



Writing Through THE BODY™

Banish Writer's Block, Achieve Flow, Tell Your Untold Stories

The Writing Through the Body™ Writer's Block Handbook

Banish Writer's Block | Achieve Flow | Tell Your Untold Stories

By

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Writer's Block Handbook**

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Many thanks to all the writers and creative souls willing to attend my workshops over the years while I experimented and refined the Writing Through the Body™ method. Thanks also to those who will use the method in the future and continue to provide me with valuable feedback so I can keep refining and perfecting.

Love and gratitude to all my faithful followers who have tracked me over the years while I figured out what on earth I was doing with what sounded like a crazy, perplexing idea. I cannot express how much it has meant to me to have you following along with me, believing in me, and supporting me.

Sending you love and, as always, mad writing mojo..

Introduction

If you follow me or have heard me talk about the concept of writer's block, you know it's a phenomenon I don't believe in. I do believe blocks can happen, but I don't think they're specific to writing. I think we humans can get blocked in many ways, and the consequence of that is sometimes that we can't create.

So, what's the cause of these blockages?

According to psychiatrist, Edmund Bergler, it has to do with our emotions (Konnikova). As someone who has created a writing method adapted from the ancient chakra system, which is directly connected with our emotional experiences in life, I am not surprised by this.

If you have attended one of my Intro to Writing Through the Body™ classes, you've heard me talk about Candace Pert, a pharmacologist and neuroscientist who discovered the opiate receptor, the site in the brain that binds endorphins and, in short, tells us what to feel (Pert).

In an effort to better understand the impact our emotions have on our health, the driving question behind Pert's research was: *Where do our emotions come from?*

Pert discovered that the neuropeptide molecules our bodies secrete and travel to our brains to signal emotional responses originate in the very spots where the chakras are believed to reside.

In an interview with Adam Helfer, Founder of Omkara World, Pert said, “I realized in 1987 that areas along the axis, from the top of the forehead to the base of the spine, these classical chakra areas corresponded to what I called ‘nodal points.’ Places where lots of neurotransmitters and neuropeptides were released” (Pert).

It stands to reason, then, that if we can name an emotion and locate its physical origin, we can begin to unravel and banish internal blocks that interfere with our creative output.

As I say in my *Intro to Writing Through the Body™* class, this method works on both the writing and the writer. My intent while developing it was to provide a practical method to help writers effectively work with deeply considered character development. The ancient chakra system is the perfect vehicle for this endeavor because it walks us through the seven levels of human development. In turn, it takes us to a deeper understanding of the human condition. (Please visit www.writingthroughthebody.com for more information.)

On the surface, *Writing Through the Body™* helps the writer in two ways. First, it’s nearly impossible not to have revelations about our own existential experience when we’re delving so deeply into our characters’ desires, motivations, and behaviors. Second, the meditation portion of the method calms the writer’s mind, facilitates focus, and clears lingering thoughts and energy that might be filtering through the writer’s subconscious, which, as Pert declared, is the body itself.

Through more intentional use of the *Writing Through the Body™* method with a focus on the Self, writers can realize even more personal benefits so they can banish blocks, achieve flow, and tell their untold stories.

If we embrace and accept Bergler's theory that blocks, and specifically, writer's block, arise due to emotions, we can begin to locate and address the areas in the body where they are lodged.

Each chakra is representative of a stage in our development as a human. It is virtually impossible, even in the best of circumstances, to move smoothly through every developmental stage without distress to the being and its systems. For example, we can grow up in a relatively healthy nurturing family, yet we can experience moments within that family when our needs were not met. Not because our parents were bad people but because to consistently and perpetually tend to the nurturance of a growing organism, a human, is virtually impossible. Likewise, we can experience neglect and trauma outside our family through social and institutional systems, for example, that can also stunt or slow a stage of development.

Also virtually impossible is the ability to name and process each and every emotion we felt growing up (much of the time we didn't have the knowledge to name them) and into adulthood (our daily lives are full of a multitude of responsibilities).

Additionally, the day-to-day environmental and noise pollutions we experience in the modern world, along with responsibilities and survival concerns (for instance, finding and keeping a job, feeding ourselves and our families), the balance of our systems and, therefore, our chakras can become unbalanced. It's virtually impossible to address every single emotion we have at every moment of every day.

