



Let Future You Handle Your Writing Problems

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When I coach new writers -- writers who haven't landed a freelance writing gig yet -- these are the questions I hear over and over:

- *What if I get an assignment and I don't know how to write it?*
- *Do I need a business license, a lawyer, an accountant?*
- *What if two publications accept my idea at the same time?*
- *I don't know anything about contracts...shouldn't I learn before I start looking for writing jobs?*
- *What happens if I write an article and the editor hates it?*
- *How do I avoid getting sued as a writer?*

I call this *pre-freaking out*. It's when you freak out in advance, just to make sure you never have to freak out in the future.

I recommend that new writers freak out about one thing only: Getting freelance writing jobs. Because if you don't freak out about getting freelance writing jobs, you'll never have the opportunity to freak out about contracts, business licenses, and unhappy editors.

MAKE IT FUTURE YOU'S PROBLEM

If you've been reading my articles for any length of time now, you probably know what I'm going to say: **Worrying about what might happen should you get a freelance writing assignment is a handy excuse for not going out and getting said assignments.** After all, if you get an assignment right now, in the future you could get sued, scammed, or blacklisted! No one wants that.

And now that you've pre-freaked out, you can rest assured that you'll never run into any of these issues...not because you came up with solutions for them, but because you've psyched yourself right out of your desire to write. Boom! Problem solved. You're safe.

However, I'm going to assume here that you really, really do want to write for a living—but you're scared, which is perfectly normal. In that case, **it's better to worry about getting work now, and task future you with worrying about any problems that come up once you have the work.**

Let me illustrate the difference. Pre-freaking out looks like this:

1. Decide you want to become a freelance writer.
2. Freak out that you might get sued.
3. Freak out that you don't understand contracts.
4. Freak out that you don't have what it takes to do a writing assignment.
5. Freak out that you don't have a business license, lawyer, or accountant.
6. Give up, apply for a job as a Walmart greeter, and get turned down because you're too young.

Making it future you's problem looks like this:

1. Decide you want to become a freelance writer.
2. [Market your butt off.](#)
3. Land a freelance writing job.
4. Get a contract from the client and freak out that you don't understand it.
5. Look up the contract terms you don't understand online, realize you're fine with the terms, sign the contract.
6. Freak out that you don't have a business license.
7. Quickly research whether you need a business license, and if you do, get one.

8. Freak out that you don't know how to write the assignment.
9. Look at similar articles in print publications and online, do what they do. Turn the article in.
10. Freak out that the editor asks you for revisions.
11. Do the revisions and realize it's just part of the game.
12. Get paid.
13. Repeat, but this time with much less freaking out.

Okay, I realize letting future you handle your problems requires double the number of steps...but this is a worst-case scenario. More likely, you'll discover you don't need to freak out about a lot of these things at all. For example, I've never been sued by a reader or a client. Only in the past few years of my 20-year writing career have I needed an accountant. Often, clients don't ask for revisions at all. Your creative mind can dredge up an infinite number of things to freak out about, but reality will whittle that number down for you.

Also, this long list ends with you receiving a fat check for your work, and then doing it again —with a heck of a lot more confidence this time around!

I have to warn you: **Future you will hate you for laying this burden on them.** Future you will moan, “Oh, why did I ever do this? Now I have to figure out my taxes, learn contract terms, and figure out how to soothe a prickly editor. Past me was such an idiot.”

However, future you is changeable like the wind. When future you sees that extra coinage in your bank account, and your byline on an article, they'll calm down pretty fast.

Know someone who's pre-freaking out? Do them a favor by sending them the link to this article or emailing them the PDF version. Future you will probably get a great big thank you.

Your Freelance Writing Success Coach,

Linda Formichelli

P.S. Looking for help breaking into freelance writing -- or making it to the next level? Blast off your writing career with help from a veteran freelancer with 20 years of experience. (Ahem...that's me.) You can take a look at my Freelance Writing Success Coaching [here](#).