

I Write for the Love of It

by Ken Mellor

I love writing. A deeply meditative experience for me, all aspects of it nourish my soul. When without the opportunity to write, I am increasingly filled with empty yearning, a craving for the fulfilment that lies hidden beyond the density and confinement of my everyday perceptions. When writing, my day-to-day consciousness thrives because I see beyond the immediate and feel liberated from my limitations.

This may seem exaggerated, even fanciful, yet others—such as painters, dancers, musicians, athletes, inventors, and so on—have similar passions. And perhaps many of them also have experiences similar to the way writing opens my awareness to inner being and the way this then nourishes and expands my sense of self to include a natural spaciousness, awakening, fulfilment, and fundamental aliveness. Perhaps these others also yearn to express their passion when blocked from doing so for any length of time.

As a teenager, while feeling driven to write, I did not find it easy, mainly because I was devoid of ideas

about “my last vacation” or “my favorite pet.” What was interesting about these topics? I felt jammed between the set task and not knowing how to avoid the inevitable criticism from my teachers in an educational system in which fault finding, not encouragement, was the primary teaching mode. How things have changed!

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I did, even so, substantially fill two school exercise books with notes. One contained jottings on horse anatomy and riding skills, which I recorded in preparation for end-of-year tests at the pony club I used to attend with my three brothers. The other contained yacht anatomy



(bow, stern, port, starboard, mast, jib, etc.)—diagrams of new fittings I helped invent to make my twin brother and me go faster in the races we were determined to win—and accounts of race tactics and races won and lost.

Describing my beginning efforts like this, however, could hide how hard won my learning the craft and the tricks of the writing trade actually was. Decades passed before the process involved had a familiar easy flow, a far cry from where I started.

Perfectionism was the problem back then. There were no cut-copy-paste functions with pen and ink, and there were many smudges, spelling errors, and poorly constructed sentences. All of them were unacceptable. Every mistake required starting the whole page again, even if it were in the very last word. Not surprisingly, many crunched up paper balls would litter the floor at the end of the process.

Of course, this approach was an expression of a mindless compulsion

for which no one ever suggested the simple remedy I finally discovered for myself: Write for yourself in the first instance, without trying to satisfy the critics in your head or elsewhere, and make the first effort only a draft, filled with mistakes if that's what happens. The time to cater perfectly to other people's demands only comes after multiple drafts "for you" have honed your own understanding enough to go public with it.

The complete solution also came when I realized that creative writing is an organic process, one that has its own timing, periods of insight, productive and nonproductive stages, and output schedules. This awareness arose in me as I was increasingly called on by others or my inner prompting to write long articles or books on, for example, parenting and child rearing, spiritual development, therapeutic approaches, and the like.

I was deeply relieved when I realized that, for me at least, writing is like giving birth to a child and that the birth only comes at the end of the process. It starts with conception (the initial idea or suggestion), moves on to implantation in the womb (deciding where to write, making notes, talking about it as an idea, etc.), then there is the gestation period (research, collecting ideas, jottings, writing the occasional paragraph, taking time for the "fetus" to grow), next comes prelabor (forced attempts to write too

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soon that just don't last), and finally full labor (when a natural internal pressure to produce prompts easy-flowing productivity that carries us within its own momentum when it arrives). This labor includes transition ("It's all too much," "I can't do this," "Someone else should do it for me," wanting to give up), and then the huge satisfaction and relief as the delivery occurs (the project is completed, we hold the product in our hands), and finally, and necessarily, the bonding (we embrace and tenderly hold the "baby" to ourselves and show it off to others: friends, editors, publishers, etc.).

Once I recognized the way each of these stages was saturated with its own distinctive creative processes and that it unfolds in its own time, I was released from trying to hurry. I had learned patience. Also, when the "Braxton Hicks" contractions of prelabor occur, I learned to relax into them, to be satisfied with their short duration and not to try to do more with them than was available at the time. A healthy "fetus" develops and arrives at its own pace, regardless of what the "mother" may do to try to hurry things up, and the growing "prenatal child" needs its own time to grow, without our prematurely trying to push it out into the world.

Released by all of this, I found profound, unexpected joy in the process of writing and how deeply nourishing the experience of being "pregnant" and giving birth is. I was released into a direct experience of living, integrative processes—into the direct experience of generativity.

What a transformation this has been! And now, often with several projects on the go at once, like kangaroos in Australia I carry more than one joey (project) in my pouch at a time, simultaneously supplying each one with the unique nourishment it needs and nurturing it through its implantation, gestation, labor, delivery, and bonding. 🍓

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