



Dellgirl Publishing

At the Starting Gate Newsletter

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Get Started Writing Your Book

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Everybody has a story to tell. Some desire to tell their stories more than others, and many people think about doing just that—someday. If you're reading this right now you can probably think of at least one time in your life when the thought crossed your mind that the situation you were in would make a good story. Some people think of writing their stories on a regular basis. I'm one of those people. No matter what the day or what the occasion happened to be, I found myself thinking, *this will make a good story*.

Like me, you probably have written bits and pieces of poetry, fiction, short stories, and novels in an attempt to get that book done. Day after day and year after year, you write your pieces for that *one-day-I'll-write-that-book* file. Pages become piles, piles become filled folders or binders that inevitably end up stored away.

Eventually, if you're lucky, something or someone motivates you to the point of actually doing instead of thinking. In my case, it was my daughter who coaxed me to *do it* rather than simply talking about it.

Now it's your turn. I'm here to motivate you, to coax you into finally getting enough of your words on paper to make that book you've always dreamed of writing, a reality.

Before we begin, think of the book you always wanted to write. How big is it? How many pages do you contemplate? Will it be a novel, a short story, or will it be a collection of your poetry? Inspirational pieces? A cookbook? What is your answer?

THINK AGAIN! THINK SMALLER! Think about making your book only half that size.

Smaller is do-able

- *Everybody has a story to tell...*
- *Think about the book you want to write,*
- *Think again!*
- *Think smaller!*
- *This is your baby step to getting it done—now.*

Step 1: Find the Spark That Lights Your Fire

Pull yourself up to the table. Think about what you want to do; something you have always wanted to do but put it off. Now what you need to do is **find the spark to light the fire within.**

My "fire within" had fizzled to a smoldering simmer when my daughter gave me a book her friend, Tracie Jae, had written. It was a quick easy read so I finished the entire book in two sessions. After reading it, I gave it a thorough going-over, from cover to cover—several times. To my daughter I said, "This is great, I love her book!" Inside my head, I thought, and to my daughter I declared, "I can do this! I can write a book this size!" *The fire was lit!* The desire to write began to burn inside immediately, like it never had before.

Tracie's book became my best friend and constant companion as I moved about the house gathering my written work. I studied her book, re-read and used it to form a picture of my own book in my mind.

With Tracie's book to guide me, each day became more productive than the preceding one. My finished pieces pile grew as my unfinished pieces pile shrank. Soon I had enough pages to fill a book—a smaller book than originally imagined.

To all those would-be writers out there, I encourage you to start now. Perhaps what worked for me might work for you - and, that is to have something tangible in your hand that reminds you every moment of the day that it is possible. Order my book, *At the Starting Gate* and use it as your own personal motivator; to guide you in getting your words on the page and into a book.

At the Starting Gate Newsletter

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Some might say 61 years old is awfully late to try and start anything of a major importance. In some ways it is.

But at 20, I thought “There’s lots of time. At 40, I justified, “There is just too much going on right now, I still have time.” Then, 50 and 55 came and went. One day I looked up from “*life*” and 60 had zipped right on by.

Even though it’s late, I’m starting now to become the writer I only dreamed of before. I am ...

At the Starting Gate

Leona G. Shankle

Step 2: Collect, Sort, & Write

Collect every piece of writing you have that you want in your book. Gather everything you’ve ever written over the years, thinking you would write a book—someday. Someday is here, now!

If you have only thought about writing a book and haven’t written anything yet, *skip this step and go directly to step 3.*

Next, sort your writing into two categories. Category 1 is for finished pieces. These are complete and contain a title. Category 2 contains unfinished pieces. This includes finished with no title, has a beginning but no ending, or has a title and a few scribbled notes summarizing what it is about.

You’re ready to write.

Write a short poem about your experience preparing for and completing step 1.

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

Leona Shankle

Step 3: Write, Write, Write

The first phase and the key to writing and publishing your book is to **write**. Write without editing or worrying about punctuation or grammar. The only thing we do here is to write. Get all your words on the page.

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

Start with a title. Then, write whatever comes to mind. Anything is fair game. Then write until it is finished. If the piece is short and only takes up a page or a page and a half in its final form, stop. It is finished.

Do it all over again. Pick a title; then write, write, write until the piece is finished.

Set a minimum number of pages for your book then write until you have achieved that number.

Happy writing,

Leona



**...a wide-eyed
young girl dreamed
of becoming a
writer.**