



# THE WAR OF ART: Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner Creative Battles

by Steven Pressfield



## Overview

When trying to create a novel, it's not the actual writing part that is so difficult. It's the initial act of sitting down to write which takes the most effort. The reason it is so hard to start a project is Resistance. Resistance is the thing you feel when you have a sudden burst of inspiration but somehow can't seem to start. Resistance is what keeps us from realizing our full potential, from starting something which could have ended up truly great. This book discusses the definition of Resistance, methods to counteract it, and finally how to refocus on your higher purpose to render the Resistance moot.

*"When inspiration touches talent,  
she gives birth to truth & beauty."*

### Book 1. Resistance: Defining the Enemy

Genius is "an inner spirit, holy and inviolable, which watches over us, guiding us to our calling", and the enemy of your Genius is Resistance. Resistance rejects anything which in the long-term would yield real growth or integrity. If it calls on our higher nature, Resistance fights against it. Resistance is:

- **Invisible:** Resistance cannot be seen or heard.
- **Internal:** While we seem to see Resistance in everything around us, blaming external factors, it actually stems from within.  
*"It is self-generated and self-perpetuated."*
- **Insidious:** Resistance is a manipulative liar.  
*"It will reason with you like a lawyer or jam a nine-millimeter in your face like a stickup man."*
- **Implacable:** You can't reason with Resistance; all it does (and knows) is to fight like a machine.  
*"[Resistance is] implacable, intractable, indefatigable".*
- **Impersonal:** Resistance is not a living organism, but rather an indifferent force. It is not unique to you, and cannot be fought like a personal demon.  
*"It doesn't know who you are and doesn't care."*

- **Infalible:** Resistance tells you the exact opposite way to go; you can thus use that to know where you should go (where you feel the most Resistance).  
*"The more important a call or action is to our soul's evolution, the more Resistance we will feel."*
- **Universal:** Resistance is everywhere, in everyone.
- **Never Sleeps:** You never grow out of Resistance.  
*"The warrior and the artist live by the same code of necessity... the battle must be fought anew every day."*
- **Plays for Keeps:** Resistance's goal is to destroy, not just wound. It never pulls punches.  
*"Its target is the epicenter of our being: our Genius, our soul, the unique and priceless gift we were put on earth to give and that no one else has but us."*
- **Fueled by Fear:** We power Resistance with fear, and thus conquer it with bravery and perseverance.  
*"Resistance has no strength of its own."*
- **Only Opposes in One Direction:** Resistance only targets true higher callings; it will never prevent self-sabotage, from taking a step down in life.
- **Most Powerful at the Finish Line:** Resistance works hardest to defeat you when you're nearly at your full potential. When at the end, stay alert.
- **Recruits Allies:** While Resistance is essentially self-sabotage, others' Resistance can attack you too. When mastering our own Resistance, others will get jealous and allow their Resistance to bring us down. Be ruthless with both yourself and others. Keep moving, even if your friends cannot keep up.

### Resistance and its Partners

- **Procrastination:** Resistance manifests itself most commonly as procrastination. We rationalize it by putting things off, rather than telling ourselves the truth: we'll never do them. Despite the habitual nature of procrastination, it is possible to change.  
*"The most pernicious aspect of procrastination is that it can become a habit."*



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