

# Gotta Book in You?

Tips, Tools and Resources to Coax the  
Writer in You Out of the Closet



A gift to you from Corrie Woods  
author of  
*The Woman's Field Guide to  
Exceptional Living*

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Dear Writer,

(Yep, that is you, whether you've ever published a word or not. If this mini-guide has landed in your hands, then you are a writer at heart.)

So you want to write a book?

Well, you are not alone. In a 2002 article in *The New York Times*, author JOSEPH EPSTEIN stated: "According to a recent survey, 81 percent of Americans feel they have a book in them and that they should write it now." That means that millions of people are moving through their lives thinking, "*Gee, I'd like to write a book.*" And here is the light-of-day truth: most people don't. We'll take liberties here and go on to assume that all those unwritten stories cause big regrets in countless people's lives. We can't have that now, can we?

What about you? If the thought of writing a book has been nudging you, this may be your ticket to get started.



What follows is a bit of play, a bit of the practical, and lots of random ideas for you to explore. After reading through the ideas, try to see each new word that pops out of your pen (or keyboard) and onto the page (or screen) as a new stepping-stone in your writer's life. One after the other, where will they lead? Perhaps to that book of yours, perhaps to a love letter you've been longing to write, or perhaps to a commentary about a topic you are passionate about. The focus here is on the journey, not the destination. A book might be swell, and/but as a result of reading this mini-guide you may discover immense satisfaction in showing up as a writer in your life in whatever new ways unfold, whether you end up with your words wrapped up in a bound edition or not.

### **How to use this mini-guide:**

- Read through it and choose one thing to do
- Come back to it whenever you need a writing nudge
- Share it with your writing buddies and/or create a writing group around the tips
- As you read through it write down you own ideas of ways to coax the writer in you out of the closet
- Give copies to your aspiring-writer friends
- If you are a writing coach or teacher share a copy with your clients and/or students to expand their view of writing
- Write us to let us know how this information has served you

Ready to dive in? Here goes ...

## Whom (that's right: whom!) Are You Hanging Out With?

*"Writing is the only profession where no one considers you ridiculous if you earn no money." - Jules Renard*

- Join a writing group, attend a workshop or take a class.
- Join a book club.
- Connect with other writers in your community.
- Surround yourself with encouraging people.
- Come up with a fun writing project that you can collaborate on with others.
- Don't compare yourself.
- Become a dedicated listener to others.
- Write an "old-fashioned" letter to someone dear and pop it off in the mail.
- Join a local or national writing organization.
- Find a writing buddy to meet with on a regular basis.

## Show Up for Yourself and for Others!



*"The reason 99% of all stories written are not bought by editors is very simple. Editors **never** buy manuscripts that are left on the closet shelf at home." - John Campbell*

- Attend an "Open Mic" session at a local bookstore or café and read a snippet of your writing.
- Explore the masks you may be wearing in your life and in your writing. Perhaps they serve you by providing a "new voice," or perhaps they are getting in the way of your using your authentic voice.
- Have a safe place to write with radical honesty. Your truth needs a place to be expressed.

## Prompts (though there are countless sources for great writing prompts, here are a few to add to the mix)

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*“If you haven't got an idea, start a story anyway. You can always throw it away, and maybe by the time you get to the fourth page you **will** have an idea, and you'll only have to throw away the first three pages.” – William Campbell Gault*

- Shift from your head to your body and write your way through the sensations.
- Play with your sense of clarity – describe something in detail while you view it in focus, then shift your gaze and describe it out of focus.
- Breathe life into past writings by pulling them out, dusting them off, and picking up where you left off.
- Listen to your life and write about the sounds you hear.
- Fill a box or basket with questions and unfinished statements written on slips of paper – then draw one out whenever the mood strikes.
- Write a letter a day for a month: to a loved one, to a local paper, even to yourself.
- Write for at least ten minutes each day to clear your head. Don't stop to think or edit – just free-flow.
- Find a special time to write with children. Their spontaneity might just blow your own creativity wide open.
- Create a “Gratitude” journal to write in each day about all that you have to be grateful for.
- Create a “Little Kid in Me” journal into which you let your inner child out to rant, rave and play.
- Write naked. We feel certain this idea and/or practice will evoke some strong reactions in most of you and maybe will jar loose some surprises in your writing.

## Education + Inspiration = New Writing Horizons

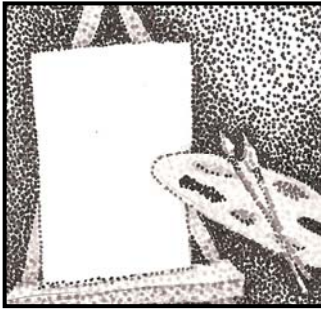
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“Pay attention to the sound of words.” - Dave Wolverton

- Read, read, read great books.
- Learn about publishing options: explore magazines, online resources, self-publishing possibilities, and traditional publishers.
- Learn one new word a day, or make one up. One good place for this is [www.visualthesaurus.com](http://www.visualthesaurus.com) which emails a word-of-the-day every morning!
- Read what other writers have to say about writing.
- Take a writing class.
- Capture phrases that you come across that resonate with you and write them down in a special place.
- Read aloud what you've written; pay attention to how words flow.

## Awakening Your Creative Muse

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*“The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become visible.” - Vladimir Nabakov*

- Create a special place in your home that inspires your creativity.
- Create a file folder or treasure box of captured ideas, images, and phrases.
- Design a ritual to invite creativity. Perhaps it is lighting a candle before you begin to write, listening to your favorite piece of music, or cleaning off your desk to make room for your creative voice.
- Get creative on any other front in your life. Take the art class that you've been eyeing, learn a new language, or step into graceful movement through dance.
- Shift from writing with a graphite pencil to colored pencils.
- Create an illustrated journal filled with a blend of your writing, your doodling and drawing, and images that resonate with you.
- Play with your handwriting: try calligraphy, practice beautiful penmanship, or change a sweep of a line here or there.

