

What Playing Computer Solitaire Has Taught Me About Writing

- ❖ You can't play unless you turn on the computer and sit down in front of it.
- ❖ You can't win if you don't play.
- ❖ Once you start, it's hard to quit. So starting's the key.
- ❖ You will almost always dip into negative figures before you start to win.
- ❖ You don't really lose until you stop playing.
- ❖ No matter how deep a hole you get into, persistence over time can (sometimes) get you out.
- ❖ You need skill and luck.
- ❖ Sometimes luck deserts you, and no matter how much skill you have, you just have to wait for the luck to turn.
- ❖ Skill is the only one of those two aspects you control.
- ❖ Even with great skill, you need concentration to apply it.
- ❖ Sometimes, when all your moves up and down are blocked, you can break out of the logjam by moving sideways.
- ❖ The most boring part is when you can see how all the cards will play out but you have to persist and put them in place in order to be rewarded with dancing cards and more money in your total.
- ❖ The one piece that you needed to open up the previous game and that remained stubbornly hidden throughout that previous game, will now jump up on the board for the next game and do a rude tap dance in front of you, flaunting itself.
- ❖ You see more moves when you give yourself a break and view a setup with fresh eyes.
- ❖ (This one applies specifically to romance writing.) In order to win the game, the king has to follow the queen to the top (referring to emotions, of course - what did you think I meant?)
- ❖ Some games nothing goes right, in a few games everything goes right.
- ❖ Those games where everything goes right seem like flukes.
- ❖ Those games where nothing goes right seem like your destiny.
- ❖ Providing you're applying the same level of skill, they're both flukes.

- ❖ The games where everything goes right are boring.
- ❖ The most satisfying games are the ones where it looks as if it's going totally wrong, but you pull it out.
- ❖ When it comes to gambling, my money is much better spent on conferences, writing supplies and mailing costs than trying to play solitaire in Las Vegas.

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P.S. Patricia McLinn is not playing much computer solitaire these days because a.) she's writing hard or b.) she's learned all the lessons it can teach or c.) she's discovered Freecell.