

# FS News: Author! Author! Edition

Hi Readers!

As you know, I've been busy adding information to the Fair Shake website to increase opportunities to anyone who visits the website, including YOU, your potential employers, corrections/reentry people (including the FREE software they can provide, if they choose to), activists and your outside supporters!

Included in the update is, of course, the Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Authors page where several FS News subscribers have books on display. If you have written a book, and it is available online, please share the title and where I can link to the book, and I can add it to the page. Likewise, if you know of folks who would like to read books by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated writers, please share the Fair Shake website with them!

This issue of the FS News has info for folks who wish to be published and also for folks who would just like to write...so I'll cut to the quick and get to the point!

## PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES:

AMERICAN PRISON WRITING ARCHIVE FREE <https://apw.dhinitiative.org/>

The mission of the APWA is to replace speculation on and misrepresentation of prisons, imprisoned people, and prison workers with first-person witness by those who live and work on the receiving end of American criminal justice. As of 2.18.20 they have 2323 titles in English and 17 titles in Spanish. To submit your essay, book or poem, send for their permissions questionnaire here:

The AMERICAN PRISON WRITING ARCHIVE  
c/o Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323-1218

PRISONS FOUNDATION FREE <http://prisonsfoundation.org/>

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, or would like to write a book, we want to publish it. All books on any subject are welcome. There is no charge to you to publish your book and no charge to anyone who wishes to read it. You retain full rights to your book if you later wish to place it with a literary agent or commercial publisher. Placing your book on our website is in fact a good way to bring it to the attention of agents and larger publishers (and protect it under common copyright law). (Even bestselling author Stephen King had to self-publish and give away his first five books, which were eventually picked up and published by commercial publishers after he was "discovered.") When we receive your book, it will be scanned in its entirety, just as you submitted it to us...even if it's hand written.

They also offer inexpensive Dictionaries (Webster's) and Thesauruses (Roget's) – in larger print. Either book is just \$3.95 + \$2.75 shipping.

PRISONS FOUNDATION  
2512 Virginia Ave. NW, #58043  
Washington, DC 20037

SO YOU CAN WRITE PUBLICATIONS, LLC

home4writers@sycwp.com <https://sycwp.com/> 920-821-3006

From the website "So You Can Write Publications is a publishing company designed to assist writers with their writing works. We are here to help present your story in the same light as the light bulb that created your thoughts and ideas. It is our greatest duty to provide ongoing services that meet the needs to each writer's individuality. Helping our community build vision by understanding the talent that's within. Your dreams are reachable! We are not just a publishing company, but a home for writers!" (SYCWP is a Formerly-Incarcerated-Owned business)

About the owner, Kendrick Watkins:

“When I was released from prison in 2010 I had a vision, dreams, and goals to meet. Just because I have a prison record doesn't mean my life is over, but to fight harder for the new things I wanted in life, and that was to be free and become successful. Don't be afraid to challenge yourself and remove the people, places, and things that do not bring encouragement to the new you! I started writing because it brought peace to my world. I was hurting from childhood experiences, but I begin to heal myself mentally and emotionally through my writing. I encourage writers to write because it heals the very soul you must take care of.”

## FREE BOOKS

PRISON BOOK PROGRAM [www.prisonbookprogram.org](http://www.prisonbookprogram.org)

The PRISON BOOK PROGRAM has been sending books to prisoners since 1972. We are entirely staffed by volunteers and supported by many donors who care about literacy in prison. Limited to one shipment every 6 months.

## MAIL REQUESTS TO:

Prison Book Program  
c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore  
1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100  
Quincy, MA 02169

## BELOW PLEASE FIND WRITING TIPS SHARED BY INCARCERATED AUTHORS.

ALL have been edited so they could be included in this newsletter...but their full content (and more) is available on the Fair Shake website or by contacting me directly. I no longer include names because the newsletters are randomly censored when names are included. The WI DOC charges me as if they were delivered (about \$200/month now), even though they do not tell me where they have been blocked.

## WRITING TIPS:

### #1 JUST DO SOMETHING

This is the first and most important thing you'll ever learn about writing. Writing is a career option that you'll find can be accomplished anywhere you happen to be. Thus, you're ultimately your own boss meaning that you work when you want to. Also know that because of that liberty you can put off starting just as easily as not. So it's important to “just do something”, today and every day that you set aside to write. My suggestion is to write something as soon as you finish reading this tip. It doesn't matter what you write just write something, get in the habit right now so you too will one day be able to write your own check.

### #2 GET IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM

Life often requires us to deal with particular issues before we can proceed to others. Writing is very similar in nature. I have a book to finish this month and I have set a strict schedule that if followed will help me reach that goal. But, this morning I woke up with a writing tip on my mind. Providing writing tips is something I pledged to do and is now an irrevocable responsibility. It's time to get this writing tip out of my system so I can get back on my schedule. Doing it now is how I clear my thoughts to make room for the task that was scheduled for this morning.

