

# What I've Learned from Over 50 Years of Writing

by Dan Langerock

We can all learn from each other. If you want to excel at something you must want to progress and keep improving and growing. Just think what would have happened if you had remained in third grade all during your time at school? How much you would have missed out on during your life?



Here are some of the important things I've learned about writing from over 50 years:

## 1) Don't Give Up Because You or Others Don't Like How You Write Now.

Writing, like most other things in life, are "under construction" for a long time. If you are persistent, you will grow as a writer, gradually getting better and better at it. You probably won't start out that way, but give yourself time to grow. A child doesn't grow from being a baby to adulthood all at once. Neither will writing or anything else in life. Be patient with yourself.

## 2) Get Out There and Experience Life.

A vicarious writer is one who writes through the experiences of others. You probably won't be as successful if you only do your writing this way. By comparison, Ernest Hemingway was not that kind of writer. He got out there in the trenches of life and experienced what he wrote.

## 3) Use Your Story to Help Others.



If you have read much of my writing across the Internet, you may have seen parts of the story I have lived with, like epilepsy and blindness, etc. The more you tell your story for the benefit of others, the better you will become at using its parts as illustrations. As you practice, it will become more refined, and may serve as an emotional release for you in the process. Later on, you may be able

to use public speaking as a tool to share it.

## 4) Explore Doing Different Kinds of Writing.

As a little child just beginning to write, I began with poetry. During my high school years' I won the Americanism Essay Contest as a junior. Four of my poems were published in anthologies, which are collections of poetry by different writers. Another milestone during this time was having a poem published in a Japanese magazine with my photo and the poem in Japanese and English.

Next, I began writing articles about grief and relationships. At this point, I was a minister and hospital chaplain. It was a column in a newspaper which continued for six years.

In 2009, my first book was published, a Bible study.

## 5) Keep Learning.



Along with the progression from one kind of writing to another, I kept reading about the craft of writing and applying it. Then, in my college years, I enrolled in five semesters of Creative Writing to bring my poetry to a more professional level. But I still have not finished learning. I have not considered myself to have "arrived" in the writing field. I continue to progress, but I don't believe myself to be a professional writer. It is not that I am putting myself down

or letting others do it, but there is always more to learn.

## 6) Enjoy the Journey of Becoming a Great Writer.

This could be illustrated by how you take a vacation. If you are traveling by car, you can do it two ways: You can just go from point A to point B without taking side trips to explore your surroundings. Or you can enjoy your vacation more by looking for interesting things to see.

One time my family was on vacation, and my Dad was sleeping on the back seat. We saw a sign about some interesting caves in Arizona, and the three awake members of the family voted to go see them. When we got there, we woke up my father, and he wondered where he was. We had out-voted him while he slept. You can take that as a warning to not take a nap when someone else is driving.

## 7) Don't Procrastinate Becoming a Writer or Any Part of the Process Thereafter.

I used to talk to a book store clerk during my lunch hour. We both had the same dream, to be a published writer. She procrastinated that decision, and the last I saw of her, she was still wishing. Wanting something better in your life is great, but you must put your dreams into the gear of "drive" to get anywhere. Neutral won't do!

You will have obstacles along the way but keep going with God's help and persevere. Use the obstacles to help you be stronger, instead of slowing you down or completely halting you. You can do this!



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