**Insight from Great Writers**

Below, find 12 snippets of insight from some exceptional authors. While they are all focused on the craft of writing, most of these tips pertain to pushing forward creative projects of any kind.

**PD James:** Don’t just plan to write—write. It is only by writing, not dreaming about it, that we develop our own style.

**Steven Pressfield:** [The] Resistance knows that the longer we noodle around “getting ready,” the more time and opportunity we’ll have to sabotage ourselves. Resistance loves it when we hesitate, when we over-prepare. The answer: plunge in.

**Esther Freud:** Find your best time of the day for writing and write. Don’t let anything else interfere. Afterwards it won’t matter to you that the kitchen is a mess.

**Kurt Vonnegut:** Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, and not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style. I am not urging you to write a novel, by the way — although I would not be sorry if you wrote one, provided you genuinely cared about something. A petition to the mayor about a pothole in front of your house or a love letter to the girl next door will do.

**AL Kennedy:** Be without fear. This is impossible, but let the small fears drive your rewriting and set aside the large ones until they behave – then use them, maybe even write them. Too much fear and all you’ll get is silence.

**Will Self:** Don’t look back until you’ve written an entire draft, just begin each day from the last sentence you wrote the preceding day. This prevents those cringing feelings, and means that you have a substantial body of work before you get down to the real work which is all in… The edit.

**Haruki Murakami:** In private correspondence the great mystery writer Raymond Chandler once confessed that even if he didn’t write anything, he made sure he sat down at his desk every single day and concentrated. I understand the purpose behind his doing this. This is the way Chandler gave himself the physical stamina a professional writer needs, quietly strengthening his willpower. This sort of daily training was indispensable to him.

**Neil Gaiman:** When people tell you something’s wrong or doesn’t work for them, they are almost always right. When they tell you exactly what they think is wrong and how to fix it, they are almost always wrong.

**Helen Dunmore:** Finish the day’s writing when you still want to continue.

**Hilary Mantel:** If you get stuck, get away from your desk. Take a walk, take a bath, go to sleep, make a pie, draw, listen to music, meditate, exercise; whatever you do, don’t just stick there scowling at the problem. But don’t make telephone calls or go to a party; if you do, other people’s words will pour in where your lost words should be. Open a gap for them, create a space. Be patient.

**Cory Doctorow:** Write even when the world is chaotic. You don’t need a cigarette, silence, music, a comfortable chair, or inner peace to write. You just need ten minutes and a writing implement.

**Anne Enright:** The way to write a book is to actually write a book. A pen is useful, typing is also good. Keep putting words on the page.