Of course, sometimes we "collect" emotions in our bodies because we avoid them intentionally. Sometimes, that decision is due to the time limitations inherent in leading full lives as mentioned above. Other

times, it's because we want to avoid conflict, not upset people or make them angry, or run the risk of creating wedges in relationships. And other times, we tell ourselves we're "over-reacting" or we're being "silly" for feeling what we feel.

Of course, expecting others to be responsible for our emotions is not helpful, but sharing our feelings with others, letting them know when and how they've harmed us, even if unwittingly, is essential to our overall health. As Noam Shpancer writes, "Avoiding a negative emotion buys you short term gain at the price of long-term pain" (Shpancer). Emotional avoidance harms us in a variety of ways.

Shpancer goes on to say that, "Over time, avoidance becomes a prison..." (Shpancer). This "prison" ultimately stifles our ability to express ourselves through words, which, in turn, keeps the emotions bottled up and further prevents our flow of creativity. It becomes a vicious cycle.

With these thoughts in mind, then, we can begin to think about our own chakras and the kind of attention they might need, especially if/when we experience writing blocks.

Enter COVID-19

Before COVID-19, life was full. Many of us moved through our days at taxing jobs, managing mountains of homework, working on and in our businesses, and running errands then rushing home to families who needed and deserved our attention. Creating quiet time to reflect and process was a luxury for most people.

Since COVID-19 blew into our lives, many people have found time on their hands. Some have taken up new creative hobbies, some have returned to their love for reading, and others have been compelled to honor the impulse to get their meaningful stories and brilliant ideas onto the page.

Despite this impulse, I've heard from many that they feel blocked. Stuck. Unable to see any forward movement. And it's no surprise. Layered on top of the COVID health crisis and all the uncertainty, anxiety, and fear it stirred up, the murder of George Floyd and sadly, so many others in the BIPOC community, brought about another much-needed and overdue wave in awareness and desire for change regarding racial injustice.

We are all experiencing an emotional migration, of sorts. None of us is any longer where we were, and we don't know where we'll end up or when. Change of this magnitude renders the world we've known unstable.

It stands to reason, then, that with this kind of deep, collective change, we would all be experiencing a menagerie of seemingly countless emotions.

This was the impetus to create this handbook.

Why this handbook?

I am deeply committed to helping others get their words onto the page and out into the world because I believe in the power of the written word to heal us all. After teaching the *Writing Through the Body*[™] method, I have witnessed the power it and a deeper understanding of the ancient chakra system hold.

I've created this handbook with love and deep intention to help those who want to bravely press forward and achieve a deeper relationship with their impulse to write, an impulse I view as our life force.

I have focused my efforts with *Writing Through the Body*[™] around character development, always knowing it has more to offer.

A couple of important notes

Writing Through the Body™ is adapted from the ancient chakra system. I'm aware that the translated meaning of the Sanskrit word "chakra" is "wheel" or "disc." I, however, have always envisioned each of these energy centers as three-dimensional spheres or orbs that expand and contract, like a balloon. So, I refer to them as such. I think of the condition of each chakra as **depleted** (less than optimum), **full** (balanced), and **extended** (overblown).

I am not a therapist. Writing Through the Body™ is not meant to replace deep emotional work with a professional. Nor are my thoughts and beliefs meant to diminish the extent deeply embedded trauma can have on a human and her/his systems. Deep emotional healing is a life-long process. Writing Through the Body™ is a tool to encourage further self-awareness and allow the creative impulse to flow.

I say this in all my classes, and I'll say it here. Understanding the chakra system and relating personal illness and bodily unrest and dysfunction is in no way meant to blame or shame anyone for her or his illness. I believe the relationship between our emotions and our physical health is in the early stages of our understanding. Additionally, when I think about the possibilities of the impact of past lives and our current level of awareness as a species around our emotions and our health, I believe our ability to heal ourselves is both possible and limited at the same time.

For this reason, I hope you will take in the information in this handbook with curiosity and the intentional desire to move your blocks aside so you can write. Anything more that comes of the exercise will be a gift.

How to use this handbook

This handbook, first, offers an overview of the seven main chakras, their locations, and their influence on us.

Each chapter that follows addresses a chakra and details about its influence on our lived experience. Also included are the body systems and illness associated with each chakra and remedies to fortify the chakra and bring it back to a balanced state to allow for creative flow.

