

# **The War of Art Book Summary, by Steven Pressfield**

by Allen Cheng

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## **1-Page Summary of The War of Art**

### **Overview**

Steven Pressfield's book, The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles, is a guide to help other artists get over creative blocks and produce valuable work. He discusses his own struggles with art and uses examples from history in order to help others.

The biggest obstacle to artistic creation is Resistance. It's a combination of self-doubt, deception, fear of change and success.

On a day-to-day basis, procrastination is the manifestation of Resistance. For example, an artist might clean the house or go to get food instead of working on his art. On a larger scale, Resistance can manifest itself as giving up one's dream career or denying one's creative impulses. In order to conquer this obstacle and succeed in life, artists must think like professionals. Amateurs pursue their artistic endeavors as a hobby and only work when they feel inspired to do so; professionals are dedicated to doing whatever it takes regardless of how they feel about it at that moment (i.e., even if they don't feel like doing something). Professionals also separate their personal feelings from what needs to be done—they don't let emotions affect their professional lives (for example: criticism doesn't discourage them because they know that critics are not always right).

To overcome resistance, one must simply sit down and start working. Once you begin creating art, spiritual forces will come to your aid. The universe wants to bring art into the world; therefore, it is a path to spiritual growth.

## **Key Takeaways**

Resistance is the negative energy that stands between a person and his or her dreams. It takes many forms, including procrastination, sex, trouble-making and self-medication. Resistance can be good because it shows you're on the right track with your art/work. To defeat resistance, artists must work hard enough to overcome obstacles and temptations; they also need to separate themselves from their work sometimes by being paid for it.

The universe supports creativity and will help people who are creative. Individuals have an earthbound, mundane, insular ego and a broader spiritual self. Artists don't focus on hierarchy but instead focus on territory.

### **Key Takeaway 1: Resistance is the negative energy that stands between a person and his or her dreams.**

People who pursue their dreams and goals are confronted with negative energy that stands in their way. This is what we call Resistance. It's the reason people have trouble beginning exercise programs, or committing to relationships or marriage. It also gets in the way of artists pursuing their craft.

New Year's Eve is a time when people make resolutions to improve their lives. The beginning of the New Year marks an annual high point for Resistance, as more than 40% of Americans make New Year's resolutions. They want to exercise more, finish chores around the house and even write that novel they've always wanted to start.

In the beginning of January, people tend to be more motivated and disciplined. They get exercise, refuse desserts, and start writing or painting. But soon after that they begin to lose interest in their resolutions. By February most people are backsliding on their new year's resolutions. Eventually most people give up altogether by April or May when summer starts approaching fast.

In order to defeat Resistance and stick with your New Year's resolutions, it is important to focus on one resolution at a time. In addition, you should choose an achievable goal rather than something that is too large or overwhelming. Similarly, in the process of overcoming Resistance, you need to focus on what you can do right now.

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