Articles of Live Well

SO YOU WANT TO WRITE?

It’s often said that everyone has a book in them. Maybe fiction, maybe real life. Almost all of us have dreamed an adventure, lived through a time in history, or imagined a story we’d like the world to see.

Over my twenty-five years as a professional writer I would guess I’ve had a thousand people come up to me and say, “I could write a book.”

The question is: **Do you have what it takes**?

Sometimes I think people who know me think they should write just because they’ve watched me do it---so of course, if Jodi can do it, writing couldn’t be all that hard. They usually try writing for a few weeks or months, and discover it wasn’t as easy as they thought it might be.

Surprisingly, I found that most people do have a story worth the telling inside them if they are willing to learn the craft.

First, you have to have something to say. A story. A philosophy of life. Knowledge you want to pass on.

This sounds simple but finding the story isn’t always as easy as you might think. Often the story isn’t the war, but one man’s struggle through one battle.

Next you need the skill. A few good writing classed will help with that, plus read everything you can on writing. Attend writer’s conferences. Go to meeting of writers, critique groups. Go to lunch with a few writers and talk about what you’ve learned. Grow! I’m still growing, learning about the industry, reading books on writing.

Being a reader first is essential. Writing, like music, has a beat and people who read know the beat when they hear it. For a few the skill comes easy. They pick it up like a natural. Others get lost in the details of craft and forget to listen for the beat.

Next, and this is the hard part, you have to work at it. A few hours a week writing makes a hobby. Twenty hours or more makes a career. Like most writers, I started out working on writing one evening a week and maybe Sunday afternoon. It wasn’t moving fast enough. Two night. Three night. Four. Then, the story took over and every moment I wasn’t writing the story was stewing in the back of my mind.

Right now the field of writing is exploding. Publishers are all actively seeking books, good books, but this not something you can go into blind. You have to learn the game and the craft.

If you decide to jump in, the water is fine.

Where to start:

West Texas Writing Academy on June 10, 2013. Contact Continuing education for info on one week course.

Read Steven King’s ON WRITING. Available at any library.

Jodi Thomas’s 37th novel will be out June 4, 2013. CAN’T STOP BELIEVING. If you get a chance to read it, let her know what you thought at [www.jodithomas.com](http://www.jodithomas.com)