



BIRTHRIGHT BOOKS

Your Wisdom. Your Legacy. Your Heirloom.

Partner With Birthright Books to Write Your Story Your Way

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Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt?

It's a universal question: where are those who were before us?

In evaluating ourselves, we want to know what came before we were here. What shaped us into who we are? What influenced what now exists? How did that event, that happening, or that person come to be?

A memoir answers those questions.

A well-written memoir inspires us to ask the questions.

Why is the telling and reading of our personal stories so important? Long before language was written, oral tales were passed throughout generations that were designed to inspire, thrill, and give a sense of history to the listener. As ghostwriters hired to tell the tales of others, we've concluded that most of us want to be remembered as **we** want to be seen. In telling our stories the way we want them to be told, we take control of the entire process.

Every life is a mystery. There is nobody whose life is normal and boring.
Frank McCourt

We want to be remembered. We want to know that we meant something to someone. We want our children, the children of our children, and the children of our children's children to know us – in our own words and in our own way.

What separates a good book from a bad one? We've all lived lives we can write about, so what makes some memoirs more appealing than others?

Answer: the writing.

The bottom line is that the guy who writes books has to remember this: Nobody on earth gives a damn about your life and your book, except for you, your friends, your family. Nobody cares – you have to make them care.
Gail Hochman, Literary Agent

Style and Skill

For giggles, let's illustrate how varied writing can be.

Why?

Because we've watched a couple of clients ask well-meaning friends and family to read their opus, only to fall apart when their story wasn't well-received by their diverse readers.

When you work with Birthright Books, you will be subjected to our advice that you keep your work between us. Once you start involving others and asking what they think and what they suggest, you'll lose your center. Trust us.

Anyway, let's have some fun.

Let's take a portion of a chapter from a very well known, popular, and well-received literary masterpiece, and "hire" a couple of writers to rewrite it.

The original writer is **Edgar Allen Poe** and the work is *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

The Tell-Tale Heart

TRUE! - nervous - very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses - not destroyed - not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily - how calmly I can tell you the

whole story.

First, let's ask **William Shakespeare** to give it a rewrite:

Sirrah, it is nay a falsehood!
I suffer the youthful pax in my breast.
I'll not to bed to-night; let me alone;
I step o'er the bounds of sanity
and you say that I am mad?
Go, you dis-ease, go,
Get me to bed; faith, I'll be sick to-morrow
For this night's listening.
I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth.
Pity, 'tis I hath heard many things in hell.
Alas, then, am I mad?
Hearken! and observe how healthily - how calmly I tell you the whole story.
Come, go with me!

Let's give **Stephen King** a shot:

Scarcely had night fallen before I felt the creeping nervous fingers of my oncoming fate begin their slow and careful tread along my spine. I looked toward the window, at the sinking sun just barely visible through the sheer curtain, and when my eyes returned to the closet door, I saw that it had opened. Just an inch. Just enough to taunt me. Just enough for me to know that somewhere inside that closet's dark depths death did wait for me in the form of a giggling razor-toothed clown.

I was not crazy. I know that closet door opened even another inch, while I watched. My body grew stiff with fear. My limbs were as heavy as the rocks at the Derry mine. Surely, my recent illness had sharpened my senses - not destroyed or dulled them and that was how I could hear Pennywise rustling against my winter jackets deep in my closet. The doctor called it an ear infection, and mother sent me to bed immediately, but above all the onset of the illness had brought with it an exaggerated acute sense of hearing. Not only could I hear all things in heaven and earth, but also in hell. I must be in hell because how could I be imagining the sound of Pennywise giggling in my closet?

And finally, let's guess how **Kurt Vonnegut** would have written Poe's masterpiece:

It is true. I am nervous. It's a dreadful sort of nervous. Some say I am mad. Madness is f*cking everything. And f*cking is how babies are made. Even if you're mad. The disease had sharpened my senses - not destroyed - not turned them into doodley-squat. Above all, I could hear. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Probably from the matter of chemicals

that unbalanced my mind. But I do have oodles of charm. Anybody can have oodles of charm. When they want to. Listen. Watch—or read—how calmly I can tell you the whole story despite my mind poison, man. And so on.

Notes on Memoir

I believe that the truth sets us free. I think how that works is this: We think we are bad. We think our feelings and urges and secrets are shameful, and so we hide who we really are. That hiding leaves us isolated and disconnected from others, and often causes us to feel afraid and sick. When we share our real selves, others are inevitably emboldened to come forward, out of hiding, towards us and say those magic words, “me too.”

