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# The War Of Art

# theWARofART

Break Through the Blocks  
and Win Your  
Inner Creative Battles

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**STEVEN PRESSFIELD**

"A vital gem...a kick in the ass." —*Esquire*



## Synopsis

Think of The War of Art as tough love... for yourself. Since 2002, The War of Art has inspired people around the world to defeat "Resistance"; to recognize and knock down dream-blocking barriers and to silence the naysayers within us. Resistance kicks everyone's butt, and the desire to defeat it is equally as universal. The War of Art identifies the enemy that every one of us must face, outlines a battle plan to conquer this internal foe, then pinpoints just how to achieve the greatest success. Though it was written for writers, it has been embraced by business entrepreneurs, actors, dancers, painters, photographers, filmmakers, military service members and thousands of others around the world. "As I closed The War of Art, I felt a surge of positive calm. I now know I can win this war. And if I can win, so can you." - From the foreword by Robert McKee, screenwriting guru "[The War of Art] aims to help readers channel creative energy, unlock potential and overcome the fears that stop us from reaching our fullest potential. With courage, following the right formula and working hard, the book proposes that passion can be turned into purpose." - Ellen Degeneres book pick "Resistance is the voice in the back of our head telling us to back off, be careful, go slow, compromise. . . . [Steve Pressfield is] the godfather of the resistance, the five-star general in the war against fear." - Seth Godin "A vital gem . . . a kick in the ass." - Esquire "I've never read a self help book that wasn't fatuous, obvious and unhelpful. Until The War of Art. It's amazingly cogent and smart on the psychology of creation. If I ever teach a writing course this would be one of the first books I'd assign, along with the letters of Flannery O'Connor." - Jay McInerney, author of Bright Lights, Big City and Brightness Falls "Yes, The War of Art is hell. But Steven Pressfield is our Clausewitz who shows how you too can battle against The Four Horsemen of The Apologetic: sloth, inertia, rationalization and procrastination. Shakespeare, Rembrandt and Beethoven all are proof of what you can do with talent and General Pressfield." - Frank Deford, author and NPR commentator "A marvelous help for anybody who has ever encountered the resistance of a blank page, an empty canvas or an unyielding musical scale." - Stan Berenstein, co-creator of The Berenstein Bears Steven Pressfield is the author of the novels The Legend of Bagger Vance (made into the movie starring Matt Damon and Will Smith), Gates of Fire, Tides of War, Last of the s, Virtues of War, The Afghan Campaign, Killing Rommel, and The Profession. His nonfiction includes The War of Art, The Warrior Ethos, and the upcoming Turning Pro. His books are included in the curriculum at West Point and the Naval Academy, and are on the Commandant's Reading List for the Marine Corps. In 2012, Pressfield will launch his independent publishing company, BLACK IRISH BOOKS with his longtime editor, agent, publisher, and friend, Shawn Coyne.

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## **Customer Reviews**

I found this book to incite and inspire, encourage but be frank. If you're a creative professional, you probably have questioned why you create or if it even matters. Pressfield calls this Resistance. He capitalizes the word, because he's personified all of the roadblocks we encounter, both psychologically and externally. The book makes you think and really presses you to understand your excuses for not creating what you're meant to contribute to the world.

I've been simultaneously reading this along with "Deep Work" by Cal Newport. Both books have similar themes: creativity and inspiration comes from disciplined work. They are not the product of chance, nor do they come from finding first that thing you love to do. We probably don't really know what it is that we love to do. The love of work follows after the actual work. Of the two, Pressfield has more practical advise about what it is that keeps us from doing that work and how we combat it. Both books will become part of my permanent library.

Well-known author and screenwriter Steve Pressfield introduces us to our biggest barrier to

creativity. Specifically, he discusses "Resistance," which most writers know as "writers block" and the rest of the world as procrastination. Anyone who ever started a big project after much hemming and hawing knows the feeling all too well. To overcome the resistance of procrastination, Pressfield establishes a protocol that involves preparation, order, patience, endurance and staring down the fear that keeps us from taking the first step toward change and creativity. Finally, he tells us about the origin of true inspiration that comes from discipline and resolve. Pressfield has written a book that should be given to every new artist and any business person staring at a new project. Both will benefit mightily.

Outstanding, insightful description of and guidance through the artist's process. In a nutshell, one of the book's first paragraphs succinctly describes the essential struggle: Between the life we live and the unlivable life that we dream of is resistance. This book helps the readers to understand their resistance and how to work with it.

I learned a lot from this book. A lot of insight and a lot of epiphanies. I highly recommend this book particularly for artists who sometimes question whether heading in the right direction in life. Another thing I like about the way Steven Pressfield wrote this book is, he rarely talks about the glamour. He really speaks on the moment-to-moment truth of how you have to put in work. I like that because obviously you can have huge reward for your hard work but I just really appreciate that he didn't speak on that. The grind, the present moment is what he emphasized because sometimes things don't happen right away when you want them. But if you can put your head down and do the work, it can come a lot quicker than you thought. I just really appreciate that because sometimes when you're working with just the end goal in mind and it doesn't happen as soon as you want it, you can go crazy.

"Breaking through our blocks & winning our inner creative battles" - this is the essence of the book. Modeled loosely on Sun Tzu's classic, "The Art of War", it is an absolutely brilliant reflection on the process (struggle) within all creative endeavor, Pressfield focuses his wise counsel specifically on writing, but it applies to the creative process in any other art or effort as well - athletic, entrepreneurial, musical, etc. He writes brief, pithy, succinct and unforgettable chapters about the ways and wiles of that great enemy of all creative projects: Resistance. He proposes canny strategies to outwit this ancient enemy. He identifies unseen and unheralded resources from a "higher realm" that are available to the writer/artist/creator who is open to receiving them. This book

is a poetic meditation on poetics, a real pleasure to read, and a genuine - if literary - kick in the seat of the pants. A must read!

I heart about this from the Joe Rogan Experience Podcast, and I'm glad I did. I devoured this and promptly bought more books by Pressfield. His style is straightforward and makes for a fast read while delivering interesting, informative content. For any artist struggling to find motivation, or those who aren't, PICK UP THIS BOOK!

In a car, hating my chosen vocation, feeling the onslaught of bitterness and self-pity curl up inside my soul like spoiled milk, when this book lands in my brain. The War of Art...yeah, Pressfield, that guy. Read it years ago. I look it up on my phone and read an excerpt. The fog parts. I see the truth. Though I'm still in the same place, I'm miles above it all. I can control myself. The darkness subsides. Light enters. I can continue. Point being: buy the book. No question.

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