

The Life Gets In The Way Syndrome (LGITWS)

Do you have the Life Gets In the Way Syndrome (LGITWS)?

The first sign is when all kinds of self-doubt appear: This will never work; nobody will read this; this is a lousy idea.

But the story idea keeps you up at night and sometimes you dream about it and maybe a few characters pop into mind as you are showering. Or maybe when you hit the pillow at night, the characters rap you on the shoulder and you start having a few words with them.

A few months later, you jot down some ideas on a napkin while you're at a café. You search the internet and see if anyone has already "worked" your idea. Then you do the laundry or wash the dishes or go to your day job. Your story sits, like a gift unopened, for another few months or years.

You go back to your story and either throw it away, delete it from your Dumb Story Ideas file, or...You say, "Hey! This is fantastic! I still like this and I love my characters." Then you pick the kids up or go out to dinner or maybe you get sick or someone you know is sick and needs attention. Or maybe you are in the military and get called to action; maybe you get fired from your job...So many maybes, so much time...Things to do and places to go... So you shelve the story for another few months or years.

To overcome the LGITWS, find your **writer's voice** in addition to coming up with your **story idea**. When you are sitting in the café, write down your favorite movies or novels. When you get home, add this list to all your other lists. After a few months or years of the LGITWS, make a master list. Then check

out genre on the internet. Take each movie or novel on your list and match it to the genre you think it is. Take some time and look up the movie on www.imdb.com and see if your “genre guess” matches how the film was marketed. Then do a cross-check list for yourself and make columns and see which genres are your favorite.

Now ask yourself: WHY do these genres *speak* to me? And then ask yourself what values were most prevalent in these films and novels? And then ask yourself: WHY do these values *speak* to me?

So, the next time you get the LGITWS, go to your favorite movies/novels/genres/values list. Then have a little talk with your characters, who have been waiting for you to get over the LGITWS so they can be completed! They’ve been very patient with you. It’s time to sit down and put your characters first and push the LGITWS away...Even for a few minutes. Let your characters out of the bag. It’s time...