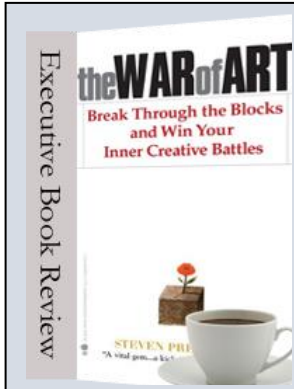




Book # 126
Event # 235

The War of Art by Steven Pressfield Reviewed by Pat Whitty



About the Authors

I wrote for 17 years before I earned my first penny (a \$3500 option on a screenplay that was never produced). I wrote for 27 years before I got my first novel published ([The Legend of Bagger Vance](#)). During that time, I worked 21 different jobs in eleven states. I taught school, I drove tractor-trailers, I worked in advertising and as a screenwriter in Hollywood, I worked on offshore oil rigs, I picked fruit as a migrant worker. For one season I lived in a house with no power, no water, no doors, no windows. Rent was \$15 a month. All during this time I was writing. Why do I tell you this? **Because this book is about you learning from my mistakes** It's about you avoiding the dead ends I drove myself into before I found myself as a writer.

About the Book

A succinct, engaging, and practical guide for succeeding in any creative sphere, *The War of Art* is nothing less than Sun-Tzu for the soul. What keeps so many of us from doing what we long to do? Why is there a naysayer within? How can we avoid the roadblocks of any creative endeavor—be it starting up a dream business venture, writing a novel, or painting a masterpiece? Bestselling novelist Steven Pressfield 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. *The War of Art* emphasizes the resolve needed to recognize and overcome the obstacles of ambition and then effectively shows how to reach the highest level of creative discipline.

The Book's ONE THING

Do the work

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Need to grow top line revenue? Improve bottom-line profits? Build accountable and trusting teams? Improve cash flow? Develop leadership team members? Blue Sky Leadership Consulting works with small and mid-market organizations to leverage Strategic Thinking and Execution Planning. We encompass many of the principles in these books into our [7 Attributes of Agile Growth](#) methodology and development of your company's [Growth Roadmap](#). Contact us for a free consultation



The Book in Three Sentences

1. Resistance is what keeps us from sitting down and doing our best work
2. Most of us have two lives: The life we live before we turn pro and the life after
3. Resistance hates it when we turn pro

The Five Big Ideas

1. Resistance cannot be seen, touched, heard, or smelled. But it can be felt. We experience it as an energy field radiating from a work-in-potential. It's a repelling force. It's negative. Its aim is to shove us away, distract us, prevent us from doing our work.
2. If you take Resistance at its word, you deserve everything you get.
3. The awakening artist must be ruthless, not only with herself but with others.
4. The best and only thing that one artist can do for another is to serve as an example and an inspiration.
5. The power to take charge is in your hands; all you had to do is believe it.

The War of Art Summary

- It's not the writing part that's hard. What's hard is sitting down to write.
- What keeps us from sitting down is Resistance.
- Most of us have two lives. The life we live, and the unlive life within us. Between the two stands Resistance.
- It was easier for Hitler to start World War II than it was for him to face a blank square of canvas.
- Resistance cannot be seen, touched, heard, or smelled. But it can be felt. We experience it as an energy field radiating from a work-in-potential. It's a repelling force. It's negative. Its aim is to shove us away, distract us, prevent us from doing our work.
- If you take Resistance at its word, you deserve everything you get.
- Henry Fonda was still throwing up before each stage performance, even when he was seventy-five.
- The warrior and the artist live by the same code of necessity, which dictates that the battle must be fought anew every day.
- The highest treason a crab can commit is to make a leap for the rim of the bucket.
- The awakening artist must be ruthless, not only with herself but with others.
- The best and only thing that one artist can do for another is to serve as an example and an inspiration.
- We don't just put off our lives today; we put them off till our deathbed.
- This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny.
- The working artist will not tolerate trouble in her life because she knows trouble prevents her from doing her work. The working artist banishes from her world all sources of trouble. She harnesses the urge for trouble and transforms it in her work.
- The more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it.



