



Publisher Writing Right

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This subject attracted outstanding comment at our recent conference and those attending wanted to hear more on the subject – particularly from Judy who sells her work on websites.

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Dr JUDY FORD – Known as “The Lifestyle Doctor”, Judy is an internationally renowned geneticist and cell biologist who has studied cellular mechanisms underlying illness, especially in fertility, ageing and cancer.

After 30 years as a leading Human Geneticist Judy describes her work as putting a whole person around their cells and seeing how the whole system works.

Judy has published about 85 research papers, taught at all education levels, sat on many research grant councils and spoken extensively nationally and internationally.

She has also written 2 books, “It Takes Two, Reproducing Naturally Today” and “G-L-O-W Principles of Healthy Ageing”. She has produced a CD “Gourmet Good Health” and a CD recording of her presentation “Strengthening Yourself against Breast Cancer”.

THE NEXT WRITING RIGHT MEETING – Friday June 16th at 6.30pm

Our guest speaker is Dr Judy Ford and she will be speaking about how to sell books electronically.

AND DON'T FORGET THE NEXT CRITIQUE SESSION Saturday June 3rd at 2.30pm

WRITING RIGHT meetings – held on the third Friday of each month in the SA Writers Centre, 187 Rundle Street.
CRITIQUE meetings – held on the first Saturday of each month at 12 Sandford St. Kensington Gdns in the cottage behind the main house. New members welcome. PH: (08) 8332 6085 for details or email to dvoz@ozemail.com.au

**Books highly recommended by Dr
Nicholas Fournikis:-**

Rhonda Whitton and Sheila
Hollingworth ;- *A Decent proposal –
How to sell your book to an Australian
publisher. 2003*

Katharine Sands. Edit:- *Making the
perfect pitch – How to catch a literary
agent's eye. 2004*

Sheree Bykofsky & Basye Sander:-
*The complete idiot's guide in getting
published*

**THE NEXT CRITIQUE
SESSION – Saturday June 3rd at
2.30pm at 12 Sandford Street,
Kensington Gardens, in the
cottage behind the main house.**

**Barbara Brockhoff will be your
host during the afternoon and
will manage the sessions.**

SHOW DON'T TELL

This subject arose from our last Friday
meeting in the Writers' Centre.

**Every writing student has heard the rule
that you should *show*, not *tell*, but this
principle seems to be among the hardest
for beginners to master.**

First, what's the difference between the two?
Telling is: Jim was an old man.

Showing is: Jim grasped his walking stick
with a gnarled had and eased himself out of
his old chair to walk carefully across the
slippery floor.

Both show the same information. But we are
told that Jim is old in the first instance and
shown it in the second.

One creates a mental image of the old man.
The second allows us to participate in the
story through mental pictures while the other
we are just told Jim is old and have no sense
of participation in the scene.

Here's another example;

Telling: Brenda has the reputation in the
office of being able to get things done and
cut through bureaucracy.

Showing: Brenda looked at Jim, "This red
tape is crap, we'll never get this done if we
shovel all this shit."

or,

Brenda strode into the office smiled with
satisfaction as she handed the package to her
boss, "All done so – we can launch the
product anytime you want."

Jim looked at her cocky pose and thought,
'*can't stand the woman but she sure does
get things done.*'

By allowing another character to speak or
think about a person we get more
characterisation and motivation into the
plotting as well as SHOWING what they are
doing and what those around think of their
actions.

Telling: Brenda is a well trained woman.

Showing: "I've been trained to get things
done and cut the crap," Brenda said.

There are times to use narration or
TELLING INSTEAD OF SHOWING when
you have a trivial bit of information to
impart to the reader, but its incidental to the
story. Briefly....simply tell the reader 'it was
raining' To explain every trivial detail
appears to be padding to the reader and yells

‘trivial’. Readers are perceptive and instinctively know the difference between a fast moving, well paced story and slow descriptive passages that don’t relate to the action.

Writers often find it useful to TELL when writing the story out the first time, to get it onto the page and let their visualization of the scene come alive in their brain...but during the rewrite they SHOW the story and edit out the TELLING to make the story more interactive.

Generally it takes more words to TELL than to SHOW.

SHOWING rather than TELLING is a mental habit...and although at first writers find it difficult it becomes second nature once you get into the habit.

Show, don’t tell, show, don’t tell, show, don’t tell...

It’s like some incessant mantra that writing teachers chant at their students – but do they really hear?

Show, don’t TELL!