At the end of this handbook, you will find a worksheet set up in matrix format. The purpose of this worksheet is to help you discern your blocks by way of identifying emotions and their locations in your body and/or the presentation of some kind of physical dis-ease.

I recommend that you read all the content on each chakra first. Then, try one of the following approaches to see what works best for you.

Approach #1

1) Sit quietly and focus in on your emotions. You might note an emotion you're feeling in the moment, or you might think of a pervasive emotion that's been with you for a while.

- a. Name your primary emotion. Embrace the emotion and rather than avoid it or try to suppress it, allow it to grow bigger until it dissipates. (I learned this cool trick from a therapist years ago... when we focus on "growing" or "blowing up" an emotion, it will dissolve and leave. The theory is that the body can't physically hold on to an emotion for more than 10-20 minutes, **if it's acknowledged and "grown."** Try it. NOTE: This is intended as a momentary emotional experience, with, for instance, situational anxiety. This is not a solution for more deep-seated, enduring emotions that require in-depth work with a professional.)

- b. Move on to secondary and tertiary emotions and repeat the process.
- 2) Note where each emotion is located in your body. Record them in the “Emotions” column next to the corresponding chakra on your worksheet. (Refer to the “Chakra Overview” page and determine which chakra needs attention, based on the location of where you’re experiencing your emotion.)
- 3) Write the suggestions that resonate with you from the “Remedies to Fortify” section for that particular chakra in the corresponding column on the worksheet.

Approach #2

- 1) Note any and all illnesses or issues you have been experiencing in your body and/or about your health (physically, emotionally, mentally)—even those that may seem insignificant.
- 2) Locate the corresponding chakra by reading the “Body Systems / Issues” section for each chakra.
- 3) Write the suggestions from the “Remedies to Fortify” section that resonate with you in the corresponding column on the worksheet.

I’d love to hear about how these exercises work for you. Your feedback helps me keep making this method better. Please contact us at hello@johnniemazzocco.com and let us know.

And now... on to the chakras.

Chakra Overview

Crown – Top of head
Spirituality | Knowledge



Third Eye – Forehead, between eyes
Intuition | Clarity



Throat – Throat
Voice | Will



Heart – Chest
Forgiveness | Compassion



Solar Plexus – Just below the sternum
Agency | Action



Sacral – Just below the navel
Creativity | Partnership



Root – Tip of tailbone
Family | Identity



Root Chakra



Mantra – I AM

Primary Influence – Identity, family, sense of belonging in the world

Sense of Power – Tribal (who I am in relation to my tribe)

Color – Red

Location – In front of the tip of the tailbone

Lesson – Surviving in the material world, learning to value the material as sacred

Full	Depleted	Extended
Strong sense of self and connection with body	Fears around survival and abandonment	Anger, impatience
Confidence	Anxiety, depression	Emotional eating
Good Health	Vanity, narcissism	Tired
Financial Security	Poor boundaries	Fear of change

Body Systems / Issues
Immune system, spinal column, feet, bones
Addictions/addictive behavior, anorexia, constipation, colitis, Crohn’s disease, depression, diarrhea, frequency of urination, glaucoma, hemorrhoids, hypertension (high blood pressure), impotence, kidney stones, knee problems, obesity, piles, sciatica, weight gain/weight loss

How to Fortify	
Affirmations	I am safe. I am cared for. I am financially secure. There is more than enough.
Yoga poses	Mountain, squat, warrior, goddess, and child’s pose
Physical activity	Stand or walk barefoot on dirt, sand, or grass. Stretch. Dance. Drum.
Be in nature	Hike and take the beauty of your environment. Garden.
Heal / Resolve	Family of origin issues.
Meditate	Sit or lie quietly and imagine a red expanding and contracting orb at the base of your spine.

