

>>Snapshot

Kristina Day

Writer

WGGB



Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

I'm a television writer and started writing about three years ago. I've run a language school for 20 years and one day I woke up and thought, do I want to do this for another 20 years? It takes 7-10 years to break into the screenwriting industry, so I am still a newbie learning my craft.

I'm a Moondance Finalist and have won other competitions including a place at the Script Lab with the renowned television producer John Yorke at the 2014 London Screenwriters Festival. I had an extract of my drama series directed by Leyla Pope and was shortlisted in the New Dramatists Club. I also got a score of 8 on the Blacklist, a site where producers go for scripts, which, apparently, less than 5% of scripts achieve. My goal is to have a series on TV.

What do you like most about your work?

I love being creative. It's amazing to come up with characters and worlds in your mind, and have actors bring them to life. Seeing your imaginary world recreated in flesh and blood is like a miracle. It would be joyous to see my created world on TV.

I also love collaborating with others. When you've had a script worked on by a production team of head writer, producer, script editor and directors, you end up with something that far exceeds anything you could have produced alone. Everyone wants to work on something good, so they all come at it from a positive place. You have to let your baby go and allow it to evolve. I really enjoy the collaborative process.

What are the biggest challenges of being a creative freelance?

The biggest challenge is juggling two jobs – the writing and the one that currently pays the bills.

There's no certainty in writing, and there's always a feeling that every job could be your last. Learning to promote myself is tough when I'm naturally a writer not

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a talker. You have to throw a lot of spaghetti at the wall for some of it to stick.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

I'm always trying to further my skills. As well as the excellent FEU Training courses, I take weekend courses, and attend industry events organised by the Writers' Guild, BAFTA, the BFI and the Royal Television Society. I read industry publications, books and other people's scripts including those of my writer friends to give them feedback as well as scripts that have been professionally produced. I've also invested in one-to-one mentorship, which is a big outlay but has propelled me forward.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

The biggest challenges are time and money. It's also very easy to get swallowed up in day-to-day tasks and lose sight of the bigger picture. There has to be a balancing act between taking advantages of work opportunities that present themselves and consciously setting a direction for



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where your life and work should be going. The FEU Training courses are an excellent help with that!

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I attended Goal Setting and Dealing with Setbacks.

What are the most important things that you've learned and how has this help you with your work?

The course with the greatest impact for me was tools for goal setting. I still use what I've learned every week if not every day! It was great to verbalise and pin down my bigger goals, then chunk them right down through sub goals to actions for the coming weeks. It made them real and taking them down to such a practical level was very motivating. The workshop inspired me to create a visual goal board, which I pinned on the inside of my front door, so I look at it every day.

I kept the hand out on my desk and re-did the exercises six months after the workshop. I tweaked my goals and revised my plan, which I continue to review from time to time. It makes me feel that I know where I'm heading and am on course.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

They cover such valuable topics that are quite different from other industry events and courses I attend. The FEU Training workshops allow you to carve out a bit of time for yourself to take a step back. Stick your head above water, look where you're heading and adjust course is necessary.

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I feel the FEU Training courses have enabled me to take responsibility for my life and my work. They've also given me the practical tools for how to structure my time, deal with rejection, procrastination, better presentation and set clear goals. It's rare to get professional help like this at a strategic level. It's very precious.

I love that all of us are there together. It's very inspiring to meet others from all four unions. I've kept in touch with a few people and hope to collaborate sometime in the future.

It's a brilliant organisation and I really hope we continue to have access to this valuable resource.

Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creatives?

Not like FEU Training does. The Writers Guild, BAFTA, the BFI and the Royal Television Society all offer very good events and courses but they all deal with very specific skills like the craft of scriptwriting. FEU Training teaches you how to be a successful freelance and creative.