Publishers and editors too will throw the phrase at you, with a patronizing air, as though you have deliberately not done so. What do you do in these situations? Simply shrug and move on?

The reading public, strangely, seems completely oblivious to the distinction, except in an obvious, vote with their feet way – that is: authors that **SHOW** always outsell authors that **TELL** by about **100 to 1!**

I can’t stress how important it is to grasp the profound difference between

showing and telling in your writing. And what a powerful impact it can make – to your readers, of course, but more especially to your chances of being taken seriously by the publishing industry. Yes, but what does the phrase actually *mean?*

Do you know what one ingredient all best-selling novels have in common? Are you thinking they are all great stories written by brilliant authors? They all sold plenty of copies at the bookstores?

Perhaps - but there's one common ingredient every one of those best-selling writers includes into each book...

The one trait that keeps readers hooked from beginning to end...

The one quality that has editors begging for more manuscripts...

The one ingredient your story should have, too... Do you know what it is?

The authors of these books are masters in the art of showing – not telling!

Wouldn’t you like to see your own novel up on those best-seller lists, too?

Let's face it - an editor is going to show a preference for a **professionally written** manuscript, containing every ingredient possible to make sure your chances of **success** are maximized.

The art of showing your story to your readers versus telling them about it is not a skill that comes easily to many writers. But it is a skill that can be learned.

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WHAT WRITERS NEED!

We’ve heard about needing a room of our own - or the necessity of having a special space where we can write – but we need more than that.

Serious writers can write anywhere as long as they have a computer and in fact some have their computers in the kitchen, lounge, bedroom, loft – the list is endless. What we really need, is other writers. We need to meet other writers, have our work critiqued, learn about the industry and hone our skills with like minded people. We need the SA Writers' Centre. We need to embrace the feeling that we take writing seriously.

The Writing Right group has just had a conference in the Writers' Centre. We could have hired a venue, had our Awards dinner in a pub or met in a community hall, but we enjoyed being in our 'home' at the Centre. The venue made the conference more successful because we all felt comfortable in 'our own' surroundings.

We would like to thank Director Barbara Wiesner and Office Manager Jude Aquilina for their enormous support in making the conference an overwhelming success. They made us so welcome and they always give writers a sense of belonging to this home base.

This sense of belonging and having a home base has quite far reaching consequences for writers in South Australia because it enables us to network and to become absorbed into the publishing industry. For new writers, this sense of belonging emphasizes the feeling that they are actually writers with their feet firmly on the ladder. The psychological and professional consequences are far reaching and immeasurable. However, we have been able to measure the benefits to a certain

extent, through comments made by our members. The conference confirmed all of our unspoken beliefs about the importance of the SA Writers' Centre to writers.

Thank you Barbara and Jude for all your support – during the conference and throughout the year.

Diane Beer
(for Writing Right members)

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DO YOU KNOW YOUR BOOK INSIDE AND OUT?

What is the theme?
What is the conflict?
What is the genre?
Write a blurb in less than 100 words.

Also before you write your synopsis:

- Write a brief description of your book.
- Write the manuscript details (page count, word count, is the book completed)
- Write a bulleted list of what makes this book stand out from a publisher's perspective.
- One or two sentences about the author (for the query letter).
- In 20 words, or less, write a sales pitch for the book.
- Key sales and marketing features: Four or five bulleted points about the book.
- Sales channel information - state where this book will sell especially well.

VITAL BLURBING

Learning to write a strong blurb may be one of the most important skills for writers. The blurb is the 'pitch' or the marketing tool on which your book, film or website stands or falls.

But the 'blurb' skill has even more importance for a writer.

A blurb is the essence of your book – it reflects the strength of your plot. If the blurb is rambling and doesn't tell the essence of the plot immediately, the writer has not written a strong enough story to make the grade in the marketplace.

A blurb reduces the plot from a 10 hour read to one minute and shows the very basic premise, tension and plot of the book, without revealing the end.

A synopsis is a longer two-page rundown of the book, which must reveal the ending.

Writers should be constantly analysing blurbs on the back of books, in television advertisements and on websites. By analysing blurbs you are also learning about plotting. You learn about the strength of themes and characterization in plotting.

If it takes 10 minutes to tell a friend about your book – it's a sure bet – the plotting is not tight enough, the conflict is not strong enough and the characters and motivation lacks substance.

We can all remember having listened to lengthy descriptions of books and at the end haven't the foggiest idea what the story is about.

It is a very valuable lesson to analyse your book and reduce it to the bare bones, as you would in a film blurb. If you can't bring it down to 150 words check your plot, conflict and characterization.

