

# Wisdom On Writing...

From *JournalingLife.com*

The purpose of a writer is to keep civilization  
from destroying itself.

ALBERT CAMUS



Deliver me from writers who say the way  
they live doesn't matter.

I'm not sure a bad person can write a good book.  
If art doesn't make us better, then what on earth is it for.

ALICE WALKER



Anyone who believes you can't change history  
has never tried to write his memoirs.

DAVID BEN GURION



One of the obligations of the writer is to say or sing  
all that he or she can, to deal with as much of the world as  
becomes possible to him or her in language.

DENISE LEVERTOV



English usage is sometimes more than mere taste,  
judgment and education -- sometimes it's sheer luck,  
like getting across the street.

E. B. WHITE

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The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it.

ELIZABETH DREW



There was never a good biography of a good novelist. There couldn't be. He is too many people if he's any good.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD



Everywhere I go I'm asked if I think the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them. There's many a best-seller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.

FLANNERY O'CONNOR



The most essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof, shit detector. This is the writer's radar and all great writers have had it.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY



I speak to the Black experience, but I am always talking about the human condition-- about what we can endure, dream, fail at and survive.

MAYA ANGELOU

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There is only one trait that marks the writer. He is always watching.  
It's a trick of the mind, and he is born with it.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN



I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

PETER DEVRIES

The desire to write grows with writing.

ERASMUS



The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man,  
it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

WILLIAM FAULKNER



All good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD



Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until  
drops of blood form on your forehead.

GENE FOWLER

If he wrote it, he could get rid of it.  
He had gotten rid of many things by writing them.  
**ERNEST HEMINGWAY**



The demonic paradox of writing: when you put something down that happened, people often don't believe it; whereas, you can make up anything, and people assume it must have happened to you.  
**ANDREW HOLLERAN**



Half my life is an act of revision.  
**JOHN IRVING**



To write simply is as difficult as to be good.  
**SOMERSET MAUGHAM**



The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say, but what we are unable to say.  
**ANAIIS NIN**



When I stepped from hard manual work to writing, I just stepped from one kind of hard work to another.  
**SEAN O'CASEY**

Always grab the reader by the throat in the first paragraph, send your thumbs into his windpipe in the second, and hold him against the wall until the tagline.

PAUL O'NEIL



I am hungry for life and for death also.  
I know what I know and I write it.

OCTAVIO PAZ



True ease in writing comes from art, not chance.

ALEXANDER POPE



However great a man's natural talent may be,  
the art of writing cannot be learned all at once.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU



The man who writes about himself and his own time  
is the man who writes about all people and all time.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



I have had a "call" to literature of a low order--i.e.  
humorous. It is nothing to be proud of,  
but it is my strongest suit [ . . . ] seriously scribbling to  
excite the laughter of God's creatures.

MARK TWAIN (SAMUEL CLEMENS):

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Whatever our theme in writing, it is old and tried [. . .]  
it is only the vision that can be new; but that is enough.

EUDORA WELTY



Writing is not like painting where you add.  
It is not what you put on the canvas that the reader sees.  
Writing is more like a sculpture where you remove,  
you eliminate in order to make the work visible.  
Even those pages you remove somehow remain.

ELIE WIESEL



Now and again thousands of memories converge,  
harmonize, arrange themselves around a central idea  
in a coherent form, and I write a story.

Katherine Anne Porter



I started with all the handicaps, incapacities and helplessness.  
I didn't talk when I was twenty.  
I taught myself by the act of writing.

ANAI NIN



The best way to become acquainted with a subject is  
to write a book about it.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI (BRITISH POLITICIAN (1804 - 1881))



Writing saved me from the sin and inconvenience of violence."

ALICE WALKER (AMERICAN WRITER, B.1944)

Dreams are illustrations...  
from the book your soul is writing about you.

MARSHA NORMAN



Writing is thinking on paper.

WILLIAM ZINSSER



Writing is the only thing that, when I do it,  
I don't feel I should be doing something else.

GLORIA STEINEM



When you use words, you're able to keep your mind alive.  
Writing is my way of reaffirming my own existence.

GAO XINGJIAN



Reduce your plan to writing.  
The moment you complete this, you will have definitely given  
concrete form to the intangible desire.

NAPOLEON HILL



Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and  
an amusement; then it becomes a mistress, and then it be-  
comes a master, and then a tyrant. The last phase is that just as  
you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the  
monster, and fling him out to the public.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

I love writing. I love the swirl and swing of words as  
they tangle with human emotions.

**JAMES A. MICHENER**



Talent is helpful in writing, but guts are absolutely necessary.

**JESSAMYN WEST**



The good writing of any age has always been  
the product of someone's neurosis.

**WILLIAM STYRON**



The reason why so few good books are written is that so  
few people who can write know anything.

**WILLIAM STRUNK**



We do not write because we want to;  
we write because we have to.

**WALTER BAGEHET**



There are three rules for writing the novel.  
Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

**W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM**

If a writer wrote merely for his time,  
I would have to break my pen and throw it away.  
W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM



A writer is a person for whom writing is more difficult than it  
is for other people.  
TRUMAN CAPOTE



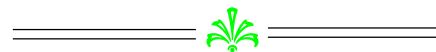
Why do writers write? Because it isn't there.  
THOMAS MANN



Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers.  
T. S. ELIOT



Either write something worth reading or  
do something worth writing.  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



I never know what I think about something until  
I read what I've written on it.  
WILLIAM FAULKNER

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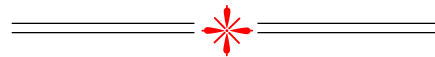
It is excellent discipline for an author to feel that he must say all that he has to say in the fewest possible words, or his readers is sure to skip them.