- Resistance is experienced as fear; the degree of fear equates to the strength of Resistance. Therefore the more fear we feel about a specific enterprise, the more certain we can be that that enterprise is important to us and to the growth of our soul. That's why we feel so much Resistance. If it meant nothing to us, there'd be no Resistance.
- If you didn't love the project that is terrifying you, you wouldn't feel anything. The opposite of love isn't hate; it's indifference.
- The more Resistance you experience, the more important your unmanifested art/project/enterprise is to you — and the more gratification you will feel when you finally do it.
- Rationalization is Resistance's right-hand man. Its job is to keep us from feeling the shame we would feel if we truly faced what cowards we are for not doing our work.
- It's one thing to lie to ourselves. It's another thing to believe it.
- Resistance is fear. But Resistance is too cunning to show itself naked in this form. Why? Because if Resistance lets us see clearly that our own fear is preventing us from doing our work, we may feel shame at this. And shame may drive us to act in the face of fear.
- Resistance doesn't want us to do this. So it brings in Rationalization.
- Aspiring artists defeated by Resistance share one trait. They all think like amateurs. They have not yet turned pro. The moment an artist turns pro is as epochal as the birth of his first child. With one stroke, everything changes. I can state absolutely that the term of my life can be divided into two parts: before turning pro, and after.
- The amateur plays for fun. The professional plays for keeps. To the amateur, the game is his avocation. To the pro it's his vocation. The amateur plays part-time, the professional full-time. The amateur is a weekend warrior. The professional is there seven days a week.
- Resistance hates it when we turn pro.
- Someone once asked Somerset Maugham if he wrote on a schedule or only when struck by inspiration. 'I write only when inspiration strikes,' he replied. 'Fortunately it strikes every morning at nine o'clock sharp.'
- The artist committing himself to his calling has volunteered for hell, whether he knows it or not. He will be dining for the duration on a diet of isolation, rejection, self-doubt, despair, ridicule, contempt, and humiliation.

What exactly are the qualities that define us as professionals?

- We show up every day.
- We show up no matter what.
- We stay on the job all day.
- We are committed over the long haul.
- The stakes for us are high and real.
- We accept remuneration for our labor.
- We do not overidentify with our jobs.
- We master the technique of our jobs.
- We have a sense of humor about our jobs.
- We receive praise or blame in the real world.



- The professional, though he accepts money, does his work out of love.
- A professional acts in the face of fear.
- The amateur believes he must first overcome his fear; then he can do his work. The professional knows that fear can never be overcome. He knows there is no such thing as a fearless warrior or a dread-free artist.
- The professional understands that Resistance is fertile and ingenious. It will throw stuff at him that he's never seen before.
- A professional does not show off
- A professional dedicates himself to mastering technique.
- A professional distances herself from her instrument.
- A professional does not take failure (or success) personally.
- The professional loves her work. She is invested in it wholeheartedly. But she does not forget that the work is not her. Her artistic self contains many works and many performances. Already the next is percolating inside her. The next will be better, and the one after that better still.
- A professional recognizes her limitations.
- A professional is recognized by other professionals.
- Making yourself a corporation (or just thinking of yourself in that way) reinforces the idea of professionalism because it separates the artist-doing-the-work from the will-and-consciousness-running-the-show.
- There's no mystery to turning pro. It's a decision brought about by an act of will. We make up our minds to view ourselves as pros and we do it. Simple as that.
- When we sit down day after day and keep grinding, something mysterious starts to happen. A process is set into motion by which, inevitably and infallibly, heaven comes to our aid. Unseen forces enlist in our cause; serendipity reinforces our purpose.
- The power to take charge was in my hands; all I had to do was believe it.
- We're not born with unlimited choices. We can't be anything we want to be.
- A hack, he says, is a writer who second-guesses his audience. When the hack sits down to work, he doesn't ask himself what's in his own heart. He asks what the market is looking for.
- Of any activity you do, ask yourself: If I were the last person on earth, would I still do it?
- Creative work is not a selfish act or a bid for attention on the part of the actor. It's a gift to the world and every being in it. Don't cheat us of your contribution. Give us what you've got.

