

How 20 Seconds of Insane Courage Can Change Your Life ...

By Cindy Cyr

Cindy Cyr here to give you some client-getting tips in *The Writer's Life* this week ...

Over the holidays, my family and I went to see the movie, "*We Bought a Zoo*."

The movie, based on a true story, is about Benjamin Mee, a recent widower who buys a run-down zoo, moves his family there, and prepares the zoo to reopen.

There's a great line where Matt Damon, who plays Mee, tells his son, "Sometimes all you need is 20 seconds of insane courage, just literally 20 seconds of embarrassing bravery, and I promise you something great will come of it."

It's an interesting point.

I don't know what happens as we get older, but it seems we get fearful and have less courage to try new things. We're more cautious, even in one of the most important parts of our freelance careers.

It's fear ... the fear of approaching your dream client ... of a new client not liking your writing or requiring your services ... that can stop you from getting writing jobs and being as successful as you want.

In fact, fear is what most often stops freelancers from landing their ideal clients.

I remember years ago hearing a speaker explain how fear stops people. She recounted how she had been so afraid to approach clients until the day someone talked her into bungee jumping.

She was absolutely terrified. Thoughts about what could happen were racing through her mind.

But, she did it anyway. She used her 20 seconds of insane courage. And, she had a blast.

Afterwards, she reflected how it seemed silly that she could jump off a platform 150 feet in the air with nothing but a giant rubber band attached to her ... yet she was afraid to ask someone if they were interested in her product, which she knew would help them.

The secret to growing your business is ... doing the thing that scares you. Calling that client that scares you is good. Going after a *bigger* client is even better.

The good news is, you can beat this fear thing. Here's how ...

Make yourself a reminder to be courageous. Print out a sign that says in big bold letters: "Sometimes all you need is 20 seconds of insane courage." Put it where you can see it when you are working on getting clients.

Read this before you do something that scares you, so you can remember that it only takes 20 seconds of courage to pick up the phone, introduce yourself to a prospect at an event, or engage in any other client-getting activity.

Ask yourself what's the worst thing that could happen? When it comes to approaching prospective clients, making phone calls, or following up on leads, the worst thing that could happen is that the client says "No." It's just a word.

Change your thinking. It's rare that a prospect says "No." Not getting back to you is more likely to happen — in which case, instead of thinking they must not be interested, start thinking, "they must not be interested ... *right now*." Then, continue to follow up with them.

Do something that really scares you from time to time. My brother-in-law attends high-end business seminars a few times a year where each participant is challenged to do something outside of their comfort zone, from bungee jumping to walking across hot coals. The whole idea is to get people back into that emotion of taking a risk and moving forward.

The next time you find yourself saying "No" to something because it seems a little scary, say "Yes" and do it anyway. For example, if your kid asks you to go on a roller coaster and the thought scares you — do it anyway.

Everyone has different levels of fear — the higher the level, the more courage you need to get past it. And, selling yourself to clients ranks pretty high on the fear scale among people who want to live *the writer's life*. Yet, it's necessary if you ever want to get anywhere with this career.

Remember, it only takes 20 seconds of insane courage to approach clients with confidence and transform your life into *the writer's life* you've been longing for.

Do you have a story where you were afraid to approach a client and you did it anyway? Share your story below.

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3 Responses to "How 20 Seconds of Insane Courage Can Change Your Life..."

I read your newsletters regularly. Many of them I find very interesting and extremely useful, others I find more suitable for an American audience. However, your article about fear increasing with age is something I do not entirely agree with. Security and authority increases with age because knowledge, experience and self value become an intrinsic part of the person. One has nothing more to lose in life.

Sincerely

Jean Kotzur

(writer, senior citizen and from England)

Guest (Jean Kotzur) – over a year ago

Thanks for a great article Cindy - very helpful! I'm still getting everything in order (website, business cards, self-promo letter, portfolio) before I start approaching clients, but I can see I shouldn't try to get everything perfect and use that as a delaying tactic!

Love the '20 seconds of insane courage' - great slogan to remember.

Guest (Julie Wuthnow) – over a year ago

Hi Jean, Thanks for your comment, I appreciate your insight very much. And you are right. I should have said "some" people as I do believe it's different for everyone--and I do think experiences and the longer you live influences this too. In my own situation I agree with you---however my observations of many people is that they are more fearful in some ways. The inspiration in fact came from the stories people told me about how they were afraid to do things they once did--People in sales afraid to sell their own services, adults afraid to go on roller coasters they once loved, people afraid to talk to strangers when they used to talk to everyone under the sun. You sound like a very wise woman and it's good you have less fear. My hope that everyone reading this article will too--and will go for their dreams!

Cindy Cyr – over a year ago

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