

In the zone

Since I was a small boy, I have had the urge to write. I would take a small stack of fresh, clean, cool paper and a pencil and place them beside me. I was poised to create – but I didn't really know what to do next. I remember that this was sometime during the Civil War Centennial, and I actually began a story that I wanted to be based in this time frame. I wrote, "This is a story of fourteen men." But there it sat, without any real plot to accompany the first line "grabber".

I wasn't crazy about English as a subject, and this continued pretty much through college. But there was one time that I really felt "in the zone" as I wrote a story for a class assignment. I wrote based on an experience I had portraying an American Indian in a state-wide show we called the Scout Circus. I somehow put myself back into that time, and described how our tribe danced around a dying elder as he sang his death song. In my college dorm room, remembering pageantry of the Indian village, I felt I was a part of it again: I was living it all over again! And my mind seemed to be in tune with the whole universe!

The feeling I had in this creative process was very powerful, and I'll never forget a few days later when the teacher proclaimed that he would read one of the stories that had been submitted to the class – it was my story he read aloud! I so wish that I had kept a copy of that assignment!

Once I graduated from college, I began to read and study for its own sake (how ironic!). I made copious notes about every thing that I thought one day might be retrieved and worked into meaningful writing. I even wrote story ideas that I thought could be developed into something interesting.

Now it is part of my job, documenting all that my technology group accomplishes each year. When Soozie has needed things written, like lesson plans, curricula, or grant proposals, I just told her "That's what I do!" and became the mouthpiece for her ideas. I have had several technical articles published, but all of this did not fulfill my true writing desires.

I have actually been writing for its own sake in the years since my first trip to the "zone". Some of these pieces have been satisfying, but others have the added value of taking me to the zone again. They may never be published, for people may not like them; but that's not the point – the point was that I can now claim with confidence that I am a writer!