

The War of Art

**Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner
Creative Battles**

STEVEN PRESSFIELD (2002)

Have you ever sat down to do something really important to you – not just an urgent thing you have to do – but something that really matters to you ...

...only to find that you just can't get going?

It almost feels as though there is an actual force acting against your best intentions and stopping you from doing your work.

You have just encountered **Resistance.**

“

Most of us have two lives.

The life we live and the unlived life within us.

Between the two stands Resistance.

”



In his own words...

- I wrote for 17 years before I earned my first penny (a \$3,500 option on a screenplay that was never produced).
- I wrote for 27 years before I got my first novel published: *The Legend of Bagger Vance*.
- During that time, I worked 21 different jobs in eleven states.
- I taught school, I drove tractor-trailers, I worked in advertising and as a screenwriter in Hollywood, I worked on offshore oil rigs, I picked fruit as a migrant worker...
- [Why do I tell you this?](#) Because I want you to learn from my mistakes, to avoid the dead ends I drove myself into before I found myself as a writer.



“ Resistance is the
most toxic force
on the planet.

It is the root of more
unhappiness than
poverty, disease and
erectile dysfunction.

To yield to Resistance deforms our spirit. It stunts us and makes us less than we are and were born to be.

From age 24 to 32, Resistance kicked my ass from East Coast to West and back again thirteen times and I never knew it existed. I looked everywhere for the enemy and failed to see it right in front of my face.

You think Resistance isn't real? Resistance will bury you.

”

How many of us have become

drunks and drug addicts, developed tumors and neuroses, succumbed to painkillers, gossip and compulsive cell phone use –

simply because we don't do that thing that our hearts, our inner genius, is calling us to?

Other forms of Resistance:

procrastination, alcohol, eating, drama, habitually lying to ourselves by saying we will deal with it tomorrow, constantly distracting ourselves, being in isolation, criticizing others, and fear.

“ Resistance
will tell you anything
to keep you from doing your work.

It will reason with you like a lawyer or
jam a nine-millimeter in your face like
a stick-up man.

Resistance
has no conscience.

Resistance is
always lying and
always full of shit.

Everyone who has a body experiences
Resistance.

Resistance is
implacable,
intractable,
indefatigable.

Reduce it to a single cell and that
cell will continue to attack.

”



Resistance is like the Alien or the Terminator.
It cannot be reasoned with. It has one object -
to prevent us from doing our work.



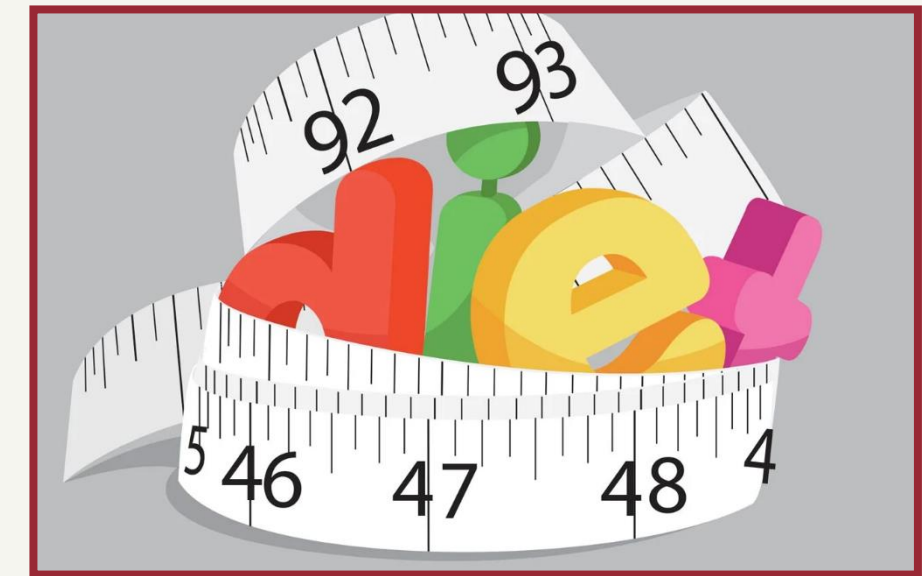
Activities that most commonly elicit Resistance:



