

# WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN ABOUT WRITING CAREERS

INSPIRED BY THE WRITER'S WORKOUT, 366 TIPS, TASKS, & TECHNIQUES FROM YOUR WRITING CAREER COACH BY CHRISTINA KATZ



**1.** Overnight success is always the result of slow and steady preparation and practice. Anyone who tries to convince you otherwise is full of beans. **2.** There are three kinds of writers: dabblers, hobbyists, and professionals. Whomever you think has the least amount of fun is likely having the most fun. **3.** There are no writing career shortcuts but there are plenty of opportunities available for those willing to work hard. **4.** If you don't write down your best ideas, they might come back and they might not. **5.** You may believe you will never succeed, but you can if you persist. **6.** When you do succeed, you will be simultaneously blown away by your "luck" and nostalgic about all the effort success actually took. **7.** Writing is business. Stay upbeat and always be cordial. **8.** At some point in your career, you will hit some kind of sophomore slump. But hang in there, you will likely learn something important from it. **9.** You can't sit around on your duff writing all day without eventually becoming overweight, so don't forget to eat healthy and exercise often. **10.** Keep two portfolios: one to impress yourself and one to impress others. **11.** Coffee and tea are not negotiable. If anyone tries to make you feel badly because you indulge in both, smile sweetly, curse them silently, and then head to the nearest café. **12.** It's always an honor to get published. **13.** Don't take out huge loans (student or otherwise) unless you are prepared to pay them off for the rest of your career. **14.** No matter how commonly known it is that writers need to promote themselves, there will always be a percentage that can't be convinced. They will figure it out eventually. **15.** Rejection is never personal. And even if it is, there's nothing you can do about it. **16.** Be process-oriented and product-oriented. Document your process from total unknown to blockbuster bestseller (or whatever your goal). **17.** If you get red flags when you meet someone—trust your gut—don't befriend, mentor, or partner with them. **18.** Back up every single thing, including your e-mail, on each computer you own and do it regularly. **19.** Celebrate every success, but don't be showy or obnoxious about it. **20.** Create a file folder and label it "Baloney." Put everything ridiculous or absurd in there for future reference, then carry on. **21.** Don't waste your voice on mediocrity. But, for goodness sake, don't be a snob either. **22.** Nobody is happy when agent-author break ups occur, but sometimes they need to happen. Be quick, clean, and professional about it, if it ever happens to you. **23.** Burn what should go unread. **24.** Finish incomplete projects. You can always self-publish them. **25.** Things could always be worse, no matter what ego-shattering thing has just happened. Get your game face on and keep it on. **26.** Have a will. **27.** Avoid bombasts and bullies (even if they are successful authors, editors or agents). **28.** When you notice people who are more famous than you bickering and quibbling, have compassion for them. You will think that you would never behave this way. But you never know. You might. **29.** Remember that gossip is toxic. People-pleasing is poison. But anger can become fuel. **30.** Love your work. And strive to do it as well as you can. **31.** Your best efforts are enough. **32.** Be respectful of editors. Endure copyeditors. And take your agent out to lunch. **33.** Always send holiday cards and gifts, if you can swing them. If you can't afford to send gifts, work harder. **34.** Enjoy the empty moments. If you play your cards right, there won't be very many. **35.** Be your own biggest fan. **36.** Have a life beyond your writing life and include all the people you cherish, who don't care who is in your Rolodex. **37.** Ask yourself hard questions about life, writing, and everything else. Write your way to the answers.