INVOCATION OF THE MUSE FROM HOMER'S ODYSSEY

**O DIVINE POESY
GODDESS-DAUGHTER OF ZEUS**

**SUSTAIN FOR ME
THIS SONG OF THE VARIOUS-MINDED MAN
WHO AFTER HE HAD PLUNDERED
THE INNERMOST CITADEL OF HALLOWED TROY
WAS MADE TO STRAY GRIEVOUSLY
ABOUT THE COASTS OF MEN
THE SPORT OF THEIR CUSTOMS GOOD OR BAD
WHILE HIS HEART
THROUGH ALL THE SEA-FARING
ACHED IN AN AGONY TO REDEEM HIMSELF
AND BRING HIS COMPANY SAFE HOME**

**VAIN HOPE—FOR THEM
FOR HIS FELLOWS HE STROVE IN VAIN
THEIR OWN WITLESSNESS CAST THEM AWAY**

THE FOOLS

**TO DESTROY FOR MEAT
THE OXEN OF THE MOST EXALTED SUN
WHEREFORE THE SUN-GOD BLOTTED OUT
THE DAY OF THEIR RETURN**

**MAKE THE TALE LIVE FOR US
IN ALL ITS MANY BEARINGS
O MUSE**



A Retrospective of our last ten books ONE THING

Think and Grow Rich	All achievement, all earned riches, have their beginning in an idea! It is what you APPLY in life that will CHANGE your life.
7 Essential Traits of Coaches	Integrate more Coaching Traits and Best Practices in Developing Your Unique Leadership Coaching Style.
Talent is Never Enough	If you want your life to be a magnificent story, then realize that you are its author. Every day you have the chance to write a new page in that story. I want to encourage you to fill those pages with responsibility to others and yourself. If you do, in the end you will not be disappointed. John Maxwell
Big Magic	Creativity is a paradox between sacredness, and unimportance, between fear and courage, between art as a crushing chore and as a wonderful privilege. Only when we are at our most playful can divinity finally get serious with us. Make space for all these paradoxes to be equally true inside your soul, and you can make anything. The treasures that are hidden inside you are hoping you will say yes.
A Republic if you can Keep It	For the American republic to have any chance of continuing, we must be able to listen as well as speak, to learn as well as teach, and to tolerate as well as expect tolerance.
Man's Search for Meaning	Forces beyond our control can take away everything we possess except one thing, our freedom to choose how we will respond to the situation.
Emotional Equations	$\text{Wisdom} = \sqrt{\text{Experience}}$
Sapiens	Today, we are less the sum of our past than we are the culmination of the future we imagine (invent), the myths we create and the stories we tell.
Power of Moments	A little attention and energy can transform ordinary moments into extraordinary ones that make life more meaningful.
The Obstacle is the Way	Although we don't control external events, we can control ourselves and our responses to those events. Every obstacle poses an opportunity to improve our condition. We have the power to turn adversity into our advantage and revolutionize our lives!



Let's Pan for Some Gold

What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?

What is your ONE THING? What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?



Our Faculty, Our Sponsors, Our Cause



Calendar of Events

San Antonio	San Antonio	San Antonio	West Side/Houston
"1st Friday"	Wine & Cheese	"4th Friday"	3rd Wednesday
7:30AM	5:30 PM	8:00 AM	12:00 Noon
5-Jun	10-Jun	26-Jun	17-Jun
Pat Whitty The War of Art	John Rugh Education of Millionaires	Robert Schmidt Talking to Strangers	Marisa Ortiz The Four Agreements
10-Jul	15-Jul	24-Jul	15-Jul
Phil Bohlender Crossroads of Should and Must	Marisa Ortiz The Moral Imagination	Peter Braeuler Multipliers	John Knotts Influencer
7-Aug	12-Aug	28-Aug	19-Aug
John Knotts Influencer	Nadia Noel-Anglade Occasional Magic Part 2	Phil Bohlender	