

# finding—and holding on to—inspiration

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## THE POWER OF INSPIRATIONAL WRITING

- Inspirational writing doesn't have to be religious (but most Christian publishing is inspirational) and it spans genres. It's simply writing that inspires; a story with an uplifting purpose or intent; seeking to find and reveal a higher truth. It contains conflict and hope and the process of someone working through that; readers should walk away from it feeling hopeful.
- The power of story—sharing life experiences and finding universal truth

### **BRAINSTORM: INSPIRATIONAL WRITING THAT HAS AFFECTED YOU**

*Take a few minutes to list books that had a profound impact on you, and then think about what made it resonate with you. Can you apply any of those ideas (an overall theme, a storytelling structure) to improve your book or approach?*

## WRITING—AND LIVING—WITH INSPIRATION

### **Establish credibility**

- Maintain authenticity
- Don't preach; reader needs to believe you're in it together.
- Admit flaws of your religious group, yourself, a particular thought process. Don't sugar-coat it but be real. Say so if you have doubt. Share your struggles. People connect to the writer or character's flaws, not to perfection.
- Responsibility to tell true stories authentically (whether they're about you or not)

### **Know your audience**

- Be sensitive to your audience, especially if it spans denomination or religions
- Importance of vocabulary
- Practice generosity
- Establish genuine relationships with readers

### **Walk that fine line**

- Find a balance between your public and private faith (if applicable)
- Be willing to go to deep, ugly, honest places without feeling exposed and vulnerable
- Feed yourself—replenish what you pour out
- Learn to accept criticism and critique

### **Establish genuine relationships**

- Don't think about platform building as being about numbers but about relationships

### **Remember goals of inspirational writing**

- Should be filled with hope. If you're still wallowing, you're not ready. The moment you realize that you're okay, that you'll survive, you are ready to write.
- It's not just about sharing what you learned, but also about how you arrived there, how you grew and were transformed; what wisdom you gained; what made this change possible; how you handled the challenges.
- Art is about communicating an idea to a viewer. Inspirational writing, for me, is about revealing a secret part of myself, offering my readers a framework in which to see or understand something in a new way—making myself known as a way to give someone a safe space in which to make themselves known.
- Must have a take-away for the reader (the “so-what” factor—if I can do it, so can you)

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#### **BRAINSTORM: IF I CAN DO IT, SO CAN YOU.**

*What are some of those situations in your life? i.e., divorce/job loss/loss of someone you love; grief; loss of faith. Next to each situation, write the take-away of each story (what is the bigger truth?).*

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- There's often more than one lesson or take on the same story. Look at those angles and decide which ones to explore. (And use these to help you write different articles or posts for different audiences.)
  - Theme should be able to be clarified into simple terms, even if the story is complex.