

Time spent in the company of other writers is almost always an inspiring and energising experience, which is why I was so keen to celebrate and promote the concept of team-writing at one of the panel discussions during the conference. In the UK 'the writers' room' has never really caught on in the way that it has in the US – for a variety of reasons, not least the perceived cost of it. Yet when the magic chemistry happens and a great writing ensemble is formed, it can mean efficiency and consistency all the way for producers and broadcasters and is a particularly successful approach to the writing of structured comedy – that toughest of all nuts to crack.

Astonishingly, I've found that in this country it is writers themselves who are the hardest to convince. Many I've spoken to about the team-writing proposition shudder and yowl, "Not for me!" That's an understandable reaction, but it's often based on a misconception of the writers' room as a gladiatorial, testosterone-fuelled ego-hell. What could be scarier and more off-putting than sitting in a room full of clever people who take delight in sneering at your rubbish contributions?

The truth is exactly the opposite in my experience. Show me the conscientious writer who doesn't sit down at the start of his or her working day and silently thinks, "I'm a fraud." For sure, the chemistry is all, but a group of sympathetic writers working together eight hours each day can be not only motivational but also stimulating, liberating, mind-expanding, a little exhausting perhaps, but damn good productive fun – often compared to the dynamic of musicians playing jazz together. And, like a mini writing academy, each writer never stops learning from the others.

Above all, team-writing can be supremely empowering (a word that returned to resonate time and again at the Warsaw convention). Rather than disappear to write alone in our attics and basement flats, sometimes feeling disassociated from the very show we are writing, we instead come to work each day, placing us right at the heart of the production – where we belong.

Many thanks to the organisers of WCOS03 for inviting me to contribute to the debate and for encouraging me to formulate my thoughts on this most fascinating subject. Speaking with so many talented colleagues from all across the world has really fired me up, and left me thinking loudly and clearly, "Writers, unite!"

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