



How to Write: Advice and Reflections

Richard Rhodes

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Uniquely fusing practical advice on writing with his own insights into the craft, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Rhodes constructs beautiful prose about the issues would-be writers are most afraid to articulate: How do I dare write? Where do I begin? What do I do with this story I have to tell that fills and breaks my heart? Rich with personal vignettes about Rhode's sources of inspiration, *How to Write* is also a memoir of one of the most original and celebrated writers of our day.

How to Write: Advice and Reflections Details

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Author : Richard Rhodes

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Karen Douglass says

I didn't read this book. I feasted on it. It's not new, so a few of the bits about technology are out of date, but the real meat of it is delicious. It's practical as sliced bread and the voice is friendly but knowledgeable. Rhodes has supported himself by his writing from the days when he wrote in-house material for Hallmark to the time he raised and educated two kids, as that rarest of creatures, a full-time, professional writer. In spite of this classification I found no liking to formulaic writing, just a smart use of time to use commercial writing to feed his creative work. I suspect that the two overlap in his case. I am about to recommend it to a friend who is in the final revisions of a long and important novel. Rhodes has advice about working with traditional agent/editor/publisher folks and I believe his experience is still valid. Great stuff!

Timothy McCluskey says

This book was very helpful in learning how to write. I really found the section on voice to be most constructive

Rebecca says

Rhodes offers personal advice and shares his memories and experiences in the writing world in this all-encompassing writing book. From his first works to the successes he's enjoyed, Rhodes takes readers through the ups and downs of his writing life, offering advice and tips along the way.

As a writer, it is hard to find books that will guide you to a successful writing career. Much of writing is done alone, and oftentimes for very little in terms of payment. For those authors who can learn the ropes and make a name for themselves, writing can be and is a legitimate career. Richard Rhodes, in *How to Write*, will tell you how this is possible.

"We live by story," quotes Rhodes early in the book, and this statement sets the tone for the remaining pages. Memories, personal stories, advice, and tips are sprinkled between the covers of this slim work, but a lifetime of experience cannot be so contained. Rhodes offers real-life success stories from his own encounters and pushes readers to take their craft more seriously. He encourages readers to learn to love language, to want to write about anything and everything under the sun—even if you don't know anything about it—and simply take comfort in the fact that there is a way to succeed by writing.

I recommend this book to anyone who wants to write, whether it be part-time for pleasure or a full-time career. The book reads much like a memoir but offers much in the way of guidance and advice for those willing to look for it. Though now a bit dated, the words of any writer are timeless, and this book is no exception. As a reader, I found inspiration within the pages of Rhodes' text and I am left pondering one memorable statement: "If you want to write, you can."

MisterFweem says

Review is here.

<http://misterfweem.blogspot.com/2011/...>

James says

This is simply one of the best books on the craft of writing. One reason for this is the author is one of the best writers of non-fiction that I have ever read. Filled with great examples and references for writing and reading, the book covers the tools, voices, and research necessary for writing. He then spends two chapters outlining the process to take the tools and research and create actual writing. Beyond that the book provides guidelines and principles that may be applied to other areas of your life. This is a truly invaluable book for your writing and reading life.

Sarah says

On the long side but very informative.

Jorun Bork says

Well-written and fascinating to read. However, it's slightly outdated, and chapter 9 could do with a major cutting.

Leland William says

Another excellent book on the craft of writing. Rhodes opens it up with a beautiful essay and then delivers thoughtful ruminations about the craft. I particularly enjoyed his inclusion of 'other voices' into the book. A splendid piece of verity.

Karen says

This is good. Rhodes has been generous with his knowledge. He blends the practical with the inspirational.

Rhonda Rae Baker says

This is the most comprehensive as well as healing inspirations that I am so pleased to have found. Richard Rhodes has lived life and shares his heart as a writer of what a person can do to find that illusive dream which is buried in all of us.

I couldn't read this fast enough yet didn't want to hurry any piece so made myself put it down and take breaks to ponder what he is really saying. Then I would pick it up again and reread the section or chapter finding new treasures to mine. Whew...so many beautiful tools and ideas here to deepen my skills for writing and living!

You will not want to miss this one! Although it was written in '95, the technology he describes still applies today. I believe that even though there are many new ways to be published these days, his advice is priceless and 'bottomed' as he would say...(-:

Read this...you will be so happy you did.

Kristin says

This is geared more towards writing non-fiction than fiction.

Sue says

Rhodes' first sentence is "If you want to write, you can." That was just the inspiration that I needed to push myself to collect all those little scraps of paper torn out of spiral bound notebooks, post it notes, and backs of deposit slips from my purse, and do something with them. The most interesting book I have read on writing. This should be required reading for college writing.

A must read for any writer! Includes notes and index.

Matt says

In writing his masterful *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, Richard Rhodes immersed himself in the stories and the collective world of half a century's worth of world-class theoretical physicists, men of extraordinary and intimidating expertise. The experience seems to have rubbed off on him. His pamphlet on the craft of writing is the work of a journeyman who is tellingly unsure of whether he himself should be considered an expert writer, and who in either case very much would like to be. After a promising start that hovers just below the inspirational, the book consists largely of explications of his own work that attempt to explain helpfully how Rhodes produced them. Rather than instructional, Rhodes's self analysis is in general self-conscious, most often presenting pragmatic structural considerations as, in retrospect, textually meaningful literary choices.

The effect serves Rhodes poorly. As a writer, we realize, one of his great strengths has been the agility with

which he can remove himself from authorial conscience. In his atomic bomb history, the sections depicting the horrors of chemical warfare in World War I and the destruction wrought by the American bomb, achieve a strikingly universal perspective of human outrage. Rhodes forgets himself, and in doing so channels us all. In *How to Write*, Rhodes attempts to take us behind the scenes, hinting at a promise to show us the technical wizardry that resides there. Instead, he reveals that he's the sort of writer who leaves it all out on stage.

Pete says

Rhodes' book is less than it promises, and his premise is achieved much more effectively by other books than by his. Meant to be a guide to writing and making it as a writer, the book veers too often between the obvious and pedantic, and along the way gets mired in technique, metaphors and generalities that simply didn't strike me as especially keen. The advice about how to write has been offered with greater clarity and usefulness elsewhere, the guidance on technique is so specifically related to the (considerable achievement) of his other books that it's barely portable, and the stories told about how he accomplished what his books do aren't particularly potent either. Sorry, but I think you'll find much better guidance about writing in related books by Stephen King, Anne Lamott, Natalie Goldberg, Steven Pressfield, and so on.

Nick says

Rhodes delivers exactly what he promises: advice and reflections. He illustrates both with examples from his own work, sometimes detailed examples. If you like Rhodes' work, this is a great book to read. If you are a writer or aspiring writer, it is also a great book to read.

Zachary Searles says

Just in my opinion, too much reflection, not enough advice. Have yet to find a book about writing that is better than on writing by Stephen king.
