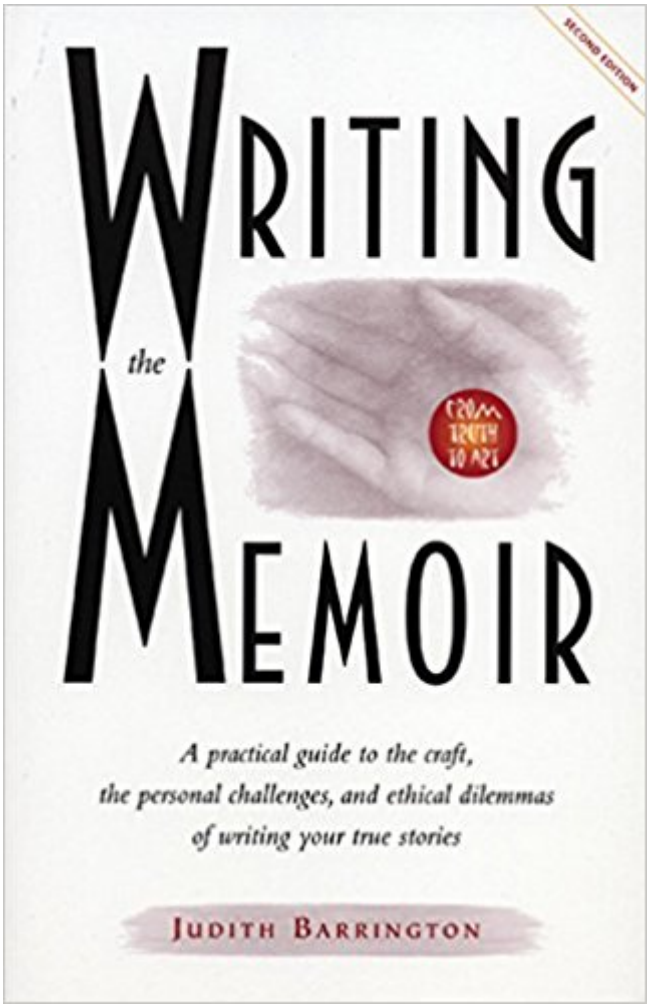
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Writing The Memoir: From Truth To Art, Second Edit



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Synopsis

Since Writing the Memoir came out in early 1997 it has sold roughly 80,000 copies and is consistently praised as "the best book on memoir out there." It is thought-provoking, explanatory, and practical: each chapter ends with writing exercises. It covers everything from questions of truth and ethics to questions of craft and the crucial retrospective voice. An appendix provides information on legal issues.Judith Barrington, an award-winning memoir writer and acclaimed writing teacher, is attuned to the forces, both external and internal, that work to stop a writer; her tone is respectful of the difficulties and encouraging of taking risks. Her nimble prose, her deep belief in the importance of this genre, and her delight in the rich array of memoirists writing today make this book more than the typical "how-to" creative writing book. In this second edition the author has added new material and reflects on issues raised since Writing the Memoir was written, early in the memoir boom."No student of memoir writing could fail to learn from this wise, pragmatic, and confiding book. One hears on every page the voice of an intelligent and responsive teacher, with years of thinking about memoir behind her."Ã¢â ¬â •Vivian GornickJudith Barrington is the author of Lifesaving: A Memoir and numerous individual memoirs which have been published in literary magazines and anthologies. She is the author of three volumes of poetry: Trying to Be an Honest Woman, History and Geography, and Horses and the Human Soul (forthcoming in 2002). She has taught creative writing for the past twenty years.

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Customer Reviews

Seems like everyone wants to write his or her own memoirs these days. Memoirist and creative writing teacher Barrington (An Intimate Wilderness: Lesbian Writers on Sexuality, LJ 10/1/91) tells us how to do it. Her practical guide leads both experienced and novice writers through the writing process from idea to publication, addressing such technical problems as theme selection, voice, tone, form, plot, scene, and character development, as well as how to stimulate creative thinking and build necessary discipline. Barrington draws on the writings of Alice Walker, Kathleen Norris, Annie Dillard, Frank Conroy, and Virginia Woolf to illustrate her techniques. Her common-sense approach strives to temper the emotional honesty of the genre with the integrity of artistic skill. Libraries supporting a writers' group (for which Barrington includes a do's-and-don'ts section) will want several copies. Academic and school libraries might want it to supplement creative writing curriculums.?Denise S. Sticha, Seton Hill Coll. Lib., Greensburg, Pa.Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The current renaissance in literary memoirs pleases readers and inspires writers, while raising a number of questions about this most fluid and open-ended of genres. Barrington recognizes and addresses both the memoir's great appeal and the issues it raises pertaining to voice, structure, the transformation of fact into truth, and the elevation of personal experience and revelation into art. Like many fellow contemporary memoirists, Barrington is a poet who found herself "needing the expansiveness of prose," but as soon as she began writing her memoir, she realized how challenging a form it is and how unsettling the act of writing about one's life so openly, without the artifice of poetry or the mask of fiction, can be. After asking the key question, "What were the rules of memoir anyway?" she ended up answering it with this intelligent and insightful book, which combines stimulating literary analysis with a great deal of practical information and excellent advice. Donna Seaman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A great book! I liked Barrington's direct writing style and found the book very useful. (As a note, given its aged 2002 Copyright I almost passed on this book. Nevertheless, after seeing it recommended in a couple of other books I decided to buy it. I am glad that I did.) In combination with Mary Karr's newer book, The Art of Memoir, and some intensive digging through multiple memoir writing blogs, I have found most of the information that I needed.

