not coming, stop. There's no point in making yourself miserable. There's always tomorrow.

Conclusion - Being a songwriter is a gift but, as with most gifts, some assembly (otherwise known as work) is required. My hope is by suggesting a few ways to lessen the burden of getting started, you'll be able to write more consistently and enjoy the accompanying results.

About Cliff Goldmacher - Cliff Goldmacher is a songwriter, producer, session musician, engineer, author and owner of recording studios in Nashville, TN and Sonoma, CA. Cliff's site, <http://www.EducatedSongwriter.com>, is full of resources for the aspiring songwriter including a brand new video series available at the link below.

<http://www.EducatedSongwriter.com/video-podcast-series>

You can download a FREE sample of Cliff's eBook "The Songwriter's Guide To Recording Professional Demos" by going to <http://www.EducatedSongwriter.com/ebook>

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