There are some mental exercises you can do to train yourself to write a blurb and there are websites and organizations that you can pay to write these for you – but you have to pay for people's time to read your book. And you are the best person to know what the book is really all about.

As you are driving, having a coffee or relaxing see if you can describe the essence of your book in one paragraph. Or try telling someone about your book in one of two sentences.

Most advertisements for films reduce the blurb down to 20 or 50 words which tells the viewer what the film is about. Blurbs for books are a tad more luxurious. A good blurb should **inform, not tease**.

Avoid Fluff and "Marketese"
Evaluate or Summarize (Don't Just Tease)
Know Your Audience

Make sure the *title* typically jumps off the page and catches the reader's attention.

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Pan Macmillan is running a new scheme called Macmillan New Writing.

The aim is to give new authors an easier run to achieving publication and was launched this month.

Looks like they pay royalties but no advances and publication is done strictly on a non-negotiable contract. Despite that, it has the cache of the PM imprimata and their distribution network.

**Check it out at:
<http://www.macmillannewwriting.com> - go to the submissions page.**

From Leah Alpin.

- If you yelled for 8 years, 7 months and 6 days you would have produced enough sound energy to heat one cup of coffee.
- If you farted consistently for 6 years and 9 months, enough gas is produced to create the energy of an atomic bomb.
- The human heart creates enough pressure when it pumps out to the body to squirt blood 30 feet.
- A pig's orgasm lasts 30 minutes (yes, you really *did* need to know that!).
- A cockroach will live nine days without its head before it starves to death!
- Banging your head against a wall uses 150 calories a hour.
- The male praying mantis cannot copulate while its head is attached to its body. The female initiates sex by ripping the male's head off.
- The catfish has over 27,000 taste buds.
- Some lions mate over 50 times a day.
- Butterflies taste with their feet.
- The strongest muscle in the body is the tongue.
- Right-handed people live, on average, nine years longer than left-handed people.
- Elephants are the only animals that cannot jump.
- A cat's urine glows under a black light.
- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- Starfish have no brains.
- Polar bears are left-handed.
- Humans and dolphins are the only species that have sex for pleasure.

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All You Need to Know About Agents - For Now!

by Sophronia Scott

The agent issue is such an emotional one for writers. Having one is a huge validation. I was fortunate to sign with an agent while still writing my first novel and it was wonderful being able to work and know that someone was waiting for what I was writing.

But the eagerness to have that feeling often pushes writers to make poor decisions when it comes to the hunt for an agent. With some thinking, solid preparation and research it is possible to hook up with an agent and have a satisfying relationship with him or her. Here are some points to help you with the process.

Do You Need An Agent?

You've probably heard the oft-cited fact that most publishers these days don't read unsolicited manuscripts. But that only means that the editor hasn't been contacted beforehand. If you send a query

letter and the editor asks to see your book or book proposal, you can send it without going through an agent.

However, if the editor does want to make an offer, they will suggest that you get an agent. An agent will help you get the best deal possible and, in the best of worlds, an agent will also be interested in helping you develop your career as a writer. If you can get an agent before the submission process, I think that's even better because the agent can help you put your manuscript in the best shape possible before it gets submitted. As they say, you only get one chance to make a first impression.

* * * * *

Points made by Helen Chilcott at the conference:

Educate yourself

A professional writing course may help.

Metaphors –

- Adds depth to your work.

Characterization –

- Learn to put yourself in the character's head.
- Tell the story from the character's perspective in the character's individual voice.

Editing –

- The best editor for your work is you.
- If someone else edits your work there is a probability that some

of your unique voice and characterizations will be lost.

Workshops –

- Having another person read your work to you in a workshop will help you identify areas that need improvement.
- Every reader wants and gets something different from what they read, so work-shopping with a group of several people will provide a well balanced suite of opinion.
- Your choice is whose opinion and comment you take on board. You might combine the ideas of several people

Starting to write –

- Don't think you can't write.
- If you have a grasp of language and a story to tell you can write.
- Start small – short story or poem, then as you gain confidence try a novella (circa 50k words), then a novel (90k words and up).
- How do I begin? EASY. With your first words. Don't worry about editing until you've got into the process.
- If you have a story, write it. Maybe begin with a synopsis (that's the bones of your story) then add the flesh, or you may choose to write the flesh up front.
- Either way is good. Choose the one that suits you best.