Glennon Doyle Melton

Consider the diverse voices in the following memoirs:

Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah

The Distance Between Us by Reyna Grande

Boy Kings of Texas: A Memoir by Domingo Martinez

Jeannette Walls' *The Glass Castle*

Sick: A Memoir by Porochista Khakpour

Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*

J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi.

Considering the popularity of the genre, there's no question that we love to read the stories of others, particularly if they're true.

Memoir invites us into a world where we can experience life as it really happened, rather than visiting a world the writer has created in their imagination. In the telling of our tales, we can accomplish a variety of goals. Memoir can be a confession, a history, a tale of secrets, general observances of life, or lessons learned.

Memoir done right is an art, a made thing. It's not just raw reportage flung splat on the page.

Mary Karr

A *best-telling* memoir separates the compelling from the mundane. Not everything that happened in our lives needs to be recorded, and this is where an experienced writer comes in. The act of choosing from a seemingly endless array of personal experiences creates a careful rendition of more than the sum of all we recall. Rather than reading a summation of what we did over the summer, memoir should be an art form; a lovely telling of a tale.

I have always fancied myself a quite competent writer in my professional career with high standards when it comes to the written language, and in my organization, I always stress good skillful communication both verbal and written. We accomplished what I hoped to achieve, and I could not be more satisfied with our result at Birthright Books.

Gerry Tucci, Author and Founder of MicroTechnologies

Perhaps contrary to intuition, the artful telling of a life should be in partnership with the reader. Our shared experiences are important because the telling is what binds us together. If we have experienced a life, or an event, or an awakening, and we share it with others in a way in which they can relate, then we're helping someone, somehow, somewhere.

What will make it memorable is how you tell it, the level of clarity and precision and insights you bring to your memories, the quality of the reflections that they give rise to, the characters evoked through them.

Peter Selgin

How much should go in a memoir? How little? Do you have to tell the truth? What if the truth will hurt somebody?

The writer selects from the monumental possibilities, strategizes, omits, truncates, and then surprisingly expands. One examines and revises, denies and exaggerates, and in that active engagement with the page, the unexpected emerges. Memoir writing is about the illusion of truth.

It's liberating to recognize that it's not about the actual events, people, era, and landscape.

Kate Braverman

We've all read those memoirs where the names have been changed, yet a quick and skillful search on the internet will easily expose the real characters. This can be hurtful if someone ends up in a poor shade in a memoir and didn't care to be there at all, let alone identified. A ghostwriter can help you maintain important parts of your story without blowing out identities.

One of the trickiest parts of writing memoir, figuring out how to tell a story that is deeply personal yet also universal. Each and every one of us is capable of noble acts of generosity as well as terrible acts of unkindness. A truly great memoir reflects both of these qualities of the human experience, with moments of light and with moments of darkness.

Shannon Leone Fowler

Memoirs aren't diaries. Nor are they an autobiographical tale of our memory dumps. They're not resumes. They don't list every single thing we've done, said, and thought. At least they shouldn't. When you hire a ghostwriter, you are hiring a storyteller who will present a story with the most skillful retelling.

You have questions, we have answers!

I sifted through my own pain and mined it for gold to share with others. When we truth-tell widely in real time, it's alarming to people because it can feel more like a cry for help than an act of service. You must be still with your pain before you can offer it up and use it to serve and connect with people you don't know. When we get real, we and the people we're writing to relax because we realize that at our cores, we're all the same.

Glennon Doyle Melton

How can the writer make the memoir special for the readers instead of being "all about me?" What's the difference between memoir as art, and memoir as a self-serving telling of one's own story?

Birthright Books was amazing to work with and I will absolutely hire them again in the future. I hired Marlayna as a writer/editor for my Amazon ebook. She is a gifted writer and nailed the tone

I was looking for. Additionally, she conducted research needed to support certain scientific assertions in the book. Marlayna is so easy to work with, does not fluster easily and remains professional at all times. She goes above and beyond what is asked of her. I was so pleased with her work that I also had her prepare press releases as well as an "about the author" piece to use on our website and my Amazon Author Page. Marlayna remained 100% enthusiastic throughout this entire process which was greatly appreciated. I can't say enough about how great of an experience it was to work with her.

John Zehren, Author

Here are some questions to consider:

- Why are you writing a book? What's your goal?
- Who is your audience?
- Do you want to try to sell your book to a traditional publisher, or will you self publish?
- What is your timeline – start to finish?
- What's your budget?
- Do you have existing material to use (beginning of a book, an outline, some chapters, articles, letters), or will you create the book from scratch?
- What's your biggest fear about writing a book?
- What are comparable titles you want to emulate?
- Who has a vested interest in this book and will be involved in some way?
- Who will be given a license to read, comment, and suggest a change?
- What is the intent? Inform, describe, convince, or tell a story?
- What is the style? Formal or informal?
- What is the emotion? Mild or strong?
- What is the domain? Creative? General? Academic? Business? Technical? Casual?
- Will you want publishing assistance?
- Will you want marketing assistance?
- Are you interested in hearing my suggestions for improvement? (profanity, slang, sensitive information, gossip, potential to injure others, book layout)
- Are you hiring a writer as a technician or an artist?

