



TIPS ON WRITING

How do you go about writing a story?

What is it like to publish a book?

Where do I start?

As I've often been asked these questions, I decided to record some of my experiences that just might be helpful for you, the budding writer . . .

There was an air of excitement amongst those who know me as my book was published and launched in 2013.

All the family had waited in abeyance during the 10 years it took me to complete my story. Some, I'm sure, were fairly skeptical they would ever see it finished. But finally the time arrived and once it was published the family were amazed and so proud. They were my greatest advocates.

The grandchildren were so delighted to think their Nan was an Author.



Who would have thought it!

They loved walking into bookstores and seeing their Nan's work on the shelf, and excitedly captured it on camera and sent a copy of the photo to me.

The photos attached will show you something of family's reactions! It was one of the highlights of publishing for me.



I am often asked, "How do you go about writing a book?"

Let's start at the beginning. Ask yourself this.

"What do I need to start writing a book?"

The points below are my suggestions

1. A flair for writing...You have probably had a flair for writing even way back or not so way back in your school days
2. A nudging to write. . . it has been there for some time and doesn't go away
3. Promptings . . . People have said, "You ought to write your story!"
4. You might have a reason for writing, for example, a goal to be reached
5. And of course there must be a story to tell . . .

I didn't realise I had all of the above when I began. The reason for writing for me was quite different. My commissioning came from a Higher Source who I couldn't argue with!

That commissioning came while my husband and I were on a holiday touring the Holy Land. We had just been on tour to Ephesus in Turkey, and on the boat ride back to our motel on the island of Samos, Greece I struck up a conversation with one of the ladies in our tour group. We shared a little of our life's journey. That night as I was reflecting on my story, I was thinking of how God had taken me from some hard places in life, healed me from my pain and blessed me. A voice impressed on my mind "Up out of Egypt, that is where you have come from, that is the title of the book you are to write?" When I protested, "Me God, write a book? I must have heard wrong". Reassuring me, he said "Up out of Egypt, out of bondage and into freedom".

That was it, I knew it was the voice of God for that is where He had taken me, out of bondage and into freedom and I knew that was as good a reason as you can get to start writing!!

It took me a while to get down to it, I procrastinated for a time and when I did start writing I was tentative; Did I have the ability to write? It was only way down the track I reflected on the answer to that question and I'll tell you about that a little later on.

The next thing to consider is:

What are the reasons prompting you to write?

What are your motivations? Well, you know what my reason was but what about you. What are the reasons for you to write a book?

1. Is it fame you are looking for?
2. Is it monetary gain?
3. Is it for cathartic reasons?
Are you hoping that by writing you will work through or put to rest some of your painful past?
4. Do you hope to write your memoirs?
Is it a way of leaving your family your history, their history?
5. Do you want to press home a point or a topic?
6. Do you have ideas that are bursting to come to the surface?

The next question to ask yourself is, what are the obstacles that hinder me to get started?

1. For me it was a huge wall, or like 2 hands on my chest holding me back...a resistance, to who knows what.
2. Time...we are always short of it.

3. Doubting your own abilities
4. Negative comments from family or friends
5. Writers block

How to overcome the obstacles

1. Make a positive decision to begin.
Remember your initial reasons for writing. Write them down.
Go back to them over and over again when doubts arise
2. Time poor
For me there was always something to do other than sit down to write, like work, housework, family, meetings, anything but sit on my chair and open up my computer and get started.
The only way to conquer this is to schedule a time and keep to it. Sit at your computer and wait, think, pray, then just start typing...
3. Doubting your abilities
When there is a story waiting to be written there is no peace and the thought will not leave. There is no getting out of it.
Reflect on past successes, even the smallest success. Believe you have been successful in the past and can be in the future.
Unbelief in my ability to write was a huge hindrance. Then...the memory came to me of a comment from my English teacher in Year 8. The class was asked to write a letter to a friend. The teacher praised my letter and said he liked the creative way it began. You can imagine what that did for me as praise didn't often come my way. That compliment meant so very much to me and I never forgot it. It became a pivotal encouragement for me to believe in my writing abilities.
4. Negative comments from family or friends
Try hard not to be influenced by them. Some people mean well and maybe want to save you from disappointment. Remind yourself of the reason for writing and believe in your own abilities.
5. Writers block

When you feel there is no creativity in you. When you have nothing in you to write, close up your computer. Go for a walk, a swim, into the garden or do some sort of exercise.

Always have a pad and pen handy, even by your bed, because great thoughts come through the night, and when a thought comes, write it down. You will find that one of those comments written may be just the thing to get you started again.

Don't despair, if you are meant to write a book, you will get started again.

As you begin

1. Decide who your target reader is, i.e. children, youth, adults, family etc
Have a beginning, climax and an end
2. Consider how many chapters you think you would like in your book and how many pages per chapter
3. Write to keep your reader wanting to turn the pages. Keep your reader wanting more.
(The greatest compliment from my readers is "I couldn't put it down")
4. Find someone with the ability to edit your work as you go along; that could be a friend with that skill with a view to engage an editor at the completion or an editor from the beginning, but that can be costly.
As you near the end, seek out publishers, or with a view to self-publish someone who will print your book for you.
5. When it is all finished, and you are happy with the product submit your manuscript to the publisher you have chosen.

Looking back...

Looking back over the years I realise I did have a flair for writing, although I never recognised it at the time.

I loved documenting things. To this day I can show you books where I recorded gifts I bought our children for Christmas from babyhood. I kept a diary, which was really helpful when searching for dates and accurate information for my story and then there was that

wonderful compliment my English teacher gave me I remembered all my life.

Do not give up

It took me 10 years to write my book and 3 years, and two Publishers before it came into print. During that time I would be tempted to compare myself to other Authors who wrote a book in a year or had sold 5,000 copies of their book, and I would think I'm too old for this or my story won't sell!

Those thoughts proved to be fruitless. I wasn't too old at 70 years old when my book was published and although I haven't sold 5,000 copies as some of my counterparts, I am still selling my book 5 years later and still have my readers tell me how much they enjoy and appreciate my story.

So pursue your dream, work hard at it, believe in yourself, set in motion all you need so you will see your story go to print. And enjoy the experience.

Are you are prospective writer? I would love to hear from you and read some of your responses to the questions I posed and how you are fulfilling your dream.

