



Hey there, Wordmaker!

Thanks for listening to Finding Your Author Identity!

Your writing identity is not just about the stories you tell, but how you tell them. It's the signature that makes your work authentically yours, a beacon for readers searching for truth, beauty, and connection in the world of romance novels. These three exercises will get you started.

While completing this in your favorite journaling app or word-processor might be your go-to, I'm going to gently encourage you to write these by hand **if you're able**. Writing longhand, as opposed to typing on a device, offers several benefits that can significantly impact the quality of your work and your mental processes. While technology has made writing more accessible and quicker, the practice of writing by hand has unique advantages, especially for creative endeavors like storytelling, poetry, and personal reflection. Here's why:

1. Enhanced Memory and Comprehension: Writing by hand engages the brain in a more comprehensive way than typing. The physical act of forming letters and words stimulates areas of the brain responsible for thinking, language, and working memory. Studies have shown that people tend to remember information better when they write it down by hand because it requires processing information on a deeper level.

2. Promotes Slower, More Reflective Thinking: The slower pace of writing by hand compared to typing can actually be beneficial for creativity and critical thinking. It allows more time for

ideas to develop and for deeper reflection on what you're writing. This slower process can lead to more thoughtful, carefully constructed passages and a clearer expression of ideas.

3. Minimizes Distractions: One of the biggest advantages of writing longhand is the reduction of digital distractions. Computers, tablets, and smartphones are gateways to the internet, social media, and other notifications that can interrupt the flow of writing. A notebook and pen don't have these distractions, allowing for a more focused and immersive writing experience.

4. Fosters a Personal Connection to the Work: There's something inherently personal and intimate about writing by hand. The connection between mind, hand, and paper can make the writing feel more authentic and emotionally resonant. This can be particularly beneficial for journaling, poetry, or any form of writing where personal expression and exploration are key.

5. Improves the Ability to Draft and Revise: The physical act of writing and then manually editing by crossing out, rewriting, and annotating in the margins fosters a more engaged revision process. It can make you more deliberate in your choice of words and structure, leading to a more polished final product.

6. Boosts Creativity: The tactile experience of writing by hand, the sight of your handwriting on the page, and even the freedom to doodle or sketch in the margins can all stimulate creativity. Many writers find that ideas flow more freely when they're not confined to the linear constraints of a word processing program.

7. Enhances Psychological Benefits: Writing by hand can have therapeutic benefits, helping to manage stress, clarify thoughts, and process emotions. The act of writing itself can be a form of mindfulness, keeping you present as you focus on the movement of your hand and the formation of words on the page.

While typing is undeniably efficient and essential for many aspects of modern writing, especially in professional and academic contexts, the benefits of writing longhand highlight the value of preserving this traditional skill. It's a tool that can complement digital processes, offering a different path to creativity, reflection, and personal expression. Again, this is not a hard rule, as I know there are authors who are unable or don't want to write longhand. It's just a suggestion!

Good luck on your journey to discover and define your author identity!

xo, Tasha

Journaling for Self-Reflection:

Journaling stands as a powerful tool for self-reflection, allowing you to explore your thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a private, unfiltered way. When journaling for self-discovery in writing, consider focusing on topics such as your reactions to the world around you, your deepest fears and desires, or the moments that have profoundly affected you. Reflect on what themes, genres, or characters you're drawn to and why. Journaling about the books that have impacted you and exploring the reasons behind their influence can also offer insights into your own writing preferences and inclinations.

1. What are the recurring themes or topics you find yourself drawn to write about, and why do you think they captivate you?
2. How do your personal experiences and background influence the characters, settings, or conflicts you create in your stories?
3. When you think about the books that have left a lasting impact on you, what elements within them do you aspire to incorporate into your own writing?
4. Can you identify a moment or piece of feedback in your writing journey that significantly shifted your perspective or approach to writing?
5. What genres do you feel most comfortable writing in, and what is it about these genres that resonate with you?
6. Reflect on a time you stepped out of your writing comfort zone. What did you learn about yourself and your writing preferences from that experience?
7. How do you navigate the balance between writing what you love and writing what you think will appeal to readers?
8. What does your ideal writing process look like, and how does your current routine align or diverge from this ideal?
9. How do you deal with writer's block or moments of doubt about your writing abilities, and what strategies help you overcome these challenges?
10. What are the core values or messages you hope to convey through your writing, and how do you weave these into your narratives?
11. How has your writing identity evolved over time, and what key events or insights prompted this evolution?
12. When you face criticism or negative feedback, how do you discern between what to take to heart and what to let go of in order to stay true to your writing identity?

