

EXPRESS, DISCOVER, CREATE

UNBLOCK YOUR RHYME

Rhymecology's Big Three Tricks



RHYMECOLOGY'S BIG THREE

"Break The Block"

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If you are anything like me, you have a passion for writing. If you are a lot like me, your passion is for writing rhymes. You feel a jolt of electricity when you connect two ideas or phrases. When you conjure up a 5 syllable rhyme that fits into the concept, it feels like you hit the lottery. You look at your notebook or screen and hope others will appreciate the genius of your pen.

But what happens when the inspiration isn't there? What about when the rhyme just isn't clicking? What happens when the blank page which has been so friendly to you, is suddenly intimidating? Do you have the dreaded ... "Writers Block"?

The answer is "No!"

It is more likely you have concept constipation. Concept constipation occurs most often when you are under pressure and the ideas just aren't coming to you. You have notebooks and pages filled with rhymes but on this day your pen is blocked up. Likely you are overthinking and trying to fit yourself into the song/idea rather than just being the artist who you always have been.

One way you can get out of your conceptual constipation is by rhyming. You still know how to rhyme, right? Still know how to write rhymes? Some simple exercises will get your pen moving and the ideas flowing.

1) **WRITE ABOUT THE BLOCK** (No, not the block where you live but the "writers block")

Since you still know how to rhyme, just throw out a few words about the current situation, without thinking of the next line or song as a whole. Let's say you write:

"Sitting in the studio feeling writers block"

Pretty simple and real. Next delve into the **emotion** that the block is causing you to feel.

"Getting pissed cuz times ticking".

So far all you have written is that you don't know what to write and it's getting to you. But you still know how to RHYME, right? So take that end word "block" and throw in something that rhymes with it. Easy ones like knock, "rock", "clock", and "shock" come to mind. Well, since we already wrote about "time", it seems obvious that "clock" will be the chosen word.

"Sitting in the studio feeling writers block"

"Getting pissed cuz time's ticking, I hate this clock".

We have not been overthinking or worrying, so the idea came easily. We now have a setting and an emotion but the rhyme isn't quite there. Someone as skilled as you can edit this to make it a bit cleaner.

*"I'm in the studio but stuck on writers block
"Getting pissed as time ticks, wanna fight this clock"*

It cleans up nice, right? We have some alliteration, a metaphor, we have an internal rhyme, and most importantly, we now have a three syllable end rhyme. But where did this come from? This initially came from less thinking, more feeling.

Now that you have an opening couplet, let your creativity flow. Take an idea from the initial couplet and run with it. Could you write a rhyme about actually being stuck on a street block? Or a street block where writers live? Or how about this clock? What would that fight look like? Are the clock hands swinging at you?

Again, you know how to rhyme, right? So take the phrase "swinging at me"? What is a multiple syllable word or phrase that rhymes with that.

*Swinging at me
Singing in C
Bringing the tea
Swimming at Sea
Binging T.V.
Stinging like bees*

"I don't know why its hands swinging at me"

*My rhymes must be swimming at sea.
Could it be cuz keep binging T.V.?
Fighting back like British bringing the tea
Crazy like Whitney singing in C
My anxiety is now stinging like bees.*

While these rhymes might not be the best, they do relate to the idea at hand. Which to remind you, came from literally nothing. We have four decent lines which are now lending themselves to a possible concept. Now, again we edit a bit and see how it looks.

*"I'm in the studio but stuck on writers block
"Getting pissed as time ticks, wanna fight this clock
"Don't understand how its hands swinging at me
It jumped off the wall while I was binging T.V."*

So now we have this personified clock jumping off the wall wanting to fight this writer who has been down on himself for not being able to write. What is this conversation going to be? What is this fight going to be? What will the writer realize? There are many ways to go with your story and we are only finishing the fourth bar.

Do you think this story is becoming a tad silly? Maybe. You started to get lost in the story of the clock, the studio, the ways you would have rhymed certain words better, etc. What you were not thinking about was how you were stuck on the writers block.

- Brainstorm about the situation (write a list of words about it)
- Explore the emotions (list them too)
- Allow yourself to be silly/outside your normal box
- Then just rhyme words with the situation, emotion, and allow it to grow without thinking, without judgment, without expectation.

This writer's block is a funny thing, isn't it? One day we just are drawing a blank when we are normally filling the page. We want to break out of our funk by any means necessary. Inspiration Circle is one one of my favorite block breakers.

2) INSPIRATION CIRCLE

We are all writers. We all have written many songs, many rhymes, even many albums. Some are great! Some...ehh, not so much. What often happens to the "ehh" songs or verses is they get shoved to the side in favor of the new, hot, verse or song. While that "ehh" verse didn't make the cut, it doesn't mean that there isn't a hot line or a clever phrase living in that verse.

Grab an old notebook or pull up some old files. Go back, a bit further than you normally do, and study your old verses. Reread the forgotten files! Not because you are going to use the verse or song, but there may be, just may be, a word, a phrase, a line that got swallowed up by the other 'ehh' lines.

Next I want you to circle that line, word, or phrase. Do that for as many old songs/verses that you possibly can. Hopefully you have 10-20 circles of lost rhymes once finished.

Next take all those circles from all those pages and put them onto one dedicated page.

From now on, this page will be called your "Inspiration Circle".

When you are stuck, go to this page. When you need a clever rhyme, go to this page. When you need to remember that you are a great writer, go...to...this...PAGE!

3) Care"FREE" Style

Compared to many I know, I would not call myself a great freestyler. BUT I can put together words quickly, without having to think about it. That is the key to the freestyle, it's creative, it's quick, and it's...carefree. When we are stuck on writer's block, everything is a struggle, everything is negative, we can't get out of the rut. Freestyling is the opposite of that.

Small side note here. I co-own and am a professor at Pendulum Ink, an on-line school to help people write better rhymes, improve their mental health and understand the business side of Hip-Hop. I mention this because every month we have legendary emcees come and teach their style of writing at our school. Everyone from Method Man to Jadakiss, to Phonte, to Big Daddy Kane, to Inspectah Deck, to Rah Digga, to Ab-Soul to Elzhi...you get the idea. They all say two things.

- Be authentic. If you are a biker, write about bikes. If you love planting vegetables, make a song about that.
- Scat/Mumble/Freestyle to the beat, first. As you are listening to the beat, they say, don't try to fit your previously written words in. Just feel the beat. See where it takes you and then mumble sounds/words to go along with it. In jazz terms, scat. Let your preconceived notions of how you "should sound" go and let the beat take your words where they are supposed to go.

As you are freestyling, make sure that you are recording your freestyles! It could be in the booth or it could be with your phone. It could be you freestyle and grab a notebook and jot down an idea. The key here is, again, lets say it all together now...to get out of your head and onto the page! Like the "Inspiration Circle", there may just be an idea or phrase that sticks!

Next time you feel yourself stuck on writers block, make sure you pull this article up and try one, two, or all three of these techniques to help you get that pen moving again.

P.S. If you do better working with a coach in a one on one setting (even though that really means the phone or zoom now) you can reach out to me for a free 20 minute clarity call. I would love to hear about your successes and struggles as a writer so I can offer you the correct pathway to help you get to where you need to go.

P.S.S If you already know you want the Rhymecology Sessions from a guy (me)who has written for and with some of the greatest emcees Hip Hop has known, then you can go to the front of the line and we can make magic together.

(Learn more www.rhymecology.com or hit me directly at rhymecology@gmail.com)