Answers to the Eleven Big ‘I’m Quitting Teaching’ Questions

written by Holly
October 11, 2011
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Think of this as the "I'm Quitting Teaching" FAQ

I was overwhelmed by the number of responses to my 51st birthday post and the announcement I made about quitting teaching. In those responses, I ran across ten questions that needed a response everyone could read, and I realized there was one question no one had asked, but that desperately needed an answer.

So I’ve answered these BIG questions below.

THE ANSWER TO THE MOST IMPORTANT

QUESTION NO ONE ASKED:

> *What can I do as a student or graduate of one of your big courses (HTTS, HTRYN, HTWAS) do to make sure I don't get left behind during the upcoming transitions?*

Log into your account for EACH course in which you're a student, go into your **Profile** on your student page, and do the following:

- Make sure your e-mail address is correct and that it's an address you check regularly,
- Make sure it is exactly the same e-mail address in each course you're taking (so you don't get locked out of the forum)
- Scroll all the way to the bottom of your profile, and make SURE you have checked the box beside Receive Critical Updates.

If you are not getting critical updates, you stand a HUGE chance of missing the announcements that will move you from the existing course platform to the new one, and if you miss the move, you'll lose your downloads and access to the forum. I'll give plenty of warning, but there are a huge number of students who are NOT subscribed to critical updates, who don't visit the forum regularly, and who, having graduated, don't visit their student pages often.

So if you're a grad or an existing student, do this now, before you forget.

(These links are for existing students only. They are not registration pages for new students.)

- **How To Think Sideways** login page

- **How To Revise Your Novel** login page
- **How to Write A Series** login page

If you don't remember your login information, please create a support ticket at http://novelwritingschool.com/support and ask me to help you.

QUESTION ONE:

> *I'm a graduate or a current student in one or more of the following courses:*
>
> - *How to Think Sideways*
> - *How To Revise Your Novel*
> - *How to Write a Series (stand-alone version)*
>
> *Will my lessons and extras continue to be available when you lock the course to new students, or do I need to download everything now?*

All your materials will remain available, AND you'll continue to be a full, permanent member of the Boot Camp Writers' Community on all your course boards.

QUESTION TWO:

> *I've purchased one or more courses from Shop.HollyLisle.com. Will those continue to be available for re-download after you close the shop permanently?*

No. If you have all your copies intact, burn them to a backup disk now. If your hard drive has eaten courses you've purchased and you need to get backups before I close the shop, log into your account at **http://Shop.HollyLisle.com** (the login is in the top left corner) and re-download whatever you're missing. Burn your copies to a backup disk.

When I close the shop, ALL my smaller courses will be available on Kindle, Nook and iTunes, or as print books on Amazon.com and elsewhere. However, if you lose your existing copies, you will have to re-buy them, because my old database will not have any connection with the big platforms, and I won't be able to issue free copies.

If you have lost your account login information, create a support ticket at: **http://novelwritingschool.com/support** and ask me to help you get back into your HollyShop account.

QUESTION THREE:

> *J.A. Konrath is just now opening his writing shop. Why are you closing yours?*

Because everything that involves the exchange of money on my site ALSO involves doing customer service. I do my own because I want it done the way I want it done, I'm a perfectionist and a big pain in the ass in making sure my people (customers AND employees) are treated right, and it was my horrified experience that when I hired someone to cover some of my customer service for me, people knew they weren't dealing with me, and regularly treated my helper like shit.

When people treat ME like shit, I politely help them get their problem solved, then request that they don't buy anything else from me. My helper couldn't do that. I refuse to subject anyone else to the sort of abuse my helper took on my behalf, however.

I ALSO refuse to use a third-party customer service option, though, because my own experiences as a customer with those options have been awful. So I handle all problems myself. And even though I rarely receive abusive treatment from a customer, when I do, it screws up my day.

And doing customer service, even when working with the kind

and understanding folks I usually deal with, is exhausting, time-consuming, and it draws focus from my ability to create.

So I'm moving EVERYTHING that involves the exchange of money to sites that will not only collect the money for the courses I create and then send it to me, but that will do customer service on what they sell.

It's worth it to me to have my students get my courses from platforms that are dedicated to making everything work right on every sale, every time—and I'm willing to pay the 30-ish% fee to sell on those sites to have that happen.

If J.A. Konrath is doing his own customer service, I wish him luck—it's going to bite his writing time. If he's hired a friend or fan to do it for him, I wish his helper luck—many customers will not treat his helper with the kindness or respect they'd use in dealing with him personally. If he's farming customer service out to some third-party customer service solution, I wish his customers luck. I have found NO happy solution to customer service, but third-party is the worst solution.

QUESTION FOUR:

> *(The four-week version of)* ***How to Write a Series*** *is the bonus gift for* ***How To Revise Your Novel.*** *Will* ***Revise Your Novel*** *students be able to get the upgrades to the full, stand-alone version of* ***How to Write A Series****? Or is there a discount for HTRYN students to move to the full version?*

The four-week version is a solid course in its own right, and a good freebie for **How To Revise Your Novel**. But ONLY students of the full stand-alone version will receive the updates and the extended version.

There's a discount for both HTRYN and HTTS students and grads. I'm not sure if I have it posted in the HTRYN course

yet (I *thought* I did), but if I don't, I'll make sure to make the discount for upgrading to the stand-alone version available in the next couple of weeks.

QUESTION FIVE:

> *I've been saving money for one of your big courses, but I haven't saved up enough yet.*
>
> *If I can't join the course before you close the doors, is that course just gone forever?*

NO! ALL of my courses will continue to be available somewhere and in some form.

(When I said I'm not abandoning my students, I include FUTURE students in that statement.)