Critique and learning from it –

- Don't give your work to family and friends to critique because they will tell you it's good even if it isn't.
- Be brave and ask for independent opinion. Ask for several opinions. Like work-shopping, the more opinions

you get the better balanced your work will become.

- Join a writer's group. Other writers will learn as much from you as you learn from them.
- Mentor another writer. As you offer your opinion on their work your own work can't help but evolve.
- Write for competitions. This is good discipline for learning to write to a theme.

Polish –

- Your first draft will never be your best work
- Tell/write your story, in full if that works best for you, then POLISH, POLISH, POLISH!
- You could do 10 drafts of a piece and still find where editing is needed. If you don't, you're not looking hard enough.
- Become your own harshest critic. Your work needs to be tight and right.

Voice –

- Your voice, your work must be uniquely yours. A string of clichés is not unique. Don't plagiarise or model your voice on someone else's. You *will* be found out!

INCOME TAX AVERAGING SCHEME FOR WRITERS

Yes, it is nearly *that* time of the year again, and for most of us it is a mad time of trying to pull together all of those receipts, expense claims and income statements (some of us still use an old shoebox as a unique filing system!) ready to head off to the accountant with the panadol!

For all you 'newbie' writers, this may be the first time you have been made aware of the differences in the taxation of 'special professionals'.

The Australian Taxation Office have put in place a scheme that enables certain professionals that will receive varying payments for their writing to average that income over a five year period.

The ATO 2004-2005 (2005-2006 currently unavailable) financial year ruling states that a special professional will be entitled to use this scheme once their earnings for writing exceed \$2,500 for the financial year.

The aim of the scheme is to ensure that 'special professionals' are able to spread their fluctuating earnings over a period, balancing out the amount of tax payable.

We will be following up further on this subject next month and Diane will be introducing a panel to further assist you all with this messy topic!

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CREDABILITY – THE WRITER'S CREDO

Characters must be credible
 Motives must be credible
 Actions must be credible
 Even fantasy must ring true to readers

We can suspend our beliefs, but we still react to writing as humans and expect the writing to be credible even if it is fantasy it must ring true.

Authors can tell themselves lies, but they can't cheat with their work – readers measure the credibility and judge the integrity of the writing.

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

By Brenda Hiatt

Royalty percentages are based on cover price (unless otherwise noted) and are for U.S. retail sales. Foreign and book club sales, if any, typically have lower royalty rates. Earn-out figures include all earnings for a book, including the advance and any subsidiary sales. N/a means that specific information wasn't available or does not apply. Ranges for advances and earn-outs are provided where applicable.

No claim is made about the statistical figures in the table below; they were simply averaged on available and most recent figures, operating on the assumption that some information is far better than none at all. Purely out of interest!

PUBLISHER	AVERAGED OVER (number of books)	AVERAGE ADVANCE (first book)	AVERAGE ADVANCE (subsequent books)	ADVANCE RANGE	STANDARD ROYALTY PERCENTAGE	AVERAGE EARN-OUT	EARN-OUT RANGE
Avalon	17	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000 - \$1,200	10%	\$1,200	\$1,000 - \$2,100
Avon/Harper Collins	55	\$13,500	\$26,500	\$3,500 - \$100,000	8%	\$26,000	\$7,000 - \$100,000
Baker/Revell	3	\$10,000	n/a	n/a	8% (of net)	n/a	n/a
Bantam/Dell	10	\$7,500	\$13,500	\$7,500 - \$25,000	8%	n/a	n/a
Barbour & Co. (Heartsong Presents)	7	\$2,600	\$2,700	\$2,500 - \$2,800	8%	\$2,750	\$2,500 - \$3,600
Barbour & Co. (Novellas)	7	\$1,000	\$1,000	n/a	2.5%	n/a	n/a
Berkeley/Jove ("Line" Books)	33	\$4,600	\$5,875	\$3,200 - \$8,500	4 - 8%	\$6,500	\$3,200 - \$10,000
Berkeley/Jove (Single Title)	7	\$7,000	\$12,500	\$6,000 - \$30,000	6 - 8%	n/a	n/a
Bet	6	\$2,500	\$7,600	\$2,500 - \$15,000	4 - 6%	n/a	n/a
DiskUs	18	none	n/a	n/a	40%	\$25	\$0 - \$130
Dorchester/Leisure	42	\$1,950	\$9,600	\$1,000 - \$60,000	4 - 6%	\$7,500	\$2,000 - \$15,000
Dutton/Signet/NAL (Single Title)	14	\$8,750	\$37,000	\$7,500 - \$85,000	8%	n/a	n/a
Dutton/Signet (Regency)	12	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$3,000 - \$5,000	6%	\$6,000	\$3,000 - \$7,500
Ellora's Cave	95	none	n/a	n/a	40% net / 37.5% digital / 7.5% print	\$2,340	\$350 - \$9,000
Ellora's Cave (Anthologies/Novellas)	19	none	n/a	n/a	varies by no. of authors	\$940	\$300 - \$2,300
Fiction Works	5	none	n/a	n/a	30%	\$150	\$0 - \$350
Five Star/Thorndike (Hardcover)	6	\$1,200	n/a	n/a	10%	\$1,275	n/a
Genesis	6	\$650	\$2,000	\$500 - \$2,500	6% ("of invoice")	n/a	n/a
HardShell Word Factory	21	none	n/a	n/a	30%	\$185	\$25 - \$475
Harlequin American	23	\$4,200	\$4,800	\$4,000 - \$5,500	6%	\$10,000	\$7,300 - \$16,000

