

Use this powerful secret and see your work in print.

The Writer's Secret: MasterMind Your Way to Publishing Success

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The Writer's Secret

MasterMind Your Way to Publishing Success

Jennifer Basye Sander, co-author of the bestseller

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Published

and

JT Long, founder of

The Capital Writers' Bloc

Chapter One:

The Writer's Life

Ah, to lead the life of a writer... start off the day with a quick call from your agent reporting on the latest piece of good news, sit at the computer for an hour or two of free-flowing and perfectly polished work, lunch with an illustrious colleague, an afternoon spent browsing in a bookstore and reading fan mail from adoring readers, followed by an evening at a glittery literary gathering to accept yet another award. Life is sweet.

Is that the way most writers live? Sadly, no. In fact, we don't know anyone with that kind of posh and glossy life. Instead, here is how the day goes for so many of us trying to survive in the world of writing:

Another day alone at the computer... another day in which the phone doesn't ring. Another day in which you might spend time staring out the window trying to decide what to cook for dinner instead of writing another chapter. Another day in which you decide, "I'll start my novel tomorrow."

"The artistic life is a long, lovely suicide."

~Oscar Wilde

Sounds lonely and grim, doesn't it? Is there a better way? We think so. Many successful writers share a powerful secret—one you can learn to use it too. We can't promise you will be instantly transported to the dream life in the beginning of this chapter, but the information in this book can help pull you out of the creative doldrums and let you forge ahead to new creative achievements, no matter *where* you live!

Time for a New Approach?

With the power of *The Writer's Secret*, you can build a different kind of writing life. One in which you are surrounded and supported by other like-minded creative people who are dedicated to helping you succeed and achieve your dreams.

Ready to meet these people? Listen to what Candy Chand has to say about the secret that worked for her:

I'll admit it, I like being a loner—composing some of my best work (six books and counting) at 2 a.m., propped up to my computer, wearing non-sexy (just ask my husband) baggy, faded pajamas. Get the picture? If not, let me assure you, it ain't pretty. Let's just say, if I smoked cigarettes, that's exactly what I'd be doing — in a disturbing chain-like fashion.

But a few months ago, I was invited to join a writer's MasterMind group and I found that, despite having to put on real clothes, I love the meetings. Why? Because these serious writers share ideas, network, and encourage each other to take on new writing challenges.

Now, I've done well with books over the years, but secretly longed to see my ideas in print in the newspaper. After I shared this at a MasterMind meeting, another group member challenged me to follow through. Not one to back off a challenge, I submitted a guest piece to a newspaper and had it published that very week. Two more articles soon followed. Another writer in this group received a personal recommendation to an agent, had her proposal snapped up, and is now happily on her way to her first book deal.

Although I still love the solitary life, I have to admit, my best work is now stemming from the support of the incredible people in my writers' MasterMind group. God, I miss my P.J.s.

Candy Chand

Good for Candy, but how are you ever going to find other writers to form one of these supportive groups? And once you gather them up, then what? Don't worry,

we will tell you how to run the meetings and keep all of the members on task. And finding other committed and serious writers who want to pump up their professional careers isn't that hard.

**“Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm.”
~Winston Churchill**

The Writer's MasterMind

So what's the big deal about forming a writer's group? They've been around forever. The meetings are always the same – endless critiques and discussion of a poem that someone wrote in graduate school and is still trying to tweak and work up the nerve to submit to a small literary review. Been there, done that. How is that a powerful secret?

No, that isn't the kind of writing group we have in mind. Did you read Candy's account? Did she say she was reading people's old essays? Nope. Was she sitting and waiting to hear what the group had to say about what she'd written? Nope.

Candy was in a Writer's MasterMind Group— swapping contacts and leads, challenging her fellow writers to try something new and holding them accountable for what they said they'd try to achieve. All the while, she, herself, was being pushed, prodded and propelled toward success by the other MasterMind members. With their help and encouragement, she was able to take her career to the next level.

It Worked for Us!

Why do we believe in this so strongly? Because we've been there, too. Jennifer is a bestselling author—you've probably read one of her books. But what you don't know is that she really didn't try very hard to write and publish and increase her output until she was challenged by her mentor – Mark Victor Hansen of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* fame.

Since then Jennifer has written more than 50 books – including *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Published* – but the fact is she has a real problem with the isolation of the typical writer's life and works hard to create a different kind of environment in which she can work. One in which, instead of sitting alone with her laptop in the quiet of the morning, she is continually sharing information online, in meetings, and on conference calls with a group of other dedicated writers about how their progress is proceeding, what kinds of snags they are trying to overcome, or what the new hot selling topic will be next year.

As an editor with Random House, Jennifer has heard every excuse in the book about why an author missed a deadline. Writer's Block, family emergency. Much of it has to do with lack of feedback when working alone, so why not form a group that will help you stay on task? You will never miss another deadline again!

JT Long worked for years as a newspaper reporter, a magazine editor, a content developer, and then a freelance writer. With our high-tech world JT has not needed to go into the office in years in order to keep employed in the same field, but found that she missed having colleagues and compatriots around her.

How to address the problem? Simple – she formed a writers' MasterMind group to overcome the isolation, and saw her career flourish! The diverse strategies and niches represented by the writers she met with each month opened her mind to how she could be more efficient with her time and selling her stories.

Because of encouragement from this group, she overcame the mental barrier that locked her into writing only for local markets. She started sending queries to national trade publications and eventually built her business in the larger, higher-paying business-to-business market.

In turn, JT helped other members make contacts and jump from regional to national exposure. Because the members work in different areas of expertise, there is no sense of competition. Writers constantly share leads and occasionally find themselves in a position to hire other members for large projects.

