



A Year of Writing Dangerously: 365 Days of Inspiration and Encouragement

Barbara Abercrombie

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In this collection of anecdotes, lessons, quotes, and prompts, author and writing teacher Barbara Abercrombie provides a delightfully varied cornucopia of inspiration — nuts-and-bolts solutions, hand-holding commiseration, and epiphany-fueling insights from fellow writers, including Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners and Abercrombie's students who have gone from paralyzed to published.

A Year of Writing Dangerously: 365 Days of Inspiration and Encouragement Details

Date : Published June 12th 2012 by New World Library (first published May 8th 2012)

ISBN : 9781608680511

Author : Barbara Abercrombie

Format : Paperback 408 pages

Genre : Language, Writing, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review A Year of Writing Dangerously: 365 Days of Inspiration and Encouragement for online ebook

Sarah says

2015 Devotional

A good devotional for daily reminders of what's important...I wished they would have dates instead of day numbers. Looking forward to writing prompts in 2016.

Christine Fulton says

Very useful information. Read as an ebook this would be one I would purchase

Mindy says

This little gem contains daily advice and motivation, as well as quotes from a wide range of creative people, from Ann Lamott to Lady Gaga. It also contains daily writing prompts.

Jaellayna Palmer says

I am on my 4th reading of it. One anecdote per day - and they all are insightful.

Teri-K says

Interesting and useful book, maybe especially for those of us who have trouble sticking with writing on a regular basis. At the end there are 365 writing prompts, but the book itself is more short, inspiring or encouraging passages. I definitely got some good thoughts and motivation from it.

Shilo says

A lot of good, practical advice in here for writers, as well as many great inspiring quotes from famous authors on writing.

Liz Lazzara says

Every writer needs a mentor, a coach, someone to tell them "how it really is," someone to hold their hand through the tough places, and someone to remind them why they became a writer in the first place.

"A Year of Writing Dangerously" does exactly this. I will miss reading it for the first time, but will return often to its pages.

Malcolm Everett says

Everything about this book is magic. Here you will find snippets of inspiration from a wide variety of writers on every topic related to the craft—anxiety, discipline, self-confidence, habits, rituals, authenticity, vulnerability. I've never felt such a strong urge to buy a physical copy of a book; I want to have this on my shelf so that I can flip to a random page whenever I feel myself slacking. Writing is my religion, and this book has become my Bible.

I must've highlighted every other sentence because my Kindle app tells me that I exceeded the publisher's 10% export limit. The quotes relate to both memoir and fiction, so no matter what you write, this book is for you. There are also 52 weeks' worth of writing prompts in the back.

I'll choose ten of my favorite affirmations to provide a glimpse of the writing wisdom to be found within these pages:

1. "This is how you put the vast chaos of your life into order, how you get to the other side. Writing is also how you nail down and get to keep the good moments. How you live more deeply and become more conscious."
2. "Here's another response, from a student, to my question about why writing feels dangerous: 'Sometimes it feels dangerous to know what I really feel. Because if I acknowledge my feelings outside the safe boundaries of my own heart and mind, if I open up the latch to my subconscious and let those precious secrets leak out, God knows what will happen. I might have to hold myself accountable to these thoughts and feelings. I might have to act upon them. I might have to change. I might have to stop lying to myself and others about what I need and want. I might have to ask for what I need and want. I might have to be a disappointment; I might have to be disappointed; I will disappoint.'"
3. "Surrender to your own ego. Let yourself sound dumb, dull, or overly earnest, or whatever you fear most about your own writing. Surrender and then rewrite."
4. "Craft has to do with rewriting, with honing the words down to story and emotion."
5. "To be a writer is to be a shuttlecock in a badminton game, one racquet of which is naïve optimism and the other a cynical despair."
6. "The writing life is a life lived with all the windows and doors opened.... And rendering what one sees through those opened windows and doors in language is a way of bearing witness to the mystery of what it is to be alive in this world."
7. "We have to ask ourselves over and over, quick, a word for the way that branch moves in the wind, the way someone you love picks up a cup of coffee, the sound of a freeway. Quick. Don't be lazy—look for the

exact move, the precise color, the specific sound that no one has ever put into words before.”

8. “Isak Dinesen said she wrote a little every day, without hope and without despair.”

9. “The most authentic endings are the ones which are already revolving towards another beginning.”

10. “Remember that you can find the most inspiring teachers in every book you love. Remember that you can be awash in doubt and fear and still write. Remember that the way out of doubt and fear is through them, one word after another.”

Andrea says

(3.5) -

I had originally intended to read this book throughout the year (one chapter a day) in the hopes that it would encourage me to keep writing or at least give me some inspiration to start my day. Overall, I think this is what the book intends for you to do, but I read it in two weeks.

