

## How Can Writing Improve Your Life?



Kelly Robbins

From ancient storytelling and hieroglyphics to modern-day therapy and prescribed journaling, writing is one of the oldest and most effective ways we communicate—both with ourselves and with others.

For centuries, people have written to bring clarity and focus to problems they've been struggling with. For those who are shy or can't find the words to express themselves, writing is a great way to get their points across, especially on personal or emotional matters.

Writing adds permanency and a sense of tangibility to your thoughts. An example is goal setting: experts tell us to write our goals down. It's one thing to think about something you want to accomplish in your life or in business—to set a goal. Taking the extra time to write down that goal makes it more permanent. You are more likely to achieve it if it is written down.

You don't have to write with the intention of being published. Write for

- self-expression
- introspection
- pleasure
- growth
- clarity
- emotional relief
- storytelling
- communicating

Writing adds another dimension to your thoughts. It expands on the experience and adds depth to the thought, making it much more likely to become a reality.

When doing anything in your life, I encourage you to use as many of your senses as you can. It enriches the experience and makes the reality of it more vivid. Writing adds the sense of touch and sight to your thoughts. Read your writing out loud—you add hearing. In business I teach my clients to incorporate as many of the senses into their marketing as they can: touch, hearing, sight, smell, and taste. Writing your goals down adds another dimension to the goal. You use another one of those senses and are thus much more likely to accomplish that goal . . . because you made it more tangible, more real.

Whether writing for pleasure or to fill your deep-seated desire to write the great American novel, many people find that the hardest part of writing is getting started. Determining what to write about is simply a daunting task for some. Staring at the blank page makes it worse. Part of what makes writing fun is seeing your thoughts flowing easily and effortlessly onto the page. But getting to that point—the effortless place where creativity and your individual thoughts come together on the page—can be tough in the beginning.

As I am writing this piece, my nine-year-old daughter is writing the final draft of a story she wrote in class. When she first brought this story home a few days ago, she was bubbling with excitement and enthusiasm. She had written an in-depth, five-page story, and many of her classmates only wrote a paragraph or two in the same amount of time. Her story was awesome, and she knew it. She started writing, and the words just flew onto the page; before she knew it, class was over. She's upset now because she has to edit and rewrite 10 times as much as her classmates before her next class. (She quickly realized it could be a bad thing if she were to continue to write that much.)

My point is that once you are in the flow—when you're in a good place and thoughts and ideas are flowing without effort—writing can be pure joy. The key is to train yourself to get to that place without effort. Following are some things to help you find that free-flowing place.

- Develop a routine, but don't make your routine difficult.
- Use a crisp pad of paper. (I always need to have a legal size pad of yellow paper. No crinkled edges. No torn pages.)
- Is your laptop better?

- Write in a quiet house or room.
- Get out of the house. Maybe sit at the local coffee shop or under a tree.
- Notice what *isn't* working so you can get away from it. The kids running madly around the house stresses me out.
- Write at the same time every day—maybe right after your first cup of coffee.
- Do you wake up early at exactly the same time every morning? Like 3:00 A.M.? If you actually take the time to get out of bed, that is a very calm time of day and can be a great time for you to be alone with yourself and do some writing.
- At the end of a stressful day a glass of wine and a pad of paper can be a great way to relax and work through some of your issues. Brainstorm ideas; gather thoughts . . . something as simple as dumping out a list of everything you need to do for the next few days can be a relief and help you to relax if you're stressed (I lovingly call this my brain-dump).
- Set a goal for yourself: 1 hour, 15 minutes, 20 pages, 1 chapter. Find what works for you.
- Write in something special—a beautifully bound journal with an expensive pen you splurged on. Make your writing time special and joyous.
- When you are writing, don't worry about spelling and punctuation. Just get your thoughts down. Let your thoughts flow freely.
- Try different things until you find what works for you.

These are just suggestions to get you started. You are not going to know what works for you if you don't just start writing. I am a writer by trade, and I coach people that want to make a living as a writer. I see them procrastinate over and over again, and the one thing I tell them over and over again is to *just start writing*. Once you get into the flow, you'll see your life improve in more ways than you can count.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly Robbins is a healthcare copywriter and marketing coach and consultant. Kelly was the recipient of the 2004 “40 under 40” award, given annually by the *Denver Business Journal*, which recognized her as a leader in the business community. Kelly is the author of *The Essential Healthcare Copywriters Toolkit* and publishes *The Healthcare Marketing Connection* (<http://www.healthcaremarketingconnection.com>), an e-zine which provides marketing tips to healthcare and nonprofit organizations across the world. Kelly is a nationally known speaker, author, and columnist on copywriting and marketing topics. Kelly can be reached at <http://www.KellyRobbinsLLC.com> or at (303) 460-0285.