JOHN RUSKIN



The writer must write what he has to say, not speak it.

HEMINGWAY, ERNEST



The only living works are those which have drained much of the author's own life into them.

SAMUEL BUTLER



Every author in some degree portrays himself in his works, even if it be against his will.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE



Writing is a dreadful labor, yet not so dreadful as Idleness.

THOMAS CARLYLE

The secret of all good writing is sound judgment.

HORACE



If any man wishes to write a clear style,  
let him first be clear in his thoughts.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE



Most writers regard the truth as their most valuable possession,  
and therefore are economical in its use.

MARK TWAIN



Why did I write? What sin to me unknown dipped me in ink,  
my parents , or my own?

ALEXANDER POPE



How vain it is to sit down to write when  
you have not stood up to live.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



His style is chaos illumined by flashes of lightning. As a writer  
he has mastered everything except language.

OSCAR WILDE



To write well, express yourself like common people,  
but think like a wise man. Or, think as wise men do,  
but speak as the common people do.

ARISTOTLE

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As I take up my pen I feel myself so full, so equal to my subject, and see my book so clearly before me in embryo, I would almost like to try to say it all in a single word.

**GEORG C. LICHTENBERG**



I write in order to attain that feeling of tension relieved and function achieved which a cow enjoys on giving milk.

**HENRY LOUIS MENCKEN**



A man writes to throw off the poison which he has accumulated because of his false way of life. He is trying to recapture his innocence, yet all he succeeds in doing (by writing) is to inoculate the world with a virus of his disillusionment. No man would set a word down on paper if he had the courage to live out what he believed in.

**HENRY MILLER**



Of all that is written,  
I love only what a person has written with his own blood.

**FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**



For a creative writer possession of the "truth" is less important than emotional sincerity.

**GEORGE ORWELL**

Everywhere I go, I'm asked if the universities stifle writers.  
My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them.

FLANNERY O'CONNOR



I am writing in the garden. To write as one should of  
a garden one must write not outside it or merely somewhere  
near it, but in the garden.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



Writing is the only thing that, when I do it,  
I don't feel I should be doing something else.

GLORIA STEINEM



Good things, when short, are twice as good.

GRACIÁN



All human beings have an innate need to hear and  
tell stories and to have a story to live by ... religion,  
whatever else it has done, has provided one of the  
main ways of meeting this abiding need.

HARVEY COX



If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live,  
I wouldn't brood. I'd type a little faster.

ISAAC ASIMOV

Arguments over grammar and style are often as fierce as those over IBM versus Mac, and as fruitless as Coke versus Pepsi and boxers versus briefs.

**JACK LYNCH**



Writing is a solitary occupation. Family, friends, and society are the natural enemies of the writer. He must be alone, uninterrupted, and slightly savage if he is to sustain and complete an undertaking.

**JESSAMYN WEST**



Women do not always have to write about women, or gay men about gay men. Indeed, something good and new might happen if they did not.

**KATHRYN HUGHES**



Critics are by no means the end of the law. Do not think all is over with you because your articles are rejected. It may be that the editor has his drawer full, or that he does not know enough to appreciate you, or you have not gained a reputation, or he is not in a mood to be pleased. A critic's judgment is like that of any intelligent person. If he has experience, he is capable of judging whether a book will sell. That is all.

**LAVINA GOODELL**

If I had to give young writers advice, I would say don't listen to writers talking about writing or themselves.

LILLIAN HELLMAN



Yes there is a meaning; at least for me, there is one thing that matters - to set a chime of words tinkling in the minds of a few fastidious people.

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH



But words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.

LORD BYRON



To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement. To condense the diffused light of a page of thought into the luminous flash of a single sentence, is worthy to rank as a prize composition just by itself..Anybody can have ideas--the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph.

MARK TWAIN

I don't wait for moods. You accomplish nothing if you do that.  
Your mind must know it has got to get down to work.

PEARL S. BUCK



Put the argument into a concrete shape, into an image, some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which they can see and handle and carry home with them, and the cause is half won.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Poetry: the best words in the best order.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE



A short saying often contains much wisdom.

SOPHOCLES



Fiction is the truth inside the lie.

STEPHEN KING



The difference between fiction and reality?  
Fiction has to make sense.

TOM CLANCY

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Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart...

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



The reality is more excellent than the report.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.

WINSTON CHURCHILL



*JournalingLife.com*  
EVERYTHING About Journaling! EVERYTHING!  
Free Newsletter · Forum · Tips · Types · Links & MORE

The banner features the website name in a cursive font, a blue bar with the text 'EVERYTHING About Journaling! EVERYTHING!', and a yellow bar with 'Free Newsletter · Forum · Tips · Types · Links & MORE'. An illustration of an open book with a pen is on the right.

The Journaling Habit .com  
Feed Your Writing Needs ... One Month at a Time

The graphic includes a pocket watch, a purple notebook, a pen, a calendar for January, and a purple envelope with 'January 1' and 'January 2' written on it.