The pursuit of any calling in writing, painting, music, film, dance or any creative art



Launch of any entrepreneurial venture for profit or otherwise



Any diet or health regimen

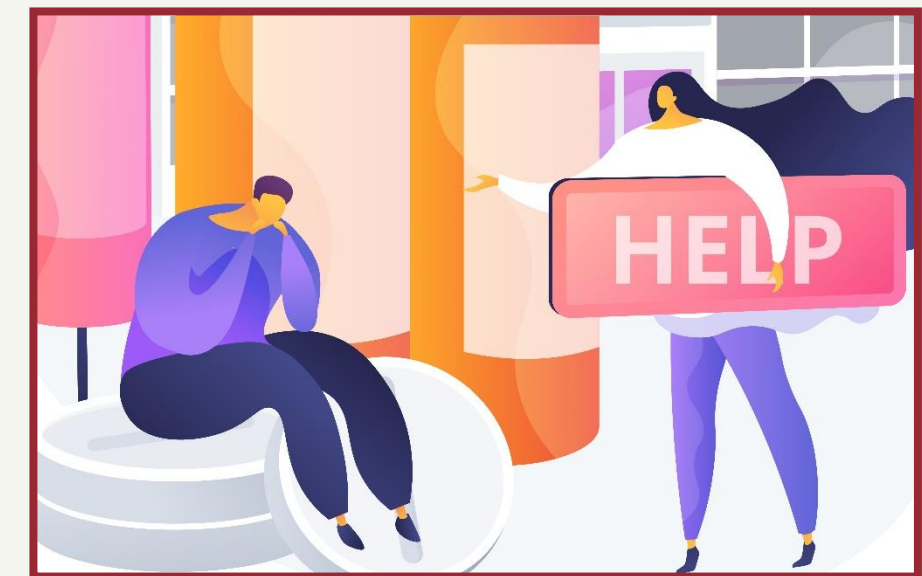
Activities that most commonly elicit Resistance:



Any program of
spiritual advancement



Tighter abs



A program to overcome a
bad habit or addiction

Activities that most commonly elicit Resistance:



Education of every kind



Any act of political,
moral or ethical courage



Any endeavour whose
aim is to help others

Activities that most commonly elicit Resistance:



Any act that entails a commitment of the heart: e.g. marriage, having a child, weathering a bad patch in a relationship etc.



The taking of any principled stand in the face of adversity

In other words, any act that rejects immediate gratification in favour of long term growth, health or integrity.

RULE OF THUMB:

**The more important a call or action is to
our soul's evolution, the more Resistance
we will feel toward pursuing it.**

**The danger is greatest when the finish line is in sight.
At this point, Resistance knows we're about to beat it.
It hits the panic button.**

Forms of self sabotage include:

Close friends, even spouses, try to distract you (they are afraid they will be left behind)

Causing trouble, playing loud music, proneness to accidents, chronic lateness etc.

Using sedatives to drug ourselves out

Falling ill, playing the victim

One night stands, because they distract us with a cheap, easy fix. Same for junk food, shopping, gossip etc.

Creating soap opera, scandals, drama is the perfect distraction

Rationalisations

theWARofART

**Break Through the Blocks
and Win Your
Inner Creative Battles**



STEVEN PRESSFIELD

"A vital gem...a kick in the ass." —*Esquire*

In his own words...



When I began this book, Resistance almost beat me. This is the form it took. It told me (the voice in my head) that I was a writer of fiction – not non-fiction.

I shouldn't be exposing these concepts of Resistance literally and overtly; rather, I should incorporate them metaphorically into a novel. That's a pretty damn subtle and convincing argument.

Resistance also told me I shouldn't seek to instruct, or put myself forth as a purveyor of wisdom; that this was vain, egotistical, possibly even corrupt, and that it would work harm to me in the end. That scared me. It made a lot of sense.

