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| **NOTES FROM TIM FERRISS AND NEIL STRAUSS INTERVIEW ABOUT WRITING.** ….an hour long interview boiled down to the key points for quick reading.  This interview drops golden tips for aspiring writers everywhere. |

[**Neil Strauss**](https://www.neilstrauss.com/) has 7 NYTtimes best-selling books, so he’s well-versed in writing.

[**Tim Ferriss**](http://www.fourhourworkweek.com/blog/) has best-sellers, and has a totally different approach to writing than Neil.

You can buy the whole series on CreativeLive [Here](http://www.creativelive.com/courses/4-hour-life-tim-ferriss)

Link to watch 1-hour interview: [Here](http://www.fourhourworkweek.com/blog/2013/06/14/tim-ferriss-interviews-neil-strauss-7x-new-york-times-bestselling-author-on-the-creative-process/)

**HOW DO YOU START WRITING? DO YOU SET A PAGE QUOTA?**

**Tim:** I set my quota at only 2 pages per day. This way, I don’t feel overwhelmed. Also, once I get started writing, I usually end up writing WAY more than 2 pages.

**HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT?**

**Tim:** Don’t ask readers what they want, and just write that. Cherry pick from their suggestions, but don’t always follow them completely.

**Neil:** All your audience knows is what you’ve done already. If you keep doing that, they’ll get bored. So will you. I write what I care about most in that particular moment of my life.

**Tim:** If you really really care about something, you can make it interesting. There was an author who wrote about hand-carved wooden canoes, and also a book about oranges.....and since he was so passionate about both, these otherwise boring subjects became amazing.

**FIRST RULE OF WRITING:**

**Neil:** I assume nobody cares about me or what I’m writing about. It’s my job to MAKE them care. If you only write about “safe” subjects, it’ll blend in.   
***“The insecure way, is the secure way.”***

**BEST WAY TO WRITE A BOOK?**

**Neil & Tim:** The only way to finish a book is to have a real-world deadline, with real-world harsh consequences!

**Neil:** If someone asks me to review a book, my FIRST question is, “When will you have it done by?” If they don’t complete it by then, I refuse to look at their book ever. A harsh deadline is required, or you’ll never finish.

**HOW DO YOU DO RESEARCH FOR YOUR BOOKS?**

**Neil:** Jot down EVERYTHING in notebook.

**Tim:** Jot down EVERYTHING on Evernote or Scrivner. I use Scrivner to write.

**Neil:** Start writing your 1st draft. It’ll be terrible and unorganized. It’s ok.

**Neil:** The way I write:

**1st Draft =** Just for me. No one ever sees this. It’s rough and unorganized.

**2nd Draft =** Clean up, organize, remove useless content. Run by others.

**3rd Draft =** Read book out loud to friends, sees where they get bored, removes content.

**HOW DO YOU STAY PRODUCTIVE WHEN WRITING?**

**Neil:** I use a program on my Mac called “Freedom” that shuts off my internet for a certain amount of time. I ONLY write during that time.

**Neil:** I eliminate and automate ALL distractions. Make sure I have lunch BEFORE I start writing, and turn off all phones so I don’t get distracted. I designate certain hours ONLY for writing.

**Tim:** Once I’m in the zone, I DON’T stop. I don’t know if the same inspiration will come again in the next few days, so I run with it.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMETHING IS GOOD?**

**Neil:** I read stuff out loud to my friends. If they start getting bored, I remove it.

**Tim:** I need a consensus to remove, but just ONE to love. So:  
If one person hates something, no biggie, I leave it in.

If one person **absolutely loves** something, I leave it in.

If A LOT OF PEOPLE hate something, I remove it.

**Neil:** You need to be able to tell a captivating story. A story teaches better and engages better. “The brain learns from metaphor.”

**IF I WANT TO START WRITING, DO I FIRST START A BLOG, OR JUST WRITE A BOOK?**

**TIM:** I’d write a blog first. If you can’t consistently write one post a week....you DEFINITELY can’t write a book. You’ll quickly find out if you even LIKE writing that much or people like your writing.

**NEIL:** I like to keep my stuff secret and have a big release, so I don’t blog about my projects. Basically, if you have sell 10,000 books, you’ll get a book deal either way.

You can watch the whole interview on Tim’s blog:  
<http://www.fourhourworkweek.com/blog/2013/06/14/tim-ferriss-interviews-neil-strauss-7x-new-york-times-bestselling-author-on-the-creative-process/>

Thanks to Tim & Neil for doing this informative interview!

[Neville Medhora](http://www.nevblog.com)