



The Enemy

By [Steven Pressfield](#) | [8 Comments](#) | [Writing Wednesdays](#)

Why am I stressing so ferociously this ideal of a rigorous, internally-generated and internally-sustained warrior-like self-awareness and self-discipline?

Because we are in a war, you and I. The enemy is inside each of us.

Here's a quote from my rabbi, Mordecai Finley, from a conversation that I taped on the Fourth of July a few years ago. Rabbi Finley and I were talking over breakfast about the true nature of the human psyche.

Here's what he said:

“There is a second self inside you—an inner, shadow Self. This self doesn’t care about you. It doesn’t love you. It has its own agenda, and it will kill you. It will kill you like cancer. It will kill you to achieve its agenda, which is to prevent you from actualizing your Self, from becoming who you really are. This shadow self is called, in the Kabbalistic lexicon, the yetzer hara. The yetzer hara, Steve, is what you would call Resistance.”

The Enemy’s Playbook

The enemy inside our heads will tell us—and I mean *all of us*, including Shakespeare and Dante and the Dalai Lama—that we are worthless, without talent, too old, too young, too fat, too thin, too smart, too dumb to achieve our dreams.



“Who do you think are,” the voice of Resistance will ask us, “to dream that you can write a book, start a company, achieve a breakthrough in science or technology or politics? You? Every idea you have has been done a thousand times before—and by men and women ten times more deserving than you. Forget it! You’re a bum and a loser and if you dare set your work before the eyes of the world, you’ll only prove yourself the fool and laughingstock you’ve always known you truly are.”

That’s the enemy.

That’s your head and mine.

Trust me, I’ve read and responded to thousands of notes and emails from creative people of all kinds.

The voice in our heads is exactly the same.

It’s not us. It’s Resistance.