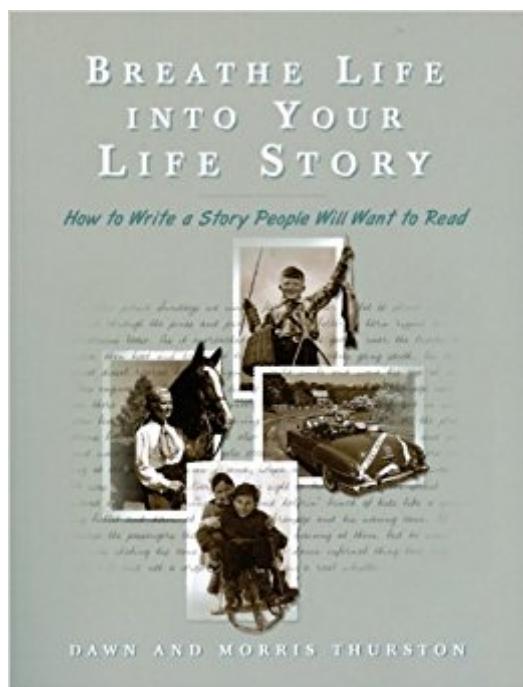


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# Breathe Life Into Your Life Story: How To Write A Story People Will Want To Read



## Synopsis

Breathe Life into Your Life Story is an essential read for anyone who aspires to write a life story "but not just any story, one your family and others will actually WANT to read. Written for both novices and experienced writers, this book presents techniques used by novelists to immerse readers into their fictional world "techniques like "showing" • rather than just "telling" •; creating interesting, believable characters and settings; writing at the gut level; alternating scene and narrative; beginning with a bang; generating tension, and more. Excerpts from memoirs written by such pros as Maya Angelou, Frank McCourt, Russell Baker, and many others illustrate how best-selling authors have used these methods to hook their readers. Dozens of "Learn by Doing" • exercises help readers practice and acquire the skills necessary to breathe life into their own stories.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The authors push the aspiring writer to achieve a victory over fear and uncertainty. Breathe Life is a great introduction to writing that even experienced authors will find helpful. It is highly recommended. --Jeff Needle, AML Reviewer The authors know the pain of learning to write well and are beside you through the struggle. If you stick with them they will make you a better writer.

--Richard Bushman, Gouverneur Morris Professor of History Emeritus, Columbia University The Thurstons are both experienced writers of family history. Dawn is a writing teacher and Morris a retired lawyer. As a result, this book is unusually creative in trying to teach readers how to write; they have some very good ideas. --Deseret News

"This is a powerful book--and a kindly one. The authors know the pain of learning to write well and are right beside you through the struggle. They may shake you up a little with their concrete, practical recommendations, but if you stick with them they will make you a better writer. You will learn if only by paying attention to their own fluid style. They show as well as tell."--Richard Bushman, Gouverneur Morris Professor of History Emeritus, Columbia University; recipient of the Bancroft Prize for *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1795*

I've purchased a few books in the personal history genre as gifts for friends and family. When I decided to start writing my own story, I reviewed what was available and then choose Morris Thurston's book. I'm glad I did. I'm rating this five stars even though I'm less than half way through the book so far. I do this in good conscience because I've already gained far more than I expected from the entire volume. If taken seriously, Thurston's book is not light reading because he gives assignments that take time. I have found these assignments interesting and beneficial. This is a book one must work through rather than simply read. The benefits received will be directly proportional to the effort expended. There are a number of products available to help people remember and record their past. While Thurston touches on the subject of recalling memories, his emphasis goes beyond that. He maintains is that it is not enough to recount memories, rehash facts, or preach wisdom. Rather, Thurston says authors will not make an impact unless they hold their readers' interest. And in order to do so, Thurston recommends understanding and employing effective story telling techniques as used by good, professional writers. In doing so, Thurston does not suggest fabricating experiences. He simply encourages and shows authors how to tell their own experiences in an interesting way. You don't have to be a professional writer to benefit from Thurston's book. I'm no pro, and I have no ambition of sharing my (ordinary) story with anyone other than my descendants. But I didn't want to risk the effort of writing a life history without it having much impact on anyone. So I am taking his recommendations to heart. I believe Mark Twain once said something like, "Of course, truth is stranger than fiction -- fiction has to make sense." Thurston shows authors how to tell their life stories in a way that makes sense.

Wonderful help with lots of suggestions and creative ideas.

I learned of Dawn Thurston's life story writing classes through a flyer posted at my local genealogy society. Now, wherever you live, you, too, have access to this superb teacher's encouraging and

practical ideas. In *Breathe Life into Your Life Story*, Dawn gives suggestions of topics to write, where to begin, specific methods to create a scene, how to let your feelings show, and how to write with a focus. She provides examples of effective writing from her students and recommends a reading list of published memoirs. For me, the Thurston book is a resourceful writing companion and a reminder of the value of putting my life on paper. My mother didn't have a copy of this new book to inspire her to leave us her stories. How I would love to have her recorded memories now. For the holidays, I will send copies of *Breathe Life* to my sister, her daughters, and at least one cousin. If we don't write our stories, who will?

Great book, very helpful suggestions to help writers understand how to organize / develop a memoir that is worth reading.

This is a wonderful book for anyone interested in writing memoirs or personal histories. Every page is filled with useful tips, excellent samples, and easy exercises to stimulate a writer's (or non-writer's!) creativity. I found every page useful and interesting, and have been effective in putting the teachings to work immediately. Definitely a book I will refer to again and again!

Book was really helpful as I transcribed my mother's handwritten autobiography into a form her kids and grand kids would read. Took some liberties with quotes but according to the book, it's perfectly OK. THANKS TO GREAT TEACHERS.

This is a great resource book. Enjoyed the course that the author presented some of these ideas in.

Received it quickly and it was as described! Thanks!

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