The best book on Memoir Writing I have ever Read!I read this book and marked it up!! It isn't just a fantastic reference guide, it is a thought-provoking look at the Art of Memoir and the ample array of

styles, characteristics and qualities a Memoir can take on.When you lose your fear and allow yourself to be intimate with the details of your story, a Memoir can be juicer than the best Fiction novel.I love how Judith elaborates on the import of True Memoir writing and what makes it an incredibly unique genre from other Non-Fiction.Her expertise in writing pushes you to examine the traditional perceptions of the term Memoir and see it in a whole new light.She shares what makes for the most fertile of subjects and getting over any 'grapplings' you might have about how to present your story. She provides value in her book, sharing details about what makes an author's own Memoir writing become something of great value to others.This book is thoughtfully executed down to every example and recommendation-- including answers to critical question a published or an apprentice writer might have.Judith Barrington clearly wrote it with the purest intentions of assisting all true writers.

I have started writing my memoir and have decided to get books that can help me get over some of my writing problems. I am glad to have bought this book. I find this to be very helpful, especially for a beginner like me.I have finished Chapter 3 of my own work and got stuck with Chapter 4. I started writing my memoir last October and glad to know that it takes time even for seasoned writers to finish their own work.One good advice I learned from the author, Judith Barrington, is that when you get stuck with your writing like you have a writer's block you have to take a break - read, talk a walk or do something else - to relax your mind. While reading this book, I got some ideas that require rewriting Chapter 3 of the memoir I am writing and lay down the ground works for Chapter 4 and the subsequent chapters.The exercises in this book will help one planning to write a memoir determine which part of one's life could be potential materials. After reading this book, I can see that there are many parts in our lives that can be turned into books.I highly recommend this book for those who are planning to write memoirs. Barrington has myriads of writing tips that will be of help. One is that you don't really have to be famous to write a memoir. There are stories even in ordinary lives. It's more of a question on how to dig in a potential gold mine.

Excellent, practical advice on how to proceed. Puts you in the space of how to move forward. Along with several others, this is a most helpful book on Memoir writing.

This book contains a lot of good tips. You can tell the author has done her research. There are almost too many references though to books that most people have not even heard of. While I agree that references need to be made to an extent to show an example, you cannot assume the

reader has read them, nor has the time to read all those books. While reading other memoirs is certainly a great research tool, a "how-to" book, should be exactly that. There are lots of good writing tips and exercises that are very helpful. It is evident that the author takes the topic at hand seriously and she herself understand the struggles of story telling, especially when it is a hard topic to discuss, much less write. I would recommend this book for anyone wanting to write. I will say though, that while it brushes on the topic of the "Memoir" in the autobiographical sense, it may be more helpful to those who are looking for more help with "memoirs", meaning shorter stories either separate or to be used as a compilation. Either way, this book is definitely helpful to anyone looking to write a book or just brush up on their writing skills.

Might inspire you if you’re set on putting the most major and memorable events of your own life to paper- if that idea doesn’t interest you or you don’t feel you have the discipline to stare at a blank page often you can give this book a pass.

Purchased this as a textbook for a writing class this coming fall semester. Have read through it once. Will now go through and work on the exercises which follow each chapter.The author discusses the various elements of memoir writing and refers the reader to numerous published memoirs that illustrate the concepts involved in memoir writing.From reading the text. writing a memoir sounds like a scary and daunting project. But I am sure the instructor will introduce us to it gradually. Hopefully it will be painless.

This book is much more than the typical craft or how-to book on memoir writing. It provides essential guidance, craft pointers, excellent examples drawing from a wide variety of well-known and lesser-known memoirs, and from the author’s own experience as a writer and instructor. The exercises are useful, provide insightful tips, and help the user to craft important parts of works or larger pieces. I found every bit of the information useful well paced, helpful, and aimed at an intelligent, serious audience. This is a great book and one that I will return to time and time again.

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