Why? Well, every "day" is just a very tiny story or just like an inspiring moment with a quote so it was pretty easy to flip through them and it truly didn't feel like it was supposed to be paced throughout the year. The only times that it is referenced (that you are writing for a year) is toward the end of the book. I think it should've been done throughout so you could feel compelled to keep writing alongside the book. I don't even know if I am making myself clear.

From the title, you would assume the author is writing for a year and she is sharing her experience alongside inspiration and encouragement. Overall, it starts as if it is going to be that way but ends up being just 365 short chapters that are supposed to encourage you to keep writing. The majority of these were fun and quite interesting. I liked the stories about other authors and their experiences writing. However, most of these were just very repetitive. Basically "keep writing" is the overall message, "keep showing up." And, this is great advice, I just didn't want to read the same advice 300 times.

Then again, I think my reading might have been affected by the format (I read the ebook). I have a feeling the experience would've been more enjoyable had I owned a physical copy and could flip through it as I was writing. If you are planning to read this novel, that is how I recommend you approach reading it.

I was really excited about the "Works Cited" though. I liked the stories referenced so basically this book, instead of inspiring me to write, expanded my TBR and my will to read more memoirs, which, I know it's not a bad thing, it just wasn't what I was expecting.

And that is the message of my review: it wasn't what I was expecting.

P.S: I don't know about you, but if I am reading non-fiction, I expect some facts. It bothers me when Abercrombie name dropped an author but didn't give the title to the novel or was very vague about stories. Like "My friend Amy was rejected but then her novel went to win awards!" - what's the novel? I feel like I have to research now or are you afraid I am going to fact-check? So yeah, unreliable narrator.

Dawn says

Deep down I always wanted to be a writer. I wandered by this book in the library and picked it up, thinking it might have some good prompts for my blog. Instead I found so much more. A day later I decided I wanted to be a writer and started actually writing.

I'll be buying this book and using it daily.

Taylor Morrissey says

This book really lit a fire underneath me to finish my novel I was working on. It encouraged me to keep writing, no matter what, and all the quotes and anecdotes from writers made me feel like I am not alone in the experience of writing ?? highly recommend if you need a pep talk or a confidence boost in your writing skills!

Hayley says

Great book for writing prompts, writing tips, etc. I like Kicking in the Wall better by the same author. I checked this out on a whim as an eBook out from JMRL, and loved that I could use it for inspiration in a pinch.

Ashton Widdison says

I'm guilty of reading this book in chunks at a time. I'm going to reread it, a section a day.

There have definitely been books on writing that I've enjoyed, but I'm very glad to have this one in my possession. I enjoyed the quotes from other writers, the experiences, the honest truths, the encouragements... I highly recommend this book for anyone who likes to write. It will inspire and energize in some sections, make you think with other sections, and the others will just make your head nod as you think, "Amen to that."

Donnelle says

For the past couple of months I have been in charge of the brand new adult writers' group at the library at which I work. I happened across this book, and it was truly a fun and informative read. This book contains three hundred sixty-five tips, bits of inspiration, anecdotes, and quotes from famous writers of all types, plus fifty two writing prompts, and I am not exaggerating when I say that all of it is interesting, clever, and truly helpful. I've been able to cull from it information on effective habits to develop, how to deal with rejection and writer's block, and so many other topics that have been very beneficial for those who attend the aforementioned group's meetings.

Barbara Abercrombie managed to impart all of that information without ever descending into repetitiveness or overly dry recitations of tips and techniques; rather, it was all imbued with humor and her clear desire to really help writers, whether they are aspiring or have written for years and have fallen into a bit of a funk; and regardless of what they write: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screenplays, etc.

I was able to get a lot out of this book and it was truly enjoyable. I couldn't recommend this more highly to anyone who has any interest in writing.

Nada says

Review first published on my blog: <http://memoriesfrombooks.blogspot.com...>

A Year of Writing Dangerously is, as the title suggests, a book of inspiration for writers. The message of the book is in essence, "Just Do It." It's not really a how to book on the craft of writing, but rather a book on pushing a writer to just write.

The entries are number 1-365 rather than a calendar format. So, you can pick it up at any time. Each day's entry are succinct and can be read in a few minutes. Each provides tips and motivation using examples from the writing habits of authors. Each entry also includes a related quote. The quotes and examples range from William Faulkner to Lady Gaga.

Interestingly, many of entries apply to situations and endeavors beyond writing. The skills of not giving up, making a commitment to a project, working through problems are life skills regardless of the endeavors you choose to pursue. So, the focus of the book is writing, but the lessons for writers transcend beyond that craft.

Being a reader and a writer and a lover of language, I really enjoyed this book. I read it straight through, but I could see keeping it on my shelf and picking it up to read different entries on different days.