### #3 DON'T WRITE WHERE YOU EAT

In its most basic form, the idea is to create a separation between work life and home life. I currently live in a concrete box that is eight feet wide and ten feet long, and every morning I get dressed, I drink my coffee, and I brush my teeth; before I sit at my desk to write. That's correct, I get myself ready just like I'm going to work before taking a seat only four feet from where I sleep. I sit at my desk only to write, and I take my seat at seven o'clock sharp, every morning. So take a moment to define a difference, it will help you get your mind started.

### #4 KNOW WHAT YOU ARE KNOWN FOR

I don't care what you do in life, you will in one way or another be branded. Your brand is what you are known for and more importantly how you make people feel. You, just like me, will become known for something. In simple terms your

brand is the emotional effect that you have on the hearts of others-it's what you are known for. So, identify your brand and keep it positive.

The above Fair Shake reader has shared his book "How To Write Your Own Check" with the Fair Shake software viewers – FOR FREE! It offers motivating tips and valuable information to help you get started on your writing career. You will also be able to access it from the member area of the Fair Shake website.

#### STRATEGY FOR WRITING WHILE IN PRISON

I have often heard people in prison say that they want to write a book. The number of people who have accomplished this goal remains small, possibly because they lack a strategy for effective book writing, such as the one I employ:

Think Big, Write Small – Most people look at a book's length (usually around 300 pages) and think that they could never write that many pages. But concentrate on writing one 250 word page per day. At the end of the year you will have 365 pages.

Just Do It – Don't stop or lose time worrying about grammar, punctuation, etc. This is called brainstorming. After a while you will have enough material to complete a chapter or maybe even the whole book.

Know Thy Subject – Thoroughly research your topic. Even if you have extensive knowledge about the subject, research will allow you to learn other perspectives from a wide range of people. Incorporate their perspectives!

Make the Time – Set aside a specific time each day for writing (whether brainstorming, researching, and/or writing). Having a set schedule keeps me focused and motivated.

Read, Read, and Read Some More – The more you read, the better your writing will become. Read a variety of material on a wide range of subjects, to increase your vocabulary. Learn to identify and emulate the writing style of your favorite author(s). As a side benefit, you can spend many enjoyable hours lost in a good book.

#### TIPS FROM A WRITER ON WHERE NOT TO WRITE

The author of "3 Decades", a book that is listed on the Fair Shake website, is in the process of having all of the tattoos removed from his nearly completely covered body.

Thinking about Inking? Here are some tips on why you should think twice before you do it:

1. Can't get certain jobs
2. Break up relationships (re: inking partner's names)
3. Smear off when you get old and wrinkled
4. Sooner or later you will regret it (esp. hands, feet, neck)
5. If you give your life to God, the offensive ones will be uncomfortable.
6. Tattoos don't always look like the patterns...
7. They don't look good on everybody
8. The tattoo artists don't care about your health. There's a 50/50 chance you could get Hep C, HIV or other blood transmittable diseases

He adds that the tattoo industry "reportedly nets 3 billion dollars in revenue" with an additional 66 million in tattoo removal.

#### WHY I WRITE

I discovered writing when I was incarcerated and going through the most difficult time in my life. I started writing letters as my only means of communication; I wasn't able to make calls or get visits from anyone. Putting my thoughts on paper was a new and enjoyable experience. It was refreshing because I realized I didn't have to keep my thoughts trapped inside anymore.

So much of what I was going through was transferred onto paper. It felt as if all my stresses escaped me. Once I felt the power in writing; I could never give it up. Writing gave me confidence. It allowed a process to happen by allowing my thoughts to manifest themselves. When I write, I'm not alone. Time doesn't exist. Everything is coming out my fingertips. I feel no physical, emotional, or mental pain.

I write because I love this world of no hurt or pain. I write because I don't have to be me. I write to see, because without thoughts; how could I perceive. Without writing, what would my world be.

I write because there are no limits. I write to find out what's deep inside, I write to open my eyes. When I write, I'm really alive.

Writing is my super-power; I can freeze my thoughts in time. I form them any way that I want...when no one but me has control.

And that is why I write!

#### QUOTES ON WRITING

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."  
- Anne Frank

"You can always edit a bad page. You can't edit a blank page." - Jodi Picoult

"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."  
- Anton Chekhov

"I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." - Douglas Adams

"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that." - Stephen King (he also said "The road to hell is paved with adverbs.")

"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world." - Philip Pullman

Thank you, Donors, for making this newsletter possible for 2842 incarcerated readers!

Thank you, Readers, for sharing your voices with me so I can share them here. It is as close to a national discussion - that includes both state and federal folks - as we can get right now. It's a pretty good start!

To our successful transitions ~

Ubuntu! ~ sue

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PO Box 63  
Westby, WI 54667

As always, remember to look up free support in your phone-gizmo:

2-1-1

Rzero.org

Fairshake.net

HelpYourselfTherapy.com