Does the idea of friends you trust calling you with paying work appeal to you? Are you ready to participate in the ultimate networking group where trust builds over time and the degree of separation between you and an assignment editor is one handshake? That is the power of a MasterMind group.

Good Reasons to Join!

Not everyone thinks of themselves as a “joiner.” We understand that. Many first-time writers cling to the notion of the lonely artist. It is worth noting, however, that many major accomplishments have been the result of groups coming together in order to achieve:

- The Manhattan Project brought together the smartest minds in science in order to end World War II once and for all. It took a group in the desert to develop the ultimate solution.
- The world's most famous literary work – the Bible – is the result of a group effort, with the apostles each writing one section.
- A soloist can produce beautiful music, but it takes a symphony to produce a full, rich sound.
- Cathedrals were built by skilled workers over many, many decades, some of whom didn't live long enough to see the beauty they helped create.
- Championship sports teams train together every day in order to work together as a single unit.

Aren't those results appealing? We think so!

Instead of that lonely artist's life that Oscar Wilde laments, what if your planner entries looked like this:

Every Day – you log into a website filled with fellow writers, insider information, writing prompts to help you bust through your dry spells, and a group of peers encouraging you to stay on course with your work.

Every Week – you call in to a conference filled with friendly, cheerful voices of fellow dedicated writers who will want to hear what you've been doing, what's worked, and what is making you struggle. You listen in on an info-rich call from industry experts about timely market information and professional marketing tips.

Every Month – you walk into a room of friends eager to hear about your successes and challenges. You report to the group, and bask in their applause.

Far more appealing than sitting alone trying to produce your masterpiece with only the only feedback coming from a blank wall, don't you think?

The Third Mind

An additional benefit of joining a Writers' MasterMind group is that suddenly you will have a Rolodex filled with new people to collaborate with! Those 50-plus books that Jennifer has written? Must have taken her years and years to complete, right? Guess again. She mostly writes with other people as co-authors and hardly ever tackles a project on her own. Where does she find writers to work with? She turns first to the members of her own Writer's MasterMind Group. *Christmas Miracles*, a *New York Times* bestseller, was the product of a three-person creative team. That same team of Jennifer, Jamie, and Laura went on to produce four other *Miracles* books, which have sold hundreds of thousands of copies. Jennifer came up with the idea for the book series on her own, but could she have finished the project on her own? Doubtful.

“No two minds ever come together without thereby creating a third, invisible and intangible force, which may be likened to a third mind.”

~Napoleon Hill

Yes, because you will be spending more time with writers who share your same level of commitment and dedication, you might well find yourself teaming up with one or two of them in order to work together on projects. Is that hard to do? Not really, as long as everyone is clear about the responsibilities and realistic about the results. As an added bonus to this book we've included a copy of the very same collaboration agreement that Jennifer has used over and over again when she works with other writers on book projects.

Sometimes ideas will come up during a group brainstorming session, and you will either decide to work on it together or make a clear decision about who will pursue the idea on their own. Make sure it is understood clearly and quickly, you don't want hurt feelings (or worse, lawsuits) later on down the road.

Get to The Top Faster!

By forming a MasterMind Group dedicated to the publishing success of its members, you will soon find that life is moving at a faster rate. No longer are you the lonely writer working in solitude, plodding to your goals. Instead, you are part of a hard-working creative team all moving towards your futures together at a rapid pace.

No doubt you are familiar with business basics and know that the first step for any company contemplating the launch of a new project is the creation of a business plan. A key component is a timeline. By breaking a task into distinct pieces and estimating how long each one will take, the project manager is making a commitment to a deadline. The role of the management team is to point out obstacles that might impact the schedule and suggest solutions to streamline it, thus saving time and getting the project to success that much faster.

Similarly, a MasterMind Group acts as a board of advisors by evaluating the plan, pointing out time wasters and keeping you on schedule. Vague goals are easy to

put off, but specific tasks are easier to complete and harder to make excuses for later.

Share Your Contacts

“It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it.”

~Albert Einstein

If there was ever a time for writers to not work alone, this is it. Publications and publishing companies are closing or laying off employees on a daily basis. The editor you've worked with for years at Random House might have suddenly lost her job. Don't panic, maybe someone else in your group knows a different editor you can approach. Maybe they know of a publishing company that published in that same field. What if the lifestyle magazine you've written for these past few years suddenly closes? Another member might be able to help you refocus your work and sell it to an ezine instead. Ask for help and information, and always be willing to give it if someone is asking you. Again, always think as your fellow members as teammates rather than competition. When one succeeds, the entire group is that much closer to the resources that could help them when the time comes.

Of course, when one door closes, others open. While traditional creative outlets may be waning, new technology rises almost daily. Your fellow members may have experience with tools such as blogging, Twittering or social media options that could help you reach your goals in new, dynamic ways. If you take a class or master a new trick, share your experience with the team. That could be just the kick in the pants they need to dive into a new way of delivering their word to the world.

Writers are very lucky to be in a position of doing the work they love and getting paid for it. Creativity is a gift and as Einstein said above, one that must be repaid by helping others find a way to share their skills. Be a giver.

Together, Go For Your Dreams

Let's get back to that image from the beginning of the chapter, that wonderful life of a much-published writer. You remember, the writer who fields upbeat calls from agents, basks in the praise of bags of fan mail, writes fluidly and with ease, attends highbrow literary events and drinks really good wine. Okay, we just added that last part as a bonus, but yes, this is truly the dream life of so many writers.

If that is your dream, what is your plan to get you there? Have you mapped out the steps, have you started to work toward making your dream a solid reality? One of the most powerful steps is available to you *right now*. Not tomorrow, not next week, not after you finish your M.F.A. *Right Now*. Form that MasterMind Group today, follow the simple steps outlined here and turn your dreams into reality!

Use this powerful secret and see your work in print.

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