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Harlequin Blaze	20	n/a	\$6,200	\$4,500 - \$10,500	6%	\$12,200	n/a
Harlequin Historical	42	\$5,000	\$6,800	\$5,000 - \$15,000	6%	\$13,700	\$6,500 - \$24,000
Harlequin Intrigue	24	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$3,500 - \$7,000	6%	\$17,000	\$11,000 - \$18,000
Harlequin Mills & Boon	3	\$2,500	\$2,500	n/a	4 - 6%	n/a	n/a
Harlequin Romance	8	\$2,600	\$2,800	\$2,600 - \$3,000	6%	n/a	n/a
Harlequin Super Romance	43	\$5,000	\$5,400	\$5,000 - \$6,000	6%	\$24,300	\$10,000 - \$58,000
Harlequin Temptation	51	\$4,100	\$5,000	\$4,000 - \$10,000	6%	\$13,700	\$11,000 - \$18,000
HQN	2	\$8,500	\$10,000	n/a	6%	n/a	n/a
Imajinn	5	\$25	\$85	n/a	8 - 10%	\$180	n/a
Kensington/Zebra	123	\$3,500	\$5,500	\$1,750 - \$17,000	6 - 8.5%	\$5,200	\$2,500 - \$17,500
Kensington (Novellas)	14	\$4,050	n/a	\$1,000 - \$9,000	2 - 2.5%	n/a	n/a
Mira	9	n/a	\$105,000	\$15,000 - \$450,000	8%	n/a	n/a
New Concepts Publishing	13	none	n/a	n/a	9.5 - 40% elec. 4 - 11% print	\$340	\$50 - \$1,100
Pocket	14	\$16,000	\$24,500	\$7,000 - \$50,000	8%	n/a	n/a
Red Dress Ink	3	\$12,000	\$15,000	n/a	7 - 7.5%	n/a	n/a
Renaissance E-Books	4	none	n/a	n/a	27 - 40%	\$1,300	\$400 - \$4,000
St Martin's Press	23	\$6,300	\$14,700	\$4,500 - \$150,000	8%	\$25,600	\$6,800 - \$51,000
Silhouette Bombshell	11	\$4,000	\$8,750	n/a	6%	n/a	n/a
Silhouette Desire	13	\$4,000	\$9,850	\$4,000 - \$15,000	6%	\$21,100	\$17,000 - \$28,000
Silhouette Intimate Moments	14	n/a	\$5,900	\$4,000 - \$7,500	6%	\$12,000	\$10,000 - \$16,000
Silhouette Romance	56	\$3,750	\$4,900	\$3,500 - \$10,000	6%	\$10,300	\$6,000 - \$18,000
Silhouette Special Edition	44	\$4,000	\$8,200	\$4,000 - \$12,000	6%	\$21,500	\$12,000 - \$37,000
Steeple Hill (Love Inspired)	61	\$3,400	\$4,900	\$3,000 - \$7,000	6%	\$7,700	\$5,000 - \$18,000
Tor/Forge	8	\$13,300	\$17,250	\$8,000 - \$20,000	8%	n/a	n/a
Treble Heart Books	6	none	n/a	n/a	15 - 35% print 40% elec.	\$65	\$5 - \$110
Warner	19	\$7,150	\$12,200	\$5,000 - \$34,000	8%	n/a	n/a
Zebra Regency	14	\$2,000	\$2,850	\$2,000 - \$4,000	4 - 6%	\$2,500	\$2,000 - \$4,000

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