

**An Introduction to**

**Holly Lisle's How to Think Sideways:  
Career Survival School for Writers**

**Presented by**

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**<http://HowToThinkSideways.com>**

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# The FIRST Barrier to Writing Successfully

(excerpted from Lesson 1)

You need to know where I'm coming from to understand that when I tell you I started out with all four mindsets that keep people from succeeding, and I successfully broke all four, I did not have small barriers to overcome. I had big ones. If I could do this, you can do this, no matter how big your own barriers are.

And you must. I did not succeed in my career until I had broken all four crippling mindsets.

Each mindset is represented by a single word. The story above is one of my several personal examples of VICTIM that I had to overcome.

The scary part about this, though, is that ALL FOUR Thinking Barriers are not only common... they're pervasive. They are often popular, and frequently we are **encouraged** to adopt them because doing so benefits others, **though it never benefits us.**

One more time on that because this is where the process of making your dreams real either starts or dies:

**Remember:** Adopting **The Four Thinking Barriers** FREQUENTLY benefits others, and NEVER benefits us.

I'm going to give you four lines to memorize. These are **The Four THINKING Barriers.**

SAFE never starts,  
PERFECT never finishes,  
VICTIM never acts,  
FEEL never thinks.

You might not have any of these mindsets, or you might have one of them, or you might have them all. Even if you don't have any of them, you need to recognize them and recognize what to do to deal with them, because situations change, life comes at us with nasty surprises, and sometimes things go right---a situation fraught with its own dangers. So let's start with the trouble you can get into when things are going right, or when you're trying to make them go right.

Let's begin with SAFE.

## SAFE Never Starts

You have already spent a certain percentage of your life looking at people who took the safe choices planned for them by parents, advisors, curriculums, and employers, and you have compared the lives of the safety-seekers to the lives of those folks who are risk-takers.

Whether you have ever followed them or not, you know the SAFE rules:

- Finish school

- Go to college
- Marry money
- Don't quit a secure job
- Don't make waves
- Don't cause trouble
- Don't question authority
- Don't chase moonbeams

You already have some idea where your gut weighs in on the whole safety-versus-risk scale. You have a pretty good suspicion whether you'd be able to function or not in a job where every day was essentially the same, or on the flip side, where you didn't know from one week to the next whether you would get paid.

But you may not have considered that the farther you lean to the safety side of the continuum, the less likely you are to be willing to take the first step toward making your goals into reality, **even if your goals are eminently practical and well thought out.**

The part of you that seeks safety is not willing to weigh potential long-term results acquired by risk against what it sees as the sure thing. It looks at the rich guy your mother wants you to marry, and at the poor-but-passionate guy you love, and it says, "Think about your future." It sees your boss doing something unethical at work and it says, "Don't say anything; you'll lose your job." It hears you talking about writing a book, and it says, "Are you nuts? Do you know how many writers FAIL?"

## Who Benefits from SAFE?

When not pushed to extremes, SAFE benefits society, our families, and us.

There are good reasons to finish school, to go to college, to marry someone who seems secure, to keep a job, and to avoid waves, trouble, and run-ins with authority. There are even good reasons not to chase moonbeams---if you're going to daydream but are never going to act, you can waste your life on moonbeams and have nothing to show when you're done.

Pushed to extremes, however, SAFE can keep you locked up in your house, never daring to step foot outside the door. It can keep you locked in a job you hate that has no future, just because you're afraid if you walk away you will never work again. SAFE can kill your hopes and dreams by telling you they were never worth pursuing, that you were never good enough to make them real, that you were only kidding yourself.

SAFE is a construct of the conscious mind. The conscious mind likes to feel sheltered, and doesn't care about the truth if a nice bit of fiction will draw the shades over the danger of the real world.

Your subconscious mind, your Muse, knows there are monsters, and knows that if you do not go out to battle them, they will come home to chase you. Your Muse will, in fact, make small monsters into big ones if you do not take risks and give it an occasional big one to battle.

Remember this:

## Safety Is Only An Illusion

- Marrying money can end up divorced from money. Marriages end.
- Neither a diploma nor a degree guarantees success.
- Jobs go overseas, and companies shut down or get swallowed in hostile takeovers.
- People in trouble blame those who knew what they were doing but said nothing as accomplices.
- Authority is often wrong.

And moonbeams can be made real, with practical planning, effort, and the collaboration of your mind and your Muse. That's why you're here---to get both parts of that whole Chasing Moonbeams equation so you can go from being an impractical dreamer to being a practical one.

## Your SAFE Assignment

Some part of you is a rebel against safety. You're here. You're taking a chance that your dream is worth pursuing, and that I'm the person who can help you figure out how to get there. Congratulations on your rebellion, and thank you for your vote of confidence.

HOWEVER, just reading and watching the course won't get you through.

To beat SAFE, you have to start. Do the exercises, start creating a project, and we'll go through it, week by week. Persist. Persistence is the key. Just do one thing at a time and you'll beat SAFE, even if you've never beaten it before.

