

The Courage to Write

“Writing is essentially an act of courage.”

This is a quote from Cynthia Orzick who is a writer and bestselling author.

After writing and publishing five books with a sixth going to print in the next month, I am beginning to understand what this means. I have a passion for writing and love to publish books, but it definitely makes you vulnerable.

As a writer, you express your ideas, concepts and understanding of your subject as only you can. As long as these ideas are in your head, they are safe and secure. However, by committing them to paper (or hard disk) and giving them to others, you expose them to the entire universe. This is especially true if you put your writing up on the internet, where 6 billion people potentially have access to it.

You also expose your ideas to yourself. By making your ideas concrete in the pages of a diary, journal, notepad or computer, you also reveal them to yourself. Your subject changes from a series of abstract thoughts known only to you, to something very real and concrete. The more you write about your subject, the more creative thoughts you have. This is the essence of mindstorming.

For example, think about your thoughts regarding another person. As long as they are only in your head, there is no impact on the other person, or the world at large. But once those thoughts are voiced to another person or put down in writing, there is no going back. They become real and concrete to you, the other person that you tell and potentially the world at large.

Another example is telling someone not to look at the yellow balloons on the ceiling. Once said, it is hard to get yellow balloons out of your mind, even if they are just imaginary. As a friend noted, “The voiced or written thoughts take on a life of their own.” How many of us have said something to another person that we wish we hadn’t?

Writing and journaling are the first steps to getting in touch with your inner self. But it does more than that, it changes you. Writing and journaling make you face yourself and examine your deepest emotions and thoughts. When you write these emotions, feelings and thoughts, you are taking a very courageous step, whether you realize it or not. This is the first step to implementing change in your life.

Louis L’Amour used the following line in a number of his western novels:

“When you fire a gun or read a book, you never know what the consequences will be.”

Writing our thoughts, emotions and ideas can change our world every bit as much as firing a gun or reading a book did in the old west.

Anytime you undertake change in your life, it takes courage. Things like a change of job, geographical location or marital state are major transitions in our lives. It is easy to see

how those take courage. You have changed your world and in doing so have impacted other lives as well.

It is more difficult to understand how just writing a sentence, paragraph or page in a notebook, a journal or on a website can make such a large change in our lives. Yet it can. The act of writing makes your idea concrete, more than just a random thought or idea that flitters through your mind. It literally becomes part of your real world. Just like firing a gun or reading a book in the old west of Louis L'Amour, you have taken an action that causes change in your life which has an impact on far more people than just yourself.

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