Sacral Chakra



Mantra – I FEEL

Primary Influence – Abundance, creativity, spirituality, sexuality, sensuality, pleasure, and well-being

Sense of Power – Partnership (who I am in relation to another)

Color – Orange

Location – Two inches below the navel

Lesson – The peace and wisdom of accepting that the individual cannot be in control

Full	Depleted	Extended
Self-worth without validation	Fear of loss of body	Anxiety
Adaptable / Flexible	Jealousy / Anger	Co-dependency
Confident creative expression	Lack of creativity	Tight muscles / stomach cramps
Healthy psychological boundaries	Pessimism / Depression	Excessive emotional responses

Body Systems / Issues
Hips, lower abdomen and back, large intestine, pelvis, sexual organs, hip area, bladder, kidneys, appendix, bodily fluids
Endometriosis, fertility issues, fibroids, irritable bowel syndrome, kidney issues, menstrual problems, muscle cramps and spasms, ovarian cysts, pre-menstrual syndrome, prostatic disease, testicular disease, uterine fibroids, womb issues

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	Creativity flows through me. I deserve to experience pleasure. I feel safe to express myself sexually. I embrace change. I attract loving people.
Yoga poses	Bound angle, squat, goddess, and happy baby
Reconnect w/ water	Swim. Sit near a stream, river, or the ocean. Take a bath. Do Watsu.
Self-care	Ample sleep. Clean foods. Express emotions. Acupuncture. Celibacy.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine an orange expanding and contracting orb an inch below your navel.

Solar Plexus Chakra



Mantra – I ACT

Primary Influence – Agency, instincts

Sense of Power – Personal power (freedom of choice through self-esteem and personal identity)

Color – Yellow

Location – Directly below the sternum, over the stomach

Lesson – Balance between taking control and letting go, strength gained by challenges

Full	Depleted	Extended
Self-esteem, self-respect	Fears of rejection / criticism	Need to be in control
Courage to take risks	Body image issues	Judgmental / critical
Ability to deal with crisis	Lack of confidence	Stubborn / inflexible
Ability to make things happen	Helplessness, indecisiveness	Angry, aggressive

Body Systems / Issues
Pancreas, stomach, liver, small intestine, digestion, blood sugar, eyes, feet
Anorexia, allergies (food), bulimia, Celiac's disease, diabetes, diarrhea, digestive problems, gall stones, heartburn, hepatitis, indigestion, irritable bowel syndrome, liver disease, pancreatitis, peptic ulcer, stomach problems, ulcers

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	I am motivated. I am in control of how I respond. I am capable. I create positive change in my life. I learn from my mistakes.
Yoga	Sun salutations, warrior pose, boat pose.
Heal and restore	Address past traumas. Talk therapy. Energy healing. Accepting support from loved ones.
Classes and hobbies	Acting / improv. Cycling. Sports.
Human interactions	Balance between leadership position and solitude.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine a yellow expanding and contracting orb just below your sternum.

Heart Chakra



Mantra - I LOVE

Primary Influence - Love, forgiveness, compassion, and trust

Sense of Power - Emotional, remembering the good in life and in people, unity

Color - Green

Location - Chest

Lesson - How to forgive and act out of love, especially to oneself

Full	Depleted	Extended
Forgiveness, compassion	Withdrawn, isolating	Codependency
Courage to take emotional risks	Lacking empathy, unforgiving	Neglect of emotional self-care
Ability to be inclusive	Critical of self and others	Identity crisis
Taking responsibility for one's life	Difficulty maintaining relationships	Weak or no personal boundaries

Body Systems / Issues
Heart and circulatory system, ribs, breasts, thymus gland, lungs, shoulders, arms, hands, diaphragm
Allergies, high blood pressure, breast cancer, circulation, fatigue, heart disease, immune disorders, lungs

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	I deserve and welcome love. I forgive others and myself. I attract love. I create loving, healthy relationships. My heart is free.
Yoga poses	Bridge, camel, upward facing dog
Human interactions	Smile at people. Move past grudges. Avoid criticism. Compliment people. Be kind.
Healing modalities	Massage. Shaman or therapist. Embrace silence. Gratitude. Surrender and trust.
Physical activities	Walking in nature. Dancing. Play of any kind.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine a green expanding and contracting orb in your chest.

