



## TEN TACTICS FOR WRITERS FROM TRISKELL COACHING...

1. Know your **transferable skills** and transfer them (e.g. professional life like deadlines, projects or personal life, like marathon strategies). Be your own performance detective. Find your precedents. Where are the gaps and how can you learn them? *Jot them down.*
2. **Find parallels.** Someone somewhere out there has faced your issue before. Learn from the work of others (e.g. plot, structure, tactics and strategies). Adopt. Adapt.
3. **Chunk** – small steps, regular endings, know your milestones and celebrate them. Keep your glass half full. Have you only done 20,000 words - or are you nearly quarter of the way there? Be gentle with yourself (and see 9). Thirty minutes a day writing is better than zero (NB: Beware the big time fallacy).
4. **Use deadlines to work for you** – for yourself and to win the support of others and to negotiate distractions. That means saying “no” sometimes. Write them down and make them public. Diary them.
5. **Feel the fear and do it anyway** – have a go, white heat writing, playing in the sandpit, making a mess and giving yourself permission to experiment. The main obstacle to achieving “the impossible” may be a self-limiting mind-set (nb Roger Bannister and his “impossible” four minute mile).
6. **Focus** – regular connection with your work – seven minute free write a day; clear goals; some kind of workplan. Write it down; keep it visible – this makes it real and help makes it happen.
7. **Writing is not just writing** – the creative process has many parts – acknowledge and value them all – reflecting, dreaming, researching, editing, exploring, planning, charting. *Key questions – did I move this forward? What did I learn? How can I do more of it?*
8. **Writing is learning** – write to discover, not just what you know. Edna O’Brien has called it a form of archaeology...
9. **Stay honest** – are you avoiding or procrastinating? Waiting for the perfect opening paragraph? Just start!
10. **Surround yourself** with the smartest people you can find, who make you feel energised and excited about the story you are choosing to tell. And if you can, find a significant other who supports and nourishes your choices. *Mindmap your writing support...you are not alone.*

### **And according to the research...**

How do the best get better and better? According to research (Harvard Business Review, June 2008, 123-127), the characteristics that enable this performance include:

- An insatiable demand for honest, immediate feedback; feedback must be constructive because stars do not engage in self-flagellation
- Using competition to push themselves to new limits
- Continually reinventing themselves, especially after they become the benchmark
- Celebrating success

***Tell your own story, the only way you know how*** ~ Margaret Atwood ~