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Why I Write

I've decided that good writing is about being honest with yourself and the reader. I asked a coaching colleague to read a piece that I had written about being a "solopreneur." The writing was riddled with sarcasm. Her comment was "Sarcasm in service of what?" When I looked at what I was trying to say through the sarcasm, I realized there was a truth that had not come out. The truth was that I was feeling the pain of having made the choice to be an entrepreneur. The pain of not having a steady paycheck and of seeing how difficult it is to create a steady revenue stream to support a family of four. So good writing is about being honest enough with yourself to turn the surface sarcasm into a deep truth, to go past the indignant anger to reveal the stinging hurt, to transform the retelling of details of our lives into a universal meaning. It sounds a lot like coaching to me. Only in this case, the writer is coaching herself. Writing is about seeking the truth, wherever that takes you, and speaking about it when you find it.

Someone asked me who I write for, who my intended audience is. This puzzled me. I have always written for me, for self-expression. But I realize I write to be heard, not just by the cat or the flowers in my backyard. But by people. I write for people who are ready to wake up to life, to see the extraordinary in the ordinary. I write for company employees who want their work life to be nourishing. I write for people who have spent their whole life in their head and who now want to live more from their heart. When I think back on some of my better articles, I realize that I write for the man or woman on the street. I write about faith. I write for the person who wants to hear that they are not alone in their humanity, circled by Gremlins, unsure that the path they've boldly chosen is going anywhere close to their vision, or too afraid to even start on the path. I write for the solopreneurs who have lost their way—the coaches, the writers, the consultants, the freelancers. I have the startling recognition, like seeing an old friend at a high school reunion, that the people who I want to connect with are different aspects of me. I am that dreamer who has lost her way. I am the person who needs to hear about faith. Funny how things come full circle. Writing helps me to uncover what I didn't know I knew and in the process share it with others, in hopes that it will be interesting to them as well.

I write to remember and honor the goodness in life and in my life. A friend told me that my writing is poignant. It's hard not to be, when you uncover the sweetness that has been there all along. Our lives are like honeycombs, only we have been too busy pollinating and making honey to recognize that the stuff dripping down, gooey and golden-colored, is what we've been yearning for all along. We are covered in goodness and all we could feel was the weight of the stickiness.

Sometimes, my writing isn't poignant or profound. It's just plain funny. There's quirkiness inside of me that delights in seeing the world reflected in the funhouse mirror. My inner voice can't help but make wisecracks about what's going on around me, a running commentary about the sublime and the ridiculous. Yes, I like to toy with the sacred and the mundane. It's the antidote to taking ourselves too seriously.

Writing is about noticing, making sense of what you see or feel, and sharing it with the world honestly, in a way that honors not one's ego but the way we are as human beings. I read a book about writing deeply and the author talked about the process of writing as making meaning of the world, for oneself, and hopefully for others. I love this view of writing, because it explains why I write, why I'm compelled to write.

I write to have a better life. I hope my readers are better off as well.

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