What finally convinced me to go ahead was simply that I was so unhappy not going ahead. I was developing symptoms. As soon as I sat down and began, I was OK.

Ambition is the most primal and sacred fudament of our being.



Not to act upon That ambition is to turn our backs
on ourselves and our reason for existence.

Rob
rob@everyone loves cartoons.com



We don't tell ourselves we're not going to write our symphony, we tell ourselves we're going to start tomorrow.

Rob
rob@everyonelovescartoons.com

“

There's a secret that real writers know that wannabe writers don't.

And the secret is this – it's not the writing part that's hard. What's hard is sitting down to write.

What keeps us from sitting down is Resistance.

Here's how to overcome the fear of starting...



GET SOMETHING on paper
(or canvas), however deficient
or incomplete.

THEN, go back and fix it.
THEN, go back and make it great.

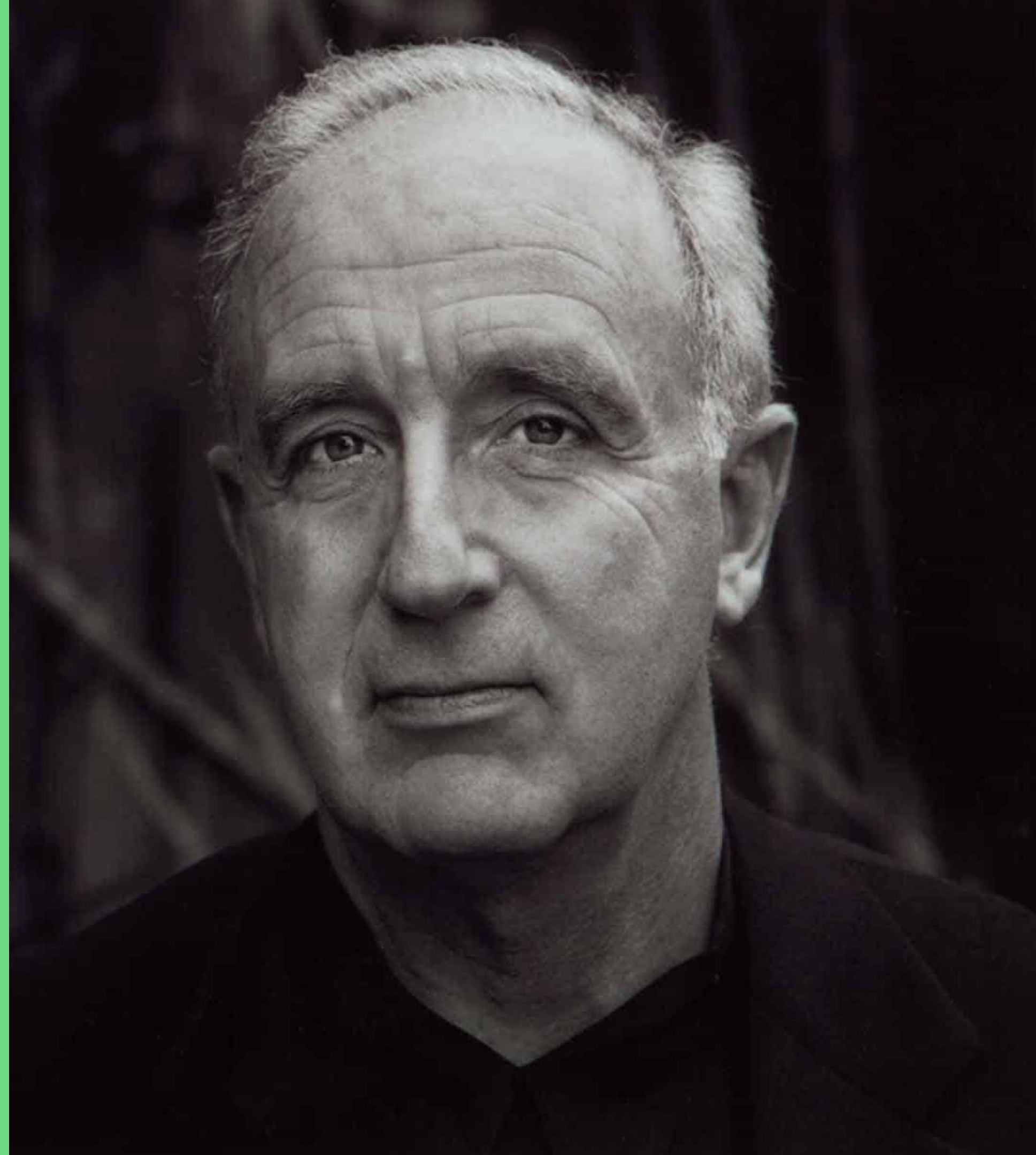
Remember, you've got an infinite
number of drafts in which to
accomplish this.