- Are you comfortable using Zoom?
- Are you comfortable working on Google drive using corrections?
- Are you familiar with the difference between a writer and an editor?

There's much to consider when putting a story to paper, which ranges from the primary goals to the technical aspects of putting the book together. Writers should walk their clients through this process, and make sure they understand exactly what it is a writer does – and doesn't – do. Discussing each of these questions upfront is the first step is making sure we're clear about what you're looking for.

I also believe we should choose carefully where we do our truth-telling. In real time, we share with our tiny circle of trusted friends and maybe our therapist. Then, when we've found some meaning in it all and feel some peace about it, we can take it wider. At that point, if folks don't want to listen, no worries. But if you've got a story burning inside you, it's likely that somebody out there is burning to hear it. The more personal it is, the more universal it is, too.

Glennon Doyle Melton

What do writers do?

Among the memoirist's greatest challenges is to rescue memory from imagination, and to do so with the understanding that the one can't survive without the other. The trick in writing memoir as faithfully as possible is to be aware of the role imagination plays in shaping our memories, in making them cohere into scenes.

Peter Selgin

Yes, yes, we know that writers *write*, but what else do they do?

Our writers are skilled interviewers. Rather than hand off the creation of your story to a low-paid interviewer, we want you to develop relationships with our writers for the duration of your project. You can expect your writer to:

- Share publishing industry knowledge
- Have a collaborative spirit/ability with your story
- Exhibit supreme management skills to structure and organize material
- Establish and expertly communicate the project, budget and time frame parameters to you
- Manage information exchange: audio, video, written, edit existing work, research, interviews
- Conduct interviews with you
- Research any needed historical information
- Keep you on schedule
- Capture your unique voice

- Write your book!

To put it simply, Marlayna is the best. She takes your thoughts, feelings, and words and brings them to life. She is magically talented. Working with her challenged me and lifted me to places I didn't think I could reach. She will forever hold a place in my heart.

Tim Green, author

Generally, a collaborative writing project works in a surprisingly simple way.

1. We interview you over a period of about one month. We meet regularly on Zoom where you talk and we ask questions. We record these interviews, then transcribe them. Some clients love to speak freely. Some require more prompting. We adjust to your style! (But we will redirect you if needed.)
2. From the transcriptions, we write your book using your words. We scrub the transcription of words like *yeah, like, actually, um, very, gonna, and you know*. We construct your book using a combination of direct quotes and restructured sentences to tell your story.
3. We present the first draft to you and ask you to review it. We will give advice at this stage, which you can accept or not. For example, some clients don't realize how much they've disclosed. Other clients haven't said enough. We look at all information from the point of view of whether or not it could hurt a reader. We will ask you if you want to include the information – and the decision will be yours.
4. We make all corrections you suggest, then present a second copy for you to review and sign off.
5. Once you approve, we have the book formatted and return a print-ready copy to you for publishing.

It's that easy!

What if you've already written a book and just need a rewrite or editing?

When you hire us, you're getting the expert rewriting services of a dynamic group of professionals. We can rewrite for structural sense, or grammatical.

1. For rewrites, we will have a conversation about what you want to achieve with your book. We adjust to your style but will offer suggestions.
2. We present the first draft to you and ask you to review it.
3. We make all corrections you suggest, then present a second copy for you to review and sign off.
4. Once you approve, we have the book formatted and return a print-ready copy to you.

The test of a great memoir is how much the story it tells us is, ultimately, our own. I think the key thing to understand is that – though based on our memories and experiences – unlike an autobiography, a memoir is never about us.

Peter Selgin

The whole process of designing your book can be unexpectedly expedient, as we can interview, transcribe, write, and return a final draft to you within about five months. Rewrites take much less time.

Q and A

I started working with Marlayna in 2017. From the moment we had our first Skype meeting I knew she was going to be able to deliver exactly what I needed. Her communication was consistent and excellent! Her work was delivered on time and of a quality that is exceptional, she really went the extra mile for my project and treated it like it was one of her own publications! I loved every minute of working with Marlayna and would highly recommend her work to anyone looking to use her services! I will definitely be working again with Marlayna on a new project in the near future!