13. In what ways do you push yourself to grow and experiment as a writer, and how do these efforts reflect your personal growth?
14. How do you incorporate the diversity of human experience into your writing, and why is this important to you?
15. Reflect on a piece of writing you are particularly proud of. What about it embodies your writing identity?
16. How do your writing goals align with the way you see yourself evolving as both a writer and an individual?
17. What role does empathy play in how you develop characters and their stories?
18. How do you reconcile the desire to be original with the influences of authors and books you admire?
19. What aspects of the writing process do you find most fulfilling, and how do these moments influence your commitment to your craft?
20. Reflecting on your writing journey, what advice would you give to your younger self about developing a writing identity?

Exploring Personal Experiences and Emotions:

Your personal experiences and the emotions they evoke are fertile ground for developing your writing identity. Consider the stories that have shaped you—the triumphs, the challenges, the pivotal moments—and reflect on how these experiences color your narrative choices. Do you find certain themes recurring in your work? Are there specific character traits or story arcs that resonate with you more deeply because of your experiences? Connecting your life stories to your writing helps to infuse your work with authenticity and depth, making your voice distinct and relatable.

1. How do my personal triumphs find their way into the characters or stories I write?
2. What challenges have I faced that are reflected in the narratives I choose to explore?
3. Are there pivotal moments in my life that I keep revisiting in my writing? What makes them so significant?
4. When I think about the themes that recur in my work, how do they relate to my own life experiences?
5. How do the emotions I've felt during key life events influence the way I develop my characters' emotional journeys?
6. In what ways do I see my personal growth mirrored in the growth of my characters?
7. Do I tend to gravitate towards certain character traits or flaws because they resonate with my own experiences? What are they?
8. How do specific events in my life color the way I describe settings, atmospheres, or moods in my stories?
9. When creating conflict in my stories, do I draw from personal conflicts I've encountered? How do I resolve these conflicts in my narratives?
10. Are there aspects of my identity that I explore through my writing? How does this exploration affect the stories I tell?
11. How do I use my writing to process or make sense of my past experiences?
12. When I think about the story arcs that resonate with me, how do they parallel my own life's journey?
13. How do my fears and hopes for the future influence the plots or themes of my writing?
14. In what ways do I challenge myself to step outside my comfort zone in my writing, reflecting my own personal challenges?

15. How does my writing reflect the way I've changed or evolved as a person over time?
16. Do I use my writing as a tool to explore different outcomes to real-life situations I've faced?
How does this affect the realism of my stories?
17. How do my cultural or familial background influence the voices and perspectives I bring into my writing?
18. In reflecting on my happiest moments, how do these translate into the scenes or moments I create in my stories?
19. How do I weave my personal values and beliefs into the narratives I craft?
20. When I think about the legacy I want to leave with my writing, how does my personal story influence this vision?

Crafting a Personal Mission Statement for Your Writing Journey:

A personal mission statement for your writing journey is a declaration of your goals, values, and the impact you wish to have through your work. This statement should reflect what you hope to achieve with your writing, the themes or messages you want to explore, and the audience you wish to reach. Crafting this statement can help you maintain focus and motivation, serving as a guiding light when you encounter challenges or crossroads in your writing career.

1. What core values do I want my writing to embody, and how can I weave these into my narratives?
2. How does my ideal writing impact look like, and what steps am I taking to achieve this with each piece I create?
3. When I think about the audience I wish to reach, what specific needs or desires am I aiming to fulfill with my stories?
4. What themes or messages am I drawn to explore in my writing, and why do these resonate with me personally?
5. How do I want my readers to feel or think differently after experiencing my work?
6. What unique perspectives or experiences can I bring to my writing that sets it apart from others in my genre?
7. How does my writing journey align with my overall life goals, and in what ways can I ensure they complement each other?
8. In what ways do I want my writing to contribute to conversations or reflections within my chosen audience or community?
9. How can I incorporate feedback or criticism constructively to refine my personal mission statement over time?
10. What are the ethical considerations I want to uphold in my writing, and how can I ensure they are consistently met?
11. How does my writing practice reflect my personal growth, and in what ways can I track this progress?

12. What obstacles have I faced in staying true to my mission statement, and how have I overcome them?
13. How can I use my writing to connect with others who share similar goals or values?
14. In what ways have I allowed my personal mission statement to evolve, and what triggered these changes?
15. How do I balance my creative ambitions with the practical aspects of my writing career, such as market demands or trends?
16. What rituals or practices do I have in place to regularly remind myself of my writing mission and goals?
17. How do I define success in relation to my personal mission statement, and how does this influence my daily writing habits?
18. What legacy do I hope to leave with my writing, and how does my personal mission statement guide me toward this legacy?
19. How do I navigate moments of doubt or creative blocks while keeping my mission statement in focus?
20. In what ways do I celebrate milestones or achievements that align with my personal mission statement for my writing journey?