Complete details on the other three barriers are included in the course:

<http://HowToThinkSideways.com>

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## How to Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers

### Curriculum

The course is extensive, and designed specifically for writers who want to make a career of writing. While all writers are welcome, the focus of the course is on teaching students how to bring out of themselves their best possible work, and then on teaching them how to find or create markets for it, and how to deal with the rigors of writing commercially--hitting deadlines, doing revisions, working with editors and agents and artist, and so on.

Each week you'll receive:

- The lesson
- One *Think Sideways* demo showing you how to solve the lesson's problem
- A course assignment for your project

ADDITIONALLY, you'll receive:

- An introduction to the month's theme at the beginning of the month
- A monthly checklist and a special "Answers To Your Questions" PDF at the end of the month.
- At unspecified intervals, you'll receive bonuses related to some of the bigger lessons.

FINALLY, you'll have access to (though you will not be required to use) a small private workgroup for brainstorming with fellow students, and to an open board for general project discussion.

This is the layout of the course curriculum, and lists only the topics of the main lessons, not the techniques, videos, bonuses, checklists, and so on that are included with the lessons.

Holly Lisle's <b>How To Think Sideways™</b> Course		
SECTION 1	<b>Thinking "Ideas"</b>	
	Lesson 1	How To Break The Four THINKING Barriers to Success
	Lesson 2	How To Discover Your Writing "Sweet Spot"
	Lesson 3	How To Generate Ideas On A Deadline
	Lesson 4	How To Recognize and Build On Good Ideas
SECTION 2	<b>Thinking "Project Planning"</b>	
	Lesson 5	How To Define Your Project's Needs
	Lesson 6	How To Discover (or Create) Your Project's Market
	Lesson 7	How To Develop Your Personal Project "System"
	Lesson 8	How To Plan Your Project While NOT Killing Your Story
SECTION 3	<b>Thinking "First Chapters"</b>	
	Lesson 9	How To Write From Inside Your Story
	Lesson 10	How To "Plan" Surprises That Surprise Even You
	Lesson 11	How To Design Compelling Queries, Proposals, and Sample Chapters
	Lesson 12	How To Create, Complicate, and Solve Problems
SECTION 4	<b>Thinking "Middles"</b>	
	Lesson 13	"Can't I Just Kill Them All?" How To Fall In Love With Your Story A Second Time
	Lesson 14	How To Find and Use Your "Planned" Surprises
	Lesson 15	How To "Hire" Spies, And Why Your Story Needs Them
	Lesson 16	How To Assess Your Progress And Make Mid-Course Corrections
SECTION 5	<b>Thinking "Endings"</b>	
	Lesson 17	How To Work With Editors, Agents, Marketing Departments, and Artists and NOT Wreck Your Book
	Lesson 18	How To Find the RIGHT Ending
	Lesson 19	How To Bend Your Plan Without Breaking It
	Lesson 20	How To Write the Ending That Sells The Next Book
SECTION 6	<b>Thinking "Wrap Up/Start Again"</b>	
	Lesson 21	How To Plan The Revision
	Lesson 22	How To NOT Fix What Ain't Broken (While Still Fixing What Is)
	Lesson 23	How To Deliver What You Promised And What They Want On Deadline
	Lesson 24	How To NOT Be A One-Book Wonder--Learn To Produce Repeatable Results

The course is available both as a weekly 24-week course, and as an every-other-week 48-week course.

Currently, registration opens every three months, and class sizes are limited.

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## A complimentary gift from me.

Currently the most-asked-for advice at Holly's site is how to create characters, cultures, worlds, plots, and so on without getting so bogged down in the worldbuilding and story-building that the writer never gets to writing.

In Lesson 7 she deals with this in the lesson plus eight modules with worksheet designed to keep world- and character-building under control.

If you click through on the following link and scroll down to the subscription box near the bottom of the page, you'll see a little man and a little woman to either side of the SUBSCRIBE button. If you click these secret links, you'll download two complete modules from Lesson 7: Critical Character Component Pre-Plan Module, and Critical Culture Pre-Plan Module. These aren't samples or partials. They're full modules directly from the course. I've found them very useful, and I hope you will, too.

[Get your complimentary course modules here.](#)

The other modules in Lesson 7 are:

- Critical Conflict Pre-Plan Module
- Critical Time & Place Pre-Plan Module
- Critical Maps & World Pre-Plan Module
- Critical Language Pre-Plan Module
- Critical Scenes Pre-Plan Module
- Critical Math (Scheduling) Pre-Plan Module
- Plus, of course the lesson itself: How to Develop Your Personal Project System

I hope you find this material interesting and helpful to your writing career. As a student of the course myself, I can tell you that I've found it worth my time and effort. It's answered questions about my writing I'd never thought to ask. I highly recommend it to you.

Sincerely,

**Michelle**

Michelle Thompson

<http://HowToThinkSideways.com>

Student

PS. This course is great! I couldn't recommend this writing course any higher. Its got me off my bottom, and writing - and planning many other novels.

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Student

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