



Gaining Altitude as a Writer

A M Carley

If all you can see is a bug on a nearby tree, you may need to pull the focus back.

When you are in the middle of a writing project and realize you've lost your sense of direction, sometimes the best thing for it is to increase your altitude.

In other words, if all you can see is a bug on the bark of a mangy pine tree eight inches from your face, you may need to pull back the focus enough to see the forest again.

The 30,000-Foot View

You may have heard this referred to as the “30,000-foot view.” I keep the term handy. It works for me often, as it does for other writers I know and coach. Gaining altitude as a writer can pull you out of your stymied state and refresh your vision, reminding you what your purpose is.

Take in the View

So, for example, if you're concerned you're not managing your time while you're juggling competing writing projects, zooming way up high can provide the perspective you need to a) see that perhaps you can't get it all done as quickly as you might like, and b) choose which items can wait a little while, or even get removed from your to-do list, leaving you with c) the things you will draft and polish, more calmly, and more promptly.

Other Uses

The same approach can apply to the rest of a writer's life. For example, if you're swamped with the publicity demands of the work you've already published, pulling the focus back can help you decide, from the array of blogs, guest blogs, newsletters, podcasts, interviews, Facebook-Instagram-Twitter-Goodreads entries, meetings, conferences, classes, workshops, live appearances, etc., that everyone tells us we must do - and

should also *want* to do - which handful of them to focus on, in what degree of detail, and with what outside assistance.

Back to That Tree

The tree will probably be there where you left it.

The bug may or may not still be in that spot on the mangy pine tree. But the tree probably will be waiting where you left it. And after a visit skyward, you'll be better prepared to know where you want to go next, from that particular place in the big forest. You may also have a renewed sense of purpose for the next step.

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