



**Dellgirl Publishing**

# *At the Starting Gate* Newsletter

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## **Keep it Simple - Keep it Small**

### ***Introduction***

Trying to “get started” writing is the hardest part. Once you get started, writing is the easy part. The key is to take the plunge; just “get started” writing. In the beginning simply—WRITE. Make corrections, edit, add to, make changes, or improve what you’ve done after you gain some momentum.

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## **Don’t Try to Write a 900 Page Novel**

### **Keep it Simple . . .**

- *And, Keep it Small*
- *In the beginning - WRITE*
- *Gain some momentum first*
- *Edit & correct later*
- *Think smaller and say less than planned*

You might ask, “*I want to write a novel or a big book, why would I want to keep it simple and small?*”

Those of us who regularly think about writing a book or a novel, think in terms of the finished product - “a 500 to 900 page “finished product”. The process of writing that number of pages alone, is an overwhelming task for first-timers. Every time we think of writing our book, we think of writing from beginning to end. We start, we get overwhelmed, and we stop.

For me, the biggest dilemma and one of my main hold-ups to getting my book finished was the thought of starting from my early childhood and writing through to the present day. Another thing that kept me from getting to a finished product was trying to say too much.

For example, I often thought of writing a tribute to my teachers starting with first grade. This included everything from what I did before leaving home on the first day of school to how the teacher held her hands as she wrote assignments for us.

I moved on to second grade; the same thing happened. I wrote about how pretty the teacher was, what we did period by period during the day, and how the teacher chose which students would answer questions. And, on and on and on. Needless to say, I only got as far as the spring of second grade year. At that point, I went off on a tangent. I started an outline that included every teacher I ever had along with notes about them and the class. Time after time, I’d start writing my “Tribute” only to find it impossible to get where I intended to go with it. In its original format, with its intended purpose, it remains an unfinished mind-boggler to me. TOO MUCH information!

It was not until I held a 53 page 8 ½” X 5 ½” book in my hands did I realize, “*I can do this! I can write a book this size.*” I changed my thoughts. Instead of imagining 900 pages I began to see 50 to 80 pages - complete, printed and bound. 80 pages was a “do-able” thing without being overwhelming. Along with that, I re-thought and altered my planned tribute to teachers. Instead of a journey through 12 grades of school, I wrote a poem or a dedication to specific teachers - those who had directly influenced and inspired me to write. Simple and small made the goal reachable.

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## Forget Chapter 1, Chapter 2, - Chapter 35

Your book does not have to be a series of chapters in sequence, another misconception that hinders us first-timers. With no idea where to start or how to do it, we unintentionally bombard ourselves with too much too soon.

Forget about writing a book starting with Chapter 1, then chapter 2 . . . Then Chapter 35. Instead of aiming for the BIG book, change your vision to a more reachable goal. Your book could be a compilation of short stories like the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. Another book without chapters in sequence is *Chocolate for a Woman's Heart & Soul*. Yours might even be a book of short inspirational stories or a cookbook filled with favorite recipes collected from family and friends. Those of us with hobbies or who are good at a particular craft might write a book about *how-to-do* what we do.

*“Forget about Chapter 1, Chapter 2, . . . Chapter 35”.*  
*Think: Collections.*

particular craft might write a book about *how-to-do* what we do.

If you don't have a book like the ones mentioned above, consider buying one or getting one from your public library as the guide you will hold in your hands as inspiration.



### At the Starting Gate

By

Leona G. Shankle

Now on sale at a special introductory price  
*(for a limited time only)*

The book is evidence that it is never too late to realize your dream, no matter what that dream might be. You might dream of being a dancer, an artist, a writer, or even a publisher. If I did it, so can you.

If you can dream it, you *can* do it!

It's time to let yourself dare to dream like a kid again!

## Stay Focused

**Stay focused** on your goal - to write and possibly publish your book.

Remember the key is to **write**.

**Stay focused** - “get started” - write.

**Stay focused** on writing more often but say less than originally planned.

*“Write like the wind; write like there is no tomorrow; write from your soul.”*

**Stay focused** on writing a smaller book than you first thought.

**Stay focused** on the “do-able” - writing your story one page at a time until you have your book.

**Stay focused** on holding *your* book in your hands and proclaiming, *“I did it! I wrote a book!”*

### Your Goal

- *Forget chapters in sequence*
- *Do short stories or collections*
- *Stay focused –get started*
- *Write, write, write*
- *Think - smaller is do-able*



**Stay  
Focused**

Until we write again,

Leona