A LOT of folks missed this.

How To Think Sideways, **How To Revise Your Novel**, and **How To Write A Series** are going to be available for Kindle, Nook, iPad (if I can work out some problematic linking issues) and where possible, as print versions.

Let me go into a bit more detail on this:

- If you don't have a Kindle, you can get the free Kindle app for your computer and get your lessons that way.
- If you don't have a computer, you can get the Kindle app for your iPhone or Android phone, and get the lessons THAT way.
- If you just hate Amazon, you can get the NOOK app, and get your lessons THAT way.
- And at least for **How to Think Sideways** and **How to Revise Your Novel**, you'll be able to buy lessons in print, though because of paper and printing, these will be more

expensive than the e-versions. (And because the courses run about 250,000 words, and 150,000 words respectively, not including handouts, you're committing to some serious shelf space.)
- **How to Write A Series**, because of its format, may only be available as individual lesson DVDs.

Each lesson will be available separately, (meaning that students can buy them as you can afford them and take them at your own pace) and will include both:

- A link for free worksheet and handout downloads, and…
- A sign-up link for the Boot Camp Writers' Community for either a small monthly fee, or a one-time permanent membership.

QUESTION SIX:

> *Will you be finishing any of the other courses you've discussed or surveyed for or said you'd like to create?*

No. I've had hundreds of course ideas. They're scattered across my hard drive like a giant guilty conscience, and I'll be deleting the ideas as I trip over them.

I want my fiction. I want clarity, and breathing room, and to pursue the stories that are scattered in bits and pieces across my hard drive like a garden full of flowers waiting to bloom.

I'll refine my existing courses and transfer them to the big platforms. I'll finish **Create A World Clinic** because only about seven zillion people have asked me to, and it really is SUCH a cool series of techniques.

And that's it.

Me. Novels. Short story collections. A couple of truly

weird fiction ideas agents and editors kept shooting down that I'll now do. That's my future.

QUESTION SEVEN:

> *Has Cadence [Drake] ever done anything like this [complete priority shift]?*

I laughed when I read this…but then realization slammed me across the nose.

In what is currently Chapter Four of the first draft of **Cadence Drake 2: Warpaint**, written a few days BEFORE I made this decision, Cady does exactly this.

Exactly.

And now I'm giving my Muse, my subconscious mind, a fishy eye and muttering, "Okay, so when did you know I was going to make this change, you sneaky bastid?"

QUESTION EIGHT:

> *When is **How to Write a Series** available? And is it really that much different from **How to Think Sideways**?*

Okay. Let me just do the existing course rundown here.

All three courses, **How to Think Sideways**, **How to Revise Your Novel**, and **How to Write a Series**, are stand-alone courses.

Each covers its own subject matter, its own techniques, and its own objectives.

How to Think Sideways is my course on how to have the ideas, use them, and create the stories from them that will allow you to write novels (or screenplays, or short stories, or whatever form of fiction floats your boat) for the rest of your life.

How to Revise Your Novel is my course on how to get the book you want from whatever wreck your first draft turned into in ONE revision, and make it the book you dreamed it would be, so you can move on to writing your next book.

And **How to Write A Series** is how to create the characters and the stories that will allow you to write exactly the series you envision, in exactly the number of books you desire, and have each book be stronger and more compelling than the one before it—and how to end it how you want it and still thrill your readers.

There's some unavoidable crossover in a couple of very basic writing techniques, but the main course subject matter **does not overlap**.

My rule on courses has always been that **no one will ever** by a course from me, buy another course, and find that he or she has just paid for the same damn information, written in different words. I've bought those recycled crap courses from other people, they pissed me off, and I swore I would never treat people that way.

That goes for my little courses as well as my big ones. If you want the details on how to create a character, for example, the ONLY place you'll find those details is in **Create A Character Clinic**.

And finally, ALL my courses except for the upcoming **Create A World Clinic** are already available.

- Short courses
- How to Think Sideways
- How To Revise Your Novel
- How to Write A Series

QUESTION NINE:

> *Will all the writing stuff on your website still be available?*

Of course! Do you know how many years I've been adding to that stuff? There are articles in the writing section that were actually print articles I did for the little writers' group newsletter I used to send out back when I was still in Schrodinger's Petshop, before anyone but scientists had even heard of the internet. 1989-1990…somewhere around there.

I'll still add the occasional writing article to the site as I feel like it. I know me, and sooner or later I'll have something new to say about writing, and I won't be able to keep it to myself.

The writing newsletter now has 52 articles in it. One full year of once-a-week tips. It will remain a free resource on the site, and again, if I get froggy, I may add to it. Even if I don't add new tips, if you stay on it, I'll make sure to send you links to any new articles I write.

QUESTION TEN:

> *You're not still using **Word**, are you?!?!*

Oh, God, no! Not for years. I use **Scrivener** and **Pages**, and I have **Open Office** on my computers but have to confess **OO** is really only there so when I'm talking to the Windows crowd, I can offer something that I know works.

I just checked, and discovered that I don't actually have any Microsoft stuff on my computers anymore. Lot of Adobe, lot of indie stuff.

Not sure when the last of Microsoft went away, but I think

it’s kind of telling that I didn’t notice is was gone until today.

WHAT DID I MISS?

These were the ten big questions I found, plus the one nobody asked. But over the next few days, I’ll check in here as I can and answer as much of what I missed as I can.

And thank you, thank you, thank you.

I had tears in my eyes reading your responses to my 51st birthday post. I have always maintained that it has been my privilege to hang out with the best people on the internet, and that was proven again with your replies to my post.

But now, ONWARD!

We’re going to have some fun, and we’re going to create wonderful things. Today, tomorrow, for the rest of our lives.

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