

Why You Should Write

By Esther Aardsma

“I don’t know... am I just adding to all the noise in the world?” Abby shrugged. “I’m not really sure I have anything to say.”

We’d been discussing my friend’s interest in writing, and her hesitation had arisen—as it had when we’d discussed writing before. Did she have anything valuable to add to the world of the written word? Should she even bother to raise her inked voice?

First, there is a difference between *writing* and *publishing*. Publishing is not necessarily for everyone. To publish is to expand your voice’s reach—but to write with the sole motive of *publishing* is to skip right over the main purpose for *writing*.

To write is to learn, and this learning starts with yourself. Painting your thoughts, ideas, feelings, memories, and images onto a page through words teaches you to slow down and examine each of those things. Why do you think that way? Do those ideas make sense? From where does that feeling stem? What message was in that memory? How can I convey the vivid image in my head to another person? A writer will start to view even intangible things (like human emotion) with curiosity and will ask more questions about them, all the while working to understand more deeply in order to communicate more clearly to a reader.

“Ugh,” you say. “I just want to write the *fun* stuff. Stories. Fantasies. Action. That kind of thing.”

“Great!” I respond. “Go for it! Believe it or not, your subconscious is still learning all these things; that’s probably why writing is so *hard*. The biggest roadblocks you will likely come against while writing are your internal emotional ones, but as you work through them, your writing will mature.”]

The most powerful place to apply this deepen-my-understanding focus is your experience of pain. What memories are painful? Write them out, in detail. (If painful enough, a professional counselor might be a valuable member to add to your team.) You will notice things about those memories you never noticed before,

and you will ask questions about those memories that never previously occurred to you to ask. What messages did you absorb? How have these messages impacted your patterns of thinking and feeling?

“But I don’t really want to be stuck navel-gazing,” Abby had said, grimacing, when I had hinted at this process.

I don’t want her to be stuck there either, and thankfully the road doesn’t stop there.

The next step is to move through how you have conquered, or are conquering, that pain. How have you come out victorious? Why are you still standing? What grace have you been given? What makes you better instead of bitter? Examine your response to your pain, and study others’ responses to the same, or similar, pain.

Then, while understanding that the discovery phase is never fully complete, uncap the ink pen, and *write*. Write to the younger version of yourself, the one that felt hopeless, desperate, and alone. Write to your children, real or imagined, warning them of the pitfalls in which you crashed. Write to your friends, the ones you wish you could reach out to and take their pain away, but you can’t—and you don’t know what else to do. Write stories, letters, essays, poems. Write through the lens that you, *and only you*, have been given.

The ultimate purpose of writing? *To offer hope through your unique experience.* And everyone can do that. Even if another soul never sees your words, what you write will enrich the lives of the people around you as you discover a passionate strength you never knew you had. Your pain becomes your platform.

Too much noise in the world for another voice? Only if the individual does not have value. The real underlying questions are *Do I belong? Is there space for me? Am I special?*

Write *you*. There’s always room for you.