## The Process, not the Product

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*“Write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought for are commonly the most valuable.” - Francis Bacon*

- Think outside the box – maybe it’s not a book inside you but rather a blog, a series of articles, or a commentary.
- Don’t edit as you write. Come back to it at a later time so your inner critic does not clog up your creative flow.
- Start simply by simply starting to write.
- Be willing to be less than graceful, less than articulate, less than polished. Know that the road of many great writers is paved with just such stuff.
- Tease out the details of life onto paper by being fully front-and-center in the moment and noticing the texture of now.
- Be open to the unfolding story and detached from the outcome.
- Schedule time for writing each day.
- Organize every inch of your writing space so that you can easily find things; that way you’ll have plenty of wide-open space in which to pour your inspirations onto the paper.
- If you are someone who writes every day as a habit, stop writing for a week to shake things up.
- If you are used to writing with pen and paper, switch to a keyboard – or the other way around.

## Filling Your Cup

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*“Writing became such a process of discovery that I couldn't wait to get to work in the morning: I wanted to know what I was going to say.” - Sharon O'Brien*

- Take yourself away on your very own writing retreat.
- Take plenty of time in your life for rest, relaxation, and self-care. It is nearly impossible to write from an empty cup.

- Step beyond the swirl in your life and slow down long enough to catch your breath.
- Exercise in ways you find enjoyable, eat nourishing delicious food, and stay hydrated with pure clean water.

## Diving Inward

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*“Reading and weeping opens the door to one's heart, but writing and weeping opens the window to one's soul.” - M. K. Simmons*

- Use your writing to discover, explore, and fuel new passions.
- Make friends with the voices in your head that may trip you up. When you hear things like, “I’m not a writer,” write your way into and through them.
- Recognize the time you take to write as a sacred act: one that helps you tune into your authentic self.
- Prepare to have your heart cracked open. Writing from the heart requires that you are in touch with your heart.
- Forget what you know: open yourself to being surprised.
- Be aware that when you write about your life experiences you get to revisit them – and potentially learn new lessons.
- Explore the points of departure in your life, those moments when you left something you loved behind (perhaps your writing went up on a shelf?)
- Capture your myths about your life and the world on paper.

## Simple Steps

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*“The only way to learn to write is to write.” - Peggy Teeters*

- Keep a notebook handy wherever you go so you can jot down your inspirations.
- Play with different ways of developing content that might include interviewing experts, doing a survey, asking others to share their stories.
- Keep a digital recorder handy to dictate into.

## What Gets in the Way?

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*“There's no such thing as writer's block. That was invented by people in California who couldn't write.” - Terry Pratchett*

- Ways to get unstuck:
  - a. Write upside down or sideways.
  - b. Doodle on your first page to break the ice.
  - c. Get clear about why you are stuck – often it is the safest place to be.
  - d. Take action in some other area of your life, any area.
- Life blurs at point-blank range. To expand your perspective and get a flush of new ideas, get some distance by stepping back and looking with fresh eye or by physically stepping into a new landscape.
- Stay away from critical people, at least until you are ready for criticism.

## Tools

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*“There are three rules for writing. Unfortunately, no one can agree what they are.”  
- Somerset Maugham*

- Gather good tools: a great pen or pencil you like to write with, a notebook or journal that inspires you to fill its pages, a computer that runs smooth as silk.
- Use the internet as a research tool, but keep a watchful eye out lest it become more of a distraction than a helpful resource.
- Stock your bookshelf with quality books on the craft, techniques, and rules of writing.
- Subscribe to print and online magazines that tickle your writing fancy.
- Buy yourself the latest, greatest dictionary edition.

## **Specific Books to Inspire and Support Great Writing**

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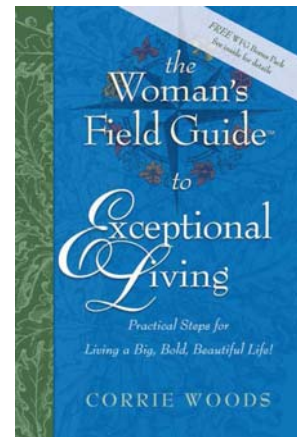
*"I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork." - Peter de Vries*

- *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, Julia Cameron
- *Spiritual Doodles and Mental Leapfrogs: A Playbook for Unleashing Spiritual Self-Expression*, Katherine Q. Revoir
- *God is at Eye Level: Photography as a Healing Art*, Jan Phillips
- *Writing from the Heart: Tapping Power of Your Inner Voice*, Nancy Slonim Aronie
- *Writing the Wave: Inspired Rides for Aspiring Writers*, Elizabeth Ayers
- *Weekly Writes: 52 Weeks of Writing Bliss*, Shery Ma Belle Arrieta

## About the Author



Corrie Woods is an author, an artist, a women's life coach, and a wellness retreat leader. This mini-guide was written from the heart with the hope that it will help encourage just a few more budding writers to pick up pencil and paper!



To learn more about Corrie and to purchase her award-winning book, *The Woman's Field Guide to Exceptional Living, Practical Steps for Living a Big, Bold, Beautiful Life!* visit [www.womansfieldguide.com](http://www.womansfieldguide.com).

Additional free mini-guides available at the website include:

- *Oh My Aching ... 101 Tips For Living Your Best Life While Managing Chronic Pain*
- *Self-Care in Your Wisdom Years, A Primer for Women in Mid-Life and Beyond*
- *Self-Care for the Family Caregiver, Tips to Help You Survive and Thrive*
- *Crafting a Personal Retreat*

*and more!*