



On Track: Group Update #5

Hope your writing's been going well! I've been hearing about some great projects: if you want to share your work with someone, check out the list below...

Birdy Diamond - phoenyxravenswing@gmail.com – Websites, Podcasts & Fiction

We are working on website writing & podcast prep (which involves more writing). We are also gearing up to start working on a requested story about one of our characters from our "For Love of a Rose" universe, Daray.

Pam - pbennett11@yahoo.com – Blogging

I'm definitely interested in being supportive and being supported in my writing. i'm working on getting a blog started.

Emily – emily.m.helms@gmail.com - Ebook

I'm working on a short ebook. I'm a musician, and the goal of the ebook is to help other musicians get more from their music practice sessions.

Leslie – leslie@socialmediamercenary.com - Ebook

I'm working on an ebook covering Web Analytics, Social Media Metrics, and Social Media Monitoring for freelancers and super small businesses

Sue – s.lambertv20@gmail.com – Blog posts

[I'm] working on blog posts. I conduct historical research, local, social and family history in libraries and archives and then write up the findings. The blog aim is to share snippets of this research with people.

Congrats to Solo!

This week, Solo from solo.lafrance.org emailed me to say:

I've finally got the courage to redraft and handwrite my entry into my legacy book for my granddaughter. Now the love is flowing in the heart of my writing, and I fynd as I write with my arm and wrist and fingers, the pen talks from my heart, more than my head.

The redraft is impossibly so much better!! I've cut excess words, redundancies, and added phrases that better express myself. The work is more accessible and more immediate.

I am liking this process very much!!

(Note that Solo's idiosyncratic spelling of "fynd" isn't a typo, but part of her unique style.)

Huge congrats to Solo! I know she's been working hard on this project, and it's going to be a beautiful book and very special legacy for her granddaughter.

Monday's Assignment

Here's a quick recap, in case you've not had a chance to do this week's assignment yet:

Start building your support team, by doing one (or more!) of these:

#1: Join an online forum and write at least one post.

#2: Get in touch with one of the writers listed above, or share what you're working on with the Twitter group (use the #ontrack hashtag so your tweet stands out).

#3: Find out about a local writers' group and put their next meeting in your diary.

Questions and Answers

Next Thursday will be the very last group update, so if you've got any questions, now's the time to send them! (You can email me on ali@aliventures.com, or find me on Twitter as @aliventures)

This week's questions are on:

1. Storing your writing and notes
2. Writers' forums

#1: Storing your writing notes

What do you recommend as a good way to organize and do housekeeping on a regular basis for one's writing?

I think all writers approach this differently, and might even have several different methods for different projects. I like to have a specific notebook for each novel I write, so that all the notes are in one place. I'm picky about the *type* of notebook too: I like to be able to lay it flat easily, and I like

thick paper and a hardback cover. (You can see my notebook in the photo at the bottom of my coaching page here - <http://www.aliventures.com/coaching/>)

For my non-fiction work, I keep notes and ideas in a piece of software called The Journal, from David RM software. Ideally, I'd revisit them on a regular basis – in actuality, I quite often forget all about the notes I've made (though, then it's a pleasant surprise to find I've already outlined five blog posts...)

When it comes to storing your writing itself, not just your notes:

- Keep a backup – either online (you can use a service like Dropbox, or even email the file to yourself) or on a USB pen or external hard drive. You might also want to print and keep a hard copy.
- Consider saving the sections of a project as separate files. I like to keep all my novel scenes as individual files, to make it easy to find them (and potentially reorder them). One HUGE file can take a while to load. If you do use separate files, give them useful filenames: I went for the format "Draft X – Chapter X – Viewpoint Character's Name".
- Be particularly careful if you work on several different computers. It's all too easy to end up saving five different chapters of your ebook in five different places. I find a USB pen helps solve this.

Ultimately, it's really up to you how you store and organise your writing and your notes. You want a system that's easy and quick to use, but which lets you find what you're looking for again.

#2: Writers' forums

You advised us to join a writer's forum. I want to ask what writers forum did you join and what forum you think gave you the most benefits as a writer?

I've never belonged to a writing-specific online forum. I started going to a local writers' circle when I was 14 (back in the days of dial-up internet!) so I got plenty of feedback from that. During my MA, I had plenty of feedback from fellow students.

In recent years, though, I've been a member of several blogging-related forums. I tried the ProBlogger community forum but found that I wasn't really making the most of it. I'm now in Third Tribe (which is a paid membership site), and have had some fantastic writing feedback from other members there.

When I've wanted specific writing advice, I've approached individual writer friends, and I'm often in touch with them by email – we swap work back and forth.

I'd actually suggest that, if you're able and willing to, you'll probably get more from a face-to-face group than a forum. It's up to you, though!

Your final lesson (!) will be in your inbox on Monday – we'll be looking at the resources which will help you as a writer, and covering ways to cultivate these.