

WHO ARE YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

7 JOURNALING PROMPTS

Find your why, stay motivated, and turn your bio into yet another hook for your novel (even if you think you're too old, too young, or too unsuccessful).

Whether you're creating your online platform or writing a query letter; at some point you need to say something about the author behind the book.

But one of the reasons many writers find the querying process so daunting is the horrible suspicion that they themselves are not what the industry is looking for. They worry that they are too old, too young, too unproven. They find writing the tiny bit of the query where you tell the agent a little bit about yourself cringeworthy and worry that they should try to hide their age or exaggerate their success.

If you do have competition wins or published short stories you can talk about, by all means include those, especially in a query letter.

But if you are wondering what on earth you can include in your bio there are ways you can make the most of what you already have. Storytelling, once again, is your saviour.

As with all life writing, I'd encourage you not to think of this bio as your vital statistics (your job, your age, where you live etc) but rather as a chance to tell the story of why you wrote this book, specifically. This is a chance to tell that story and, in doing so, to convey what readers will take away from your novel.

AN EXAMPLE

TELLING THE STORY OF A RETIRED TEACHER WHO WROTE A BOOK FOR MIDDLE GRADERS

Sarah is a retired teacher, but she'd read that agents are fed up of hearing teachers think that because they work with middle graders, they can write for middle graders.

Honestly, I think this is a little unfair, but you have to remember that for many people (including literary agents) teachers were not positive forces in their lives.

SO, Sarah needed to persuade anyone reading her letter that this was relevant. She needed to show them how it guided and inspired her writing. When she linked the message of her novel to a specific student who she remembered overcoming a stutter, this part of her query letter became very moving.

"I wrote this book for people like Luke. He had a stutter that cut him off from others. As a teacher, I witnessed his daily struggle to overcome what he perceived as a personal weakness. He triumphed in the end, beginning with shouting his words. I saw him find his voice and beat his fears. I write for Luke."

The right agent for Sarah will find their heart melting for Luke. And they will draw connections between this story and the novel, helping them get a clear sense of the arc of change and the internal, emotional level of the story.

This query letter has already had requests to see the full from agents and a pitchwars mentor.



HOW TO JOURNAL

ENJOY THE PROCESS AND LET IT FLOW

So what can you say about yourself that will make your query letter more persuasive and underline the themes of your novel?

It doesn't have to be as sentimental as Sarah's example, that was just what was right for her book.

What you're looking for is a way to tell a STORY about why you wrote this book, rather than just tell the agent your vital statistics.

These journaling prompts are designed to help you introduce yourself in a way that tells a story about your book and reinforces its one true message.

Worried you don't know what the one true message is? Don't worry, these prompts should help you uncover those as well.

A word about how to get the most out of this exercise:

Make sure you're feeling relaxed.

Make a little ritual out of it.

Make a cup of tea, light the fire or a candle, put on some music.

Write by hand.

Alternatively, go for a walk and record yourself talking (use a digital dictaphone or the recording tool on your smartphone).

Or, if you're a very visual thinker (like me), create a mindmap around the topic.

If you find this journal valuable, you might like my workshop on "How to write a persuasive query letter".

<https://events.genndi.com/channel/queryletterworkshop>



JOURNAL PROMPT #1

THE FIRST SPARK

Describe the moment you first got the idea for this book. Why did it grab you?

“Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don’t see any.”

ORSON SCOTT



JOURNAL PROMPT #2

BUT WHY YOU, SPECIFICALLY?

Why would a story like this speak to YOU specifically? What experiences does it help you process, what beliefs does it help you communicate?

"When an idea thinks it has found somebody – say, you – who might be able to bring it into the world, the idea will pay you a visit. It will try to get your attention. Mostly, you will not notice."



JOURNAL PROMPT #4

WHY WRITE?

Why is writing important to you?

“I don’t remember deciding to become a writer. You decide to become a dentist or a postman. For me, writing is like being gay. You finally admit that this is who you are, you come out and hope that no one runs away.”

MARK HADDON

www.georginagreen.co.uk



JOURNAL PROMPT #6

WHO ASKED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

Do any particular memories of people in your life who need to hear this or might have inspired this come up? Perhaps even your past self?

“I write for those that have no voice, for the silent ones who've been damaged beyond repair; I write for the broken child within me...”

NITYA PRAKASH



JOURNAL PROMPT #7

WHO ARE YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

In what ways does it now seem both surprising and inevitable that you would write this story?

"Life is not so much about beginnings and endings as it is about going on and on and on. It is about muddling through the middle."

ANNA QUINDLEN

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