“

Someone once asked
Somerset Maugham if he
wrote on a schedule or only
when struck by inspiration.

*“I write only when inspiration
strikes,”* he replied.

*“Fortunately it strikes every
morning at nine o’clock sharp.”*



The most important thing about art is to work.



Rob

Nothing else matters except sitting down and trying.

rob@everyonelovescartoons.com

“

Creative work is a gift to the world

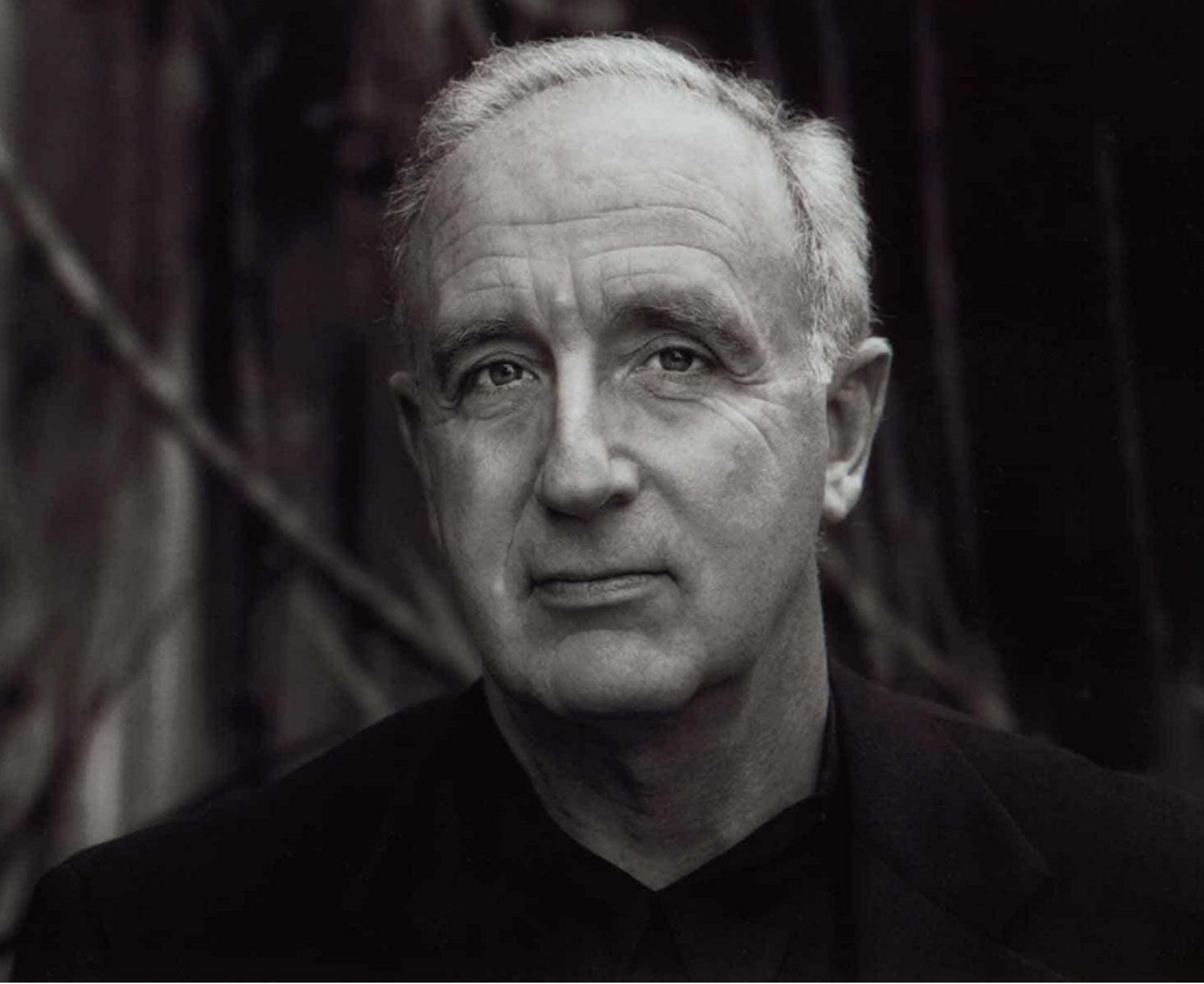
and every being in it.