Throat Chakra



Mantra – I SPEAK

Primary Influence – Speaking one’s highest truth, self-expression, living creatively

Sense of Power – Willpower (ability to communicate creatively and with integrity)

Color – Indigo

Location – Throat

Lesson – Recognizing free will and self-expression in oneself and others and accepting it with love and compassion

Full	Depleted	Extended
High self-awareness, speaks one’s truth	Fear of speaking one’s truth	Gossiping
Confidence in decisions	Uncertain about one’s needs	Arrogance / Rudeness
Content in the moment	Feelings of insecurity	Unable to hear others’ opinions
Belief in love and courage	Reliance of others’ opinions	Exclusivity

Body Systems / Issues
Throat, thyroid, trachea, esophagus, parathyroid, hypothalamus, neck vertebrae, mouth, jaw, teeth
Chronic neck pain, thyroid issues, asthma, bronchitis, ear infections, hearing problems, loss of voice, mouth ulcers, sore throats, tinnitus, tonsillitis, mouth ulcers, upper digestive tract issues

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	I speak my truth with confidence. I listen with compassion and empathy. I set clear boundaries.
Yoga poses	Cat-cow, fish pose, shoulder stand, camel, plow, lion’s breath.
Focus on the breath	Deep breathing, counted rhythmic breathing, 4/7/8 breathing: inhale through nose for 4, hold for 7, exhale completely through mouth for 8.
Use the voice / throat	Sing. Gargle. Hum. Public speaking. Stop using sarcasm.
Body-focused activities	Tai chi. Qi gong. Spinal alignment. Cranio-sacral therapy. Fasting. Hydration.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine a blue expanding and contracting orb in your throat.

Third Eye Chakra



Mantra - I SEE

Primary Influence - Ability to distill wisdom from life experience, clarity about what is best for your highest good and joy

Sense of Power - Mind Power

Color - Purple

Location - Lower forehead, between the eyes

Lesson - Discerning the difference between truth and illusion

Full	Depleted	Extended
Strong intellectually	Fears one's shadow side	Judgmental / Overly Analytical
Open to wonder and living creatively	Pushing oneself physically, mentally, and emotionally	Mental fog and/or overwhelm
Emotional intelligence	Fear of the unknown	Anxiety
Receive inspiration based on inner wisdom	Creating unrealistic expectations for oneself	Excessive daydreaming / Lack of clarity

Body Systems / Issues
Brain and neurological system, pituitary and pineal glands, eyes, ears, nose
Blindness, brain tumor, cataracts, catarrh, deafness, dyslexia, insomnia, long-sightedness, migraine, short-sightedness, sinus problems, tension headaches, visual defects

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	I have a strong inner guidance system. I trust my intuition. I am connected to and follow my spiritual truth. I think calm thoughts.
Yoga poses	Camel, dolphin, locust, child's pose, wide-legged forward bend.
Body-focused activities	Walk while focusing on body's movements. Martial art. Lie down on the earth and feel its rhythm.
Relaxing activities	Chant. Daydream / imagine. Hot bath or hot tub soak. Solitude. Watch or read positive stories.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine an indigo expanding and contracting orb in the center of your forehead.

Crown Chakra



Mantra – I KNOW

Primary Influence – Ability to conceive of and create spiritual context for life experiences, which leads to resiliency and bliss

Sense of Power – Spiritual Power and Understanding

Color – Violet

Location – Top of the head

Lesson – To live in Divine union with universal energies

Full	Depleted	Extended
Mystical and intuitive connections	Spiritual crisis	Lack of empathy for others
Practice of personally chosen spiritual belief system	‘Holier-than-thou’ attitude	Sense of superiority / Elitism
Positive attitude / Gratitude	Dissociation / Mental fog	Apathy
Awareness that all humans are divine	Inability to let go of past regrets	Disconnected from one’s body and earth concerns

Body Systems / Issues
Head, brain, central nervous system, muscular system, skin
Depression, dizziness, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, Parkinson’s Disease, schizophrenia, senile dementia

Remedies to Fortify	
Affirmations	I have a strong connection to divine universal energies. I am connected to and receive guidance from my higher self. I am an extension and integral part of the universe.
Yoga poses	Tree pose, lotus, half-lotus, savasana.
Body-focused activities	Fast. Sweat lodge. Soak up the sun. Mind-focused activities like puzzles.
Relaxing, mindful activities	Solitude. Setting intentions, writing them down. Self-reflection.
Meditation	Sit or lie quietly and imagine a purple expanding and contracting orb on the top of your head.

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Writing Through the Body™ Writer's Block Handbook Worksheet
Chakra / Emotions / Body Systems + Health Issues Matrix

Chakra	Emotion	Body Systems / Health Issues	Remedies to Fortify
Root			
Sacral			
Solar Plexus			
Heart			
Throat			
Third Eye			
Crown			