

THE WRITING LIFE

by Bobbi Linkemer

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The Secret of Going Solo

More and more writers striking out on their own for an array of compelling reasons.

- Some have no choice: they have been downsized, laid off, reorganized, or even fired,.
- Others are “following their bliss,” either by taking the plunge with little forethought and less money or by having stashed away just enough to take a calculated risk for as long as their savings hold out.
- Some brave souls dive in with no other source of income, no prospects on the horizon, and only idealism to keep them afloat.
- Those who are less gutsy, or perhaps more pragmatic, keep their jobs and cautiously stick a toe in the water, writing on the side to see how it feels and if it might some day actually pay the rent.
- A limited number think it through, plan, and get all their ducks in a row, before they launch.
- But, by far, the vast majority of would-be freelancers leap first and contemplate later.

I have been a freelancer on and off for 40 years and working at it full time for almost half that time. Here is what I know about "going solo."

It's growth promoting, satisfying, and irresistibly freeing. But it's also a tough way to make a living. The market is built on shifting sands. Whatever is hot one day, is ice cold (read, *gone*) the next. Clients dry up, staff up, or are bought out. Editors move on. Skills so painstakingly acquired become obsolete.

The name of the game is change. You must continue to adapt, learn, audition, and reinvent yourself. If you don't, you become as outdated and unmarketable as your self-correcting Selectric.

Nothing stays the same. The economy, technology, and the business world are changing every moment. You can't afford to be left behind. Read the signs; anticipate market needs, and prepare to meet them. That's the secret of going solo.

