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Writing Down The Bones: Freeing The Writer Within (Shambhala Library)

*Writing Down
the Bones*

Freeing the Writer Within



Natalie Goldberg

FOREWORD BY Julia Cameron

· 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION ·



Synopsis

With insight, humor, and practicality, Natalie Goldberg inspires writers and would-be writers to take the leap into writing skillfully and creatively. She offers suggestions, encouragement, and solid advice on many aspects of the writer's craft: on writing from "first thoughts" (keep your hand moving, don't cross out, just get it on paper), on listening (writing is ninety percent listening; the deeper you listen, the better you write), on using verbs (verbs provide the energy of the sentence), on overcoming doubts (doubt is torture; don't listen to it) "even on choosing a restaurant in which to write." Goldberg sees writing as a practice that helps writers comprehend the value of their lives. The advice in her book, provided in short, easy-to-read chapters with titles that reflect the author's witty approach ("Writing Is Not a McDonald's Hamburger," "Man Eats Car," "Be an Animal"), will inspire anyone who writes "or who longs to.

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Customer Reviews

I align myself more with the negative reviews of this book. It's easy to get caught up in some of the philosophical warm-fuzzy rhetoric of Ms. Goldberg. Akin to watching Oprah pull at an audience's

heartstrings, Ms. Goldberg pulls readers in with story after story trumpeting the same message of writing from the heart. The initial reaction is to feel that there's nothing to question about what Ms. Goldberg says. When I purchased the book, I saw nothing to indicate that it was specific to one particular form of writing, but after reading it, I feel that the author speaks much more to poetry than other forms of writing. The author on several occasions admonishes us to write in the moment and not dwell on ideas we've had in the past. She relates an experience of one student who had a fully-formed idea while out jogging but couldn't reproduce it when s/he got home to the blank page. Goldberg went into a spiel about how we should just let go of those thoughts that are not inspired or conceived in the moment that we sit down to write. That's where I have a fundamental disagreement with her and feel her philosophy becomes almost destructive to new writers. Perhaps poetry functions that way. Perhaps someone has to have that spontaneous quality about their work in order for it to be fresh and exciting. I don't know. I'm not a poet. However, for novels, short stories, and longer works, you would be a fool to let great ideas get away. Personally, I like to let some of those ideas percolate for weeks and even years. Yes, we mature and our perspectives change, but in a lot of cases that only means that we can approach a subject in a different way as we grow older. It doesn't make the subject any better or worse to write about. Bottom line: I came away from the book with mixed feelings.

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