

The Boot Camp Writer's Creed: What We're About

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

I turned 53 yesterday. Birthdays always make me think of the meaning of my life.

And because I was building the new classrooms and the community, I ended up thinking about the WHY of the HTTS Boot Camp, and all the people in it, and why I and the other people there are doing what we do.

- Why have so many of us come together to pursue writing,
- why do we want writing so much,
- why do we want to bring other writers with us into this shared dream we have of creating fiction people will love,
- why do we want to get that fiction into readers' hands,
- and why do we need to be paid (and thus validated) by the people who love what we do to keep creating?

And the answer wasn't simple. It was every individual life story (or shard of it) that has appeared in the Boot Camp forum, hundreds upon hundreds of emails I've received, countless posts from the old Forward Motion forum back when I owned and ran it...

And all of those stories don't even boil down to something simple.

Between the joyous exuberance of finding something you're good at and the ugly pain of finding a way to exorcise the demons abuse, torture, and malevolence lies the entire realm of human experience.

But *that—human experience—that* is the point of why we come together. Because no matter how we get there, we arrive at wanting to write successfully, and wanting to see our colleagues write successfully, to do this very human thing with each other...

...because we understand that words matter.

That was the footer on my blog for a long time.

"Words matter."

Words define what and how we are able to think.

Words—and the act of stringing them together in meaningful ways—matter to us...to who we are and how we live our lives **because they allow us to decide who we choose to be and how we choose to define our selves and our lives as human beings.**

Words—and the act of stringing them together in meaningful ways—matter to our fellow writers, who also discover and determine the value of life to them and the way that they choose to be human through this exploration.

The words that we put together matter to the readers who are or someday will be in places like those we have come through...but who—unlike us—arrive there with no words to help them find their way through what faces them.

If our readers find our words, they will find the path we have created to the courage and the strength, the humor and the understanding they'll need to be the people they choose to be.

Words and their meanings and how we use them are the foundation of being human.

Getting our words right, and getting them out there for others to read, **is worth doing.**

So while I was gutting code and setting up classrooms, I

started thinking through who we in the HTTS Boot Camp are.

HTTS Boot Camp writers are a very small subset of the writing community.

We are not representative of all writers—not by a long shot.

- **We don't view each other as the enemy to be conquered, but as allies to share this journey with.**
- **We aren't looking for taxpayers or other people who will never read our work to pay our way through life—we're reaching out directly to OUR readers, the people who will love what we do, and who will benefit from what we have created, whether with joy or laughter or release from pain or deeper understanding, and we are saying, I will trade fairly with you: we have made friends with the concept that making money is GOOD, that writing is a real job, and that we deserve to get paid for our work.**
- **We do not think that to be a great writer, you have to be unappreciated in your lifetime, starve to death in your garret, and only be discovered once you're a corpse: We want to be read and appreciated—and paid—now.**
- **And we do not think the purpose of fiction is to point out how worthless and meaningless fiction and life both are. We know our lives matter, both to ourselves and to each other. And we know that writing, done with intent and imbued with what matters to us, is meaningful and worthwhile.**

As I thought all of this through, I put together a short creed that I think is representative of who we—the members of the HTTS Boot Camp—are.

HTTS Boot Camp Writer's Creed

This year, I will write a story I love.

This year, I will connect with the readers who will love it

too.

This year, I will be paid for my creation by the people to whom it matters.

This year, I will live my dream.

This isn't carved in stone. Yet. ☐

Let me know what you think.

And write with joy.

Holly

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