Results of the “Help I’m Looking For” Writers’ Survey

written by Holly
May 17, 2013
By Holly Lisle

I did a survey of folks on my Writing Tips newsletter, many of whom have dropped out of regular readership.

Many of whom have a good reason for doing so.

The migraines don’t prevent me from working (most of the time) because I am tenacious and I’ll put up with a lot of pain before I give up. (This is, after all, how I got published in the first place.) This post, for example, is the sort of thing I can do with a migraine.

But the part of me that is *creative* crawls off in a hole and cries during migraines. Coming up with writing tips is big-C *Creative*. It does not play well with migraines. And when I’ve been feeling halfway decent, I’ve been working on stuff that pays the bills.

But I want to get back to doing cool things with the newsletter. So:

I asked the following four questions:

Where are you in your writing progress right now?
Answers I got:

- **598 (76.6%)** said, “I’m working on creating my first work”
- **128 (16.4%)** said, “I’ve finished projects, but I don’t know how to revise them”

- **46 (5.9%)** said, “I’m self-publishing regularly, but would like to do it better”
- **8 (1%)** said, “I’ve given up—I’ve moved on to other interests”

Receiving the following emails would help me reach my writing goals:
Answers I got (these were multiple choice, so totals are more than 100%):

- **956** said, “Writing tips once a month”
- **707** said, “Questions from readers that you answer once a month”
- **679** said, “Links to blog posts discussing aspects of writing that interest me (select preferred topics from SUBJECTS list)
- **490** said, “Notice of new writing articles on your site”
- **219** said, “Shop coupons”

The writing SUBJECTS I most need help with are:
Answers I got (these were multiple choice, so totals are more than 100%):

- **845** said, “Writing skills info: plotting, characterization, scene development, dialogue, worldbuilding, story structure and pacing, etc.”
- **627** said, “Advanced skills: career development, novel revision, series development and management, etc.”
- **619** said, “Functional skills: time management, motivation, scheduling writing time, developing project deadlines, etc.”
- **498** said, “Basic creative start-up info: how to get ideas, how to start stories, how to make myself write, etc.”
- **310** said, “Basic technical start-up info: software, hardware, document formatting, contact instruction such as how to write query letters, etc.”
- **88** said, “Something else” From this, I’ve received a

bunch of new course requests, including a LOT on self-publishing, self-promoting, some advanced writing topics, some absolute beginner writing topics…. I'm putting the requests into an inspiration folder that I can pull from when I get ready to create new courses. As always, I'll run ideas through here first to make sure enough people are interested to make it worth the investment in my time and effort. There are some GREAT ideas in there.

Do you resent me including information on my available novels and writing courses in your free emails?
Answers were:

- **1056 (99.5%)** said, "No."
- **5 (0.5%)** said "Yes. (Please cancel your subscription. While I'm willing to offer free help to struggling writers, I can only do this if I get paid for the novels and courses I create. If you resent my inclusion of links to the work that allows me to help you, you don't want my help. Unsubscribe instructions are below.)"

So far, about a hundred others however, most of whom did not fill out the survey, unsubscribed.

So what does this mean?

- First, it means that I have some wonderful folks on my list—and for those of you who sent good wishes on the migraines, thank you very much.
- **Second, it means that I'm going to be getting back to work on adding new stuff to the writing tips list.**
  Folks in Year One on the list will get a new writing tip every week. Folks who have been with me for more than a year should start looking for one writing tip a month, plus one other cool content email—either a round-up of writers questions and answers, or a discussion of some

aspect of writing or publishing I'm currently dealing with, or a link to a blog discussion here, or one of the other things folks would find useful.

- **I'll continue to include links to courses I offer that meet the needs students have noted above.** Aside from new releases, which I'll promote regularly for a week or two, the links will be attached to content emails, and they'll just fly by, so if you see something you like, go after it when you see it.
- **I'm going to be adding what I'm thinking of as *Specific Task Classes* to HowToThinkSideways.com.**
  These will be classes that use existing courses: *Character Clinic*, for example. You get *Character Clinic* separately, and then you do a Specific Task Class to create (as an example only) the Hero, Sidekick, Romantic Interest, and Villain for your next story.

  Or a class built around Plot Clinic that will help folks set up plots for related 2500-word short stories to sell as limited-run series.

  For Specific Task Classes (I'll come up with a better name, I promise), you bring your own textbook, but you'll get worksheets, audio, demos, a work board for live interaction with other students. Not sure what else. My objective with these is to keep the price low.

Here's the link to sign up for the newsletter, in case you didn't know I offered it: https://hollylisle.com/writer-updates-newsletter/

Oh, if you want to ask a writing question for the newsletter (these will ONLY be answered in the newsletter, and I'll pick the best questions to answer every month), ask them at THIS link: http://novelwritingschool.com/support2/

Comments?

Questions?

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