

12 Tips to Writing your Memoir

1. Memory is Unpredictable

You never know when or how your memories will emerge. The answers may come in dreams, chance conversations, photos or letters. That's OK, just trust that the right memories will emerge.

2. Go Easy on the "Bad Guys"

If you are writing about someone who did you wrong, try to find the good in the that person. The more you can present understanding and even compassion for your "bad guys," the more interesting and compelling your memoir will be.

3. Just Write

Maybe you don't know what to say. Just start somewhere and keep the pen moving across the paper; keep typing those words into the computer. At some point, you will find the words start to flow.

4. You Don't Have to Write

You can use digital recorders, software and video to record your stories.

5. Be Kind to Yourself

Writing a memoir is as much about telling the truth about your life, as it is recording important events. As you write your memoir, remember to have compassion for yourself.

6. One Day at a Time

It took you years to live your life and have the experiences you had. Do you think you can write it down in a few short days or weeks? Probably not. One day at a time, you will reach your goal of completing your memoir. One day at a time, you will achieve your dream.

7. Turn Off the Inner Critic

For now, just let the words flow. Write whatever is on your mind, in your heart, from your memories. Let your creativity loose. Sometimes, you need to turn off the voice that says "Maybe I'm saying it wrong," "I'm not good enough to do this,"...

8. You Can Change Everything Later

Don't worry about naming people, offending them or getting things wrong. You can change everything later -- names, dates, times, places, details, even the story itself.

9. Emotional Truth is more Important than Factual Truth

How did you feel when your son was born? How elated were you when you received those flowers? Factual details paint the story's canvas. But the emotional truths comprise the story's soul.

10. Writing is Rewriting

Writing never comes out perfect the first time. Good writing means rewriting. Give yourself the time and space to rewrite material, until you have something that is an authentic expression of your life, voice and wisdom.

11. Get Support

Find a writing teacher, coach, buddy or ghostwriter to spot you. A coach can guide and advise you, especially when you are not sure how to proceed.

12. Hold on to Your Vision

When you are stuck or discouraged, remember why you are doing this. Is it to leave a legacy? To share your wisdom? Think about how satisfied you will feel completing it and how happy those you love will be when reading it.