**With love and gratitude,
Jackie Carroll**

How many books have you ghostwritten?

We've written 50+ books, several of which have hit Amazon's bestseller list multiple times.

What do you bring to my project?

Years of experience, seasoned skills, and creative personalities!

As writers, we listen, ask the right questions, and interact in a professional capacity with clients to draw out the perfect amount of information.

We only accept clients for whom we know our skills are the perfect match for their works.

We work only in memoir, biography, legacy, and heirloom. By concentrating on what we do best, we're able to provide the most targeted services and skillsets for our clients.

What does your ideal process look like?

We interview you over Zoom, record and transcribe our conversations, and work from the materials to design your book in your voice. We also add photographs or relevant documents as requested.

How do you charge?

As per our contract, we divide the final amount over a certain number of months, usually four or five.

How will you capture my voice?

During our recorded interviews, we pay careful attention to your sentence structure, slang, and speaking rhythm. We do our best to match your style exactly because we want your book to sound like you wrote it! Some clients ask for different styles and naturally, we're always willing to deliver what you request.

What should I know as a client before I hire a ghostwriter or collaborator?

You should know that we will help you establish reasonable goals that we feel together we will be able to reach. Just like when you visit an art museum, you should understand that like oil painting artists, ghostwriting is an artistic style. We will provide a varied sample of writing styles, so you can see which writers match what you're seeking. Writing is not one-size-fits-all. There are many different types of writing styles. Carefully choose the writer who best fits your style!

What should I expect from a publisher?

Prompt communication

Answers to your questions

Experienced professionals

Industry know-how

A darn fine finished product.

What shouldn't I expect from a publisher?

Guaranteed best-seller jargon.

Extra charges.

Lag in communication time.

Sub-standard product.

Layers of folk to wade through to get to the "top."

What does your contract look like?

Description of work to be performed. (We interview you and design your book)

How and when we will be paid. (Monthly increments)

Deadline for completion. (Variable)

Copyright ownership. (You)

Royalties. (All yours)

Division of labor. (Who is responsible for doing what? Will you provide us with notes, data, research, or other materials, and if so, by when? Will we write chapters and then send them to you for review?)

Indemnification provisions. (We will be indemnified from any libelous or plagiarized material provided to us.)

Cover credit. (Are we working as a writer or as a co-author or 'as told to?' We may ask for cover credit.)

Termination provisions. (What happens if one of us wants to back out before the book or project is completed?)

Expenses and how they'll be shared. (Who pays for travel expenses? Who is responsible for any other expenses?)

A confidentiality clause. (We will provide a nondisclosure agreement.)

Steps To Partner With Us

1. General discussion about the project
2. Establish parameters, yours and ours
3. Establish information exchange process (interview/video/written/research)
4. The contract created and signed by both parties
5. Deposit is paid
6. Working together, we create an overall chapter outline
7. Interview and research – get the story from you
8. Write
9. We send you the first draft for review/approval using Google Drive
10. We discuss your corrections
11. Compile approved chapters into a master document/final draft
12. One last review by you
13. Book is complete and formatted copies are provided to you
14. You sign off and send last payment
15. You're a published writer!

Marlayna was an absolute joy to work with! She became personally invested in the story of my father from the very beginning, and won over the family's trust very quickly. Not an easy feat with any family! We could not have had a better fit. Thank you so much for making this project possible and bringing joy to our family and to many generations ahead.

Private client

Final Thoughts

Your memoir should draw on portions of your many life experiences, but we urge you to think beyond the recounting and more from autobiographical to the universal.

Ask yourself how your story is about others, and not just you? This universalization principle applies to all memoir, regardless of the subject. In telling your story in your way, ask how it serves, and will be of interest to others?

Keep in mind that memoir is not just a story, but an art form. Story-telling is an art form. Just like with any artist, there will be varying styles and personalities involved in the creation of a new form.

Creating a memoir with a writer is a very intimate process. Make sure you feel comfortable working with the writer you choose, as you will be sharing personal information, and relying upon the writer to handle it with grace, tact, style, and skill.

ABOUT BIRTHRIGHT BOOKS

Birthright Books was officially launched in 2017, although founder Marlayna Glynn has been writing for many years. She's an award-winning writer and photographer, and she is a trusted speaker at events that are dear to her heart. Immediately upon the 2012 publication of her first memoir, *Overlay: One Girl's Life in 1970s Las Vegas*, Marlayna was honored by Next Generation Indie Book Awards with an Overcoming Adversity award.

You can expect to collaborate with Marlayna and your writer on your project, as Marlayna is actively involved in every book that Birthright Books creates.

Book a call with us today.

www.birthrightbooks.pub



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