Don't cheat us of your contribution.

Give us all you've got.

STEVEN PRESSFIELD (2002)

”



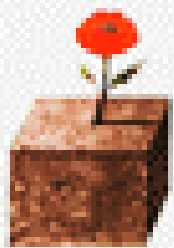
Steven Pressfield, now 78, is a best-selling American author.

He has made a professional life in five different writing arenas — advertising, screenwriting, fiction, narrative nonfiction, and self-help.

In 2003, he was made an honorary citizen by the city of Sparta in Greece.

the WAR of ART

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and Win Your
Inner Creative Battles



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"A vital gem, a kick in the ass" — *Esquire*

Turning PRO

Tap Your Inner Power and
Create Your Life's Work



STEVEN PRESSFIELD

Bestselling Author of The War of Art

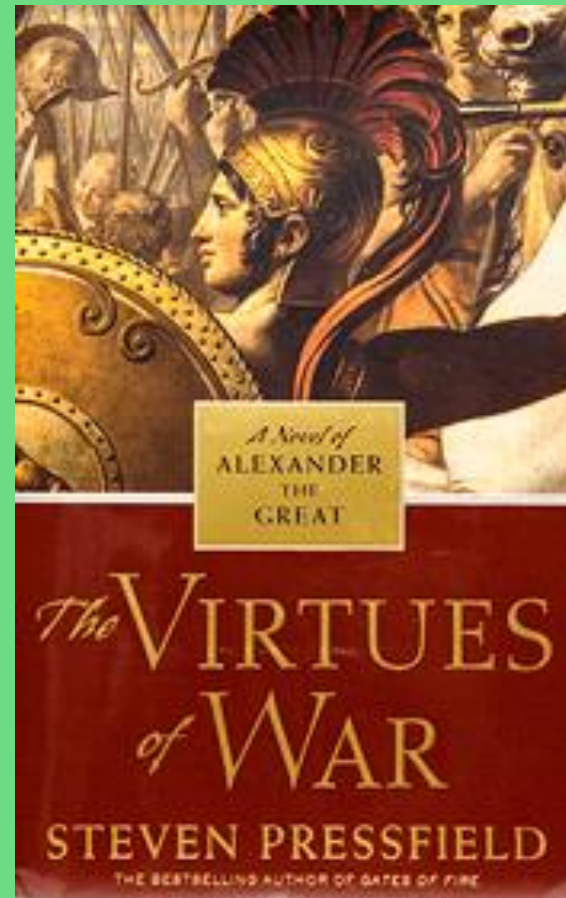
DO THE WORK



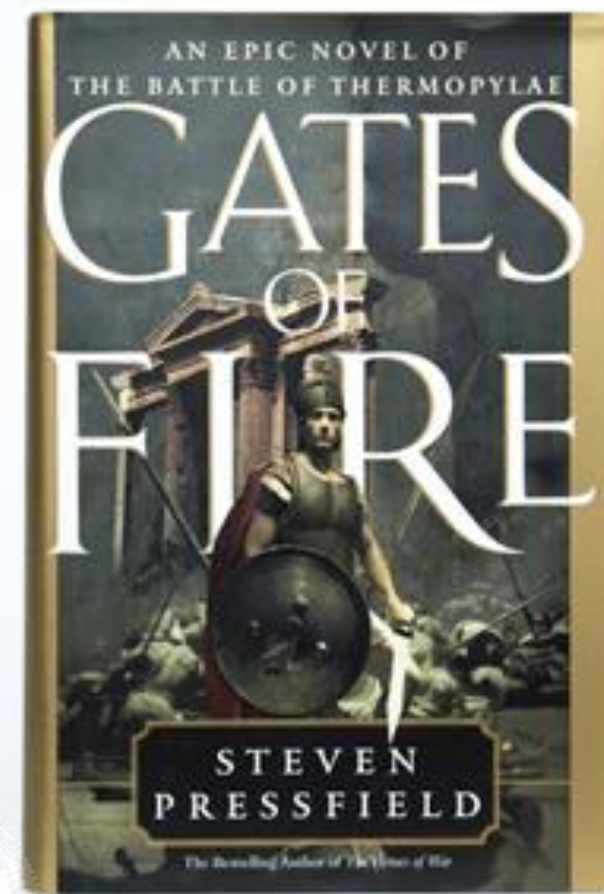
STEVEN PRESSFIELD

Bestselling Author of The War of Art and Turning Pro

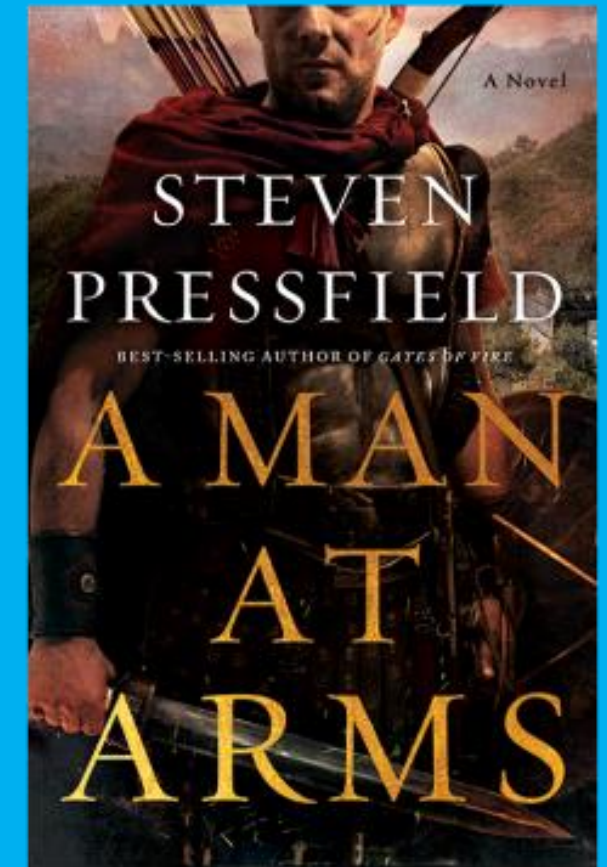
Foreword by Seth Godin



The career of Alexander the Great from boyhood to death, told in the first person by Alexander. The ‘virtues of war’— courage, patience, selflessness, comradery, the willing embrace of adversity, killer instinct, etc.—are, I believe, also the indispensable virtues of the writer and the artist.



The story of the 300 Spartans and the battle of Thermopylae, 480 BCE. Gates of Fire is required reading at West Point and Annapolis and for all officers in the U.S. Marine Corps. On the Commandant’s Reading List for all ranks since 2002. No, it is not the source material for the movie 300.



My favorite character, the solitary mercenary Telamon of Arcadia, finally gets his own book. A Man at Arms is his story, told in the time of Paul the Apostle, with the Romans as the bad guys and the clash between empire and faith as the center of the tale.