



Title: This Is Not a Writing Manual

Author: Kerri Maher

Description:

You're an aspiring writer. Maybe you've just discovered your love of words and dream of being a novelist someday. Maybe you've been filling notebooks with sci-fi fan fiction since middle school. Maybe you're contemplating a liberal arts degree, but you don't know what the heck you're going to do with it. The last thing you need is another preachy writing manual telling you how you should write.

This book *isn't* a writing manual. It *is* a series of candid and irreverent essays on the writing life, from a writer who's lived it. Kerri Majors shares stories from her own life that offer insights on the realities all writers face: developing a writing voice, finding a real job (and yes, you do need to find one), taking criticism, getting published, and dealing with rejection.

Don't have enough time to write? Learn how to plan your days to fit it all in. Not sure how your guilty pleasures translate into literature? Kerri lets you in on a few secrets about television and eavesdropping. Need a reader for your first novel? Find a writing buddy or a writing group that will support you. Nervous about submitting your first piece? Learn from Kerri's roller coaster journey to an agent and publication. *This Is Not a Writing Manual* is the writing memoir for young writers who want to use their talents in the real world.

Reviews

School Library Journal:

In this memoir, Majors answers questions that most budding writers have. Mistakes are discussed, advice is given, and tales are told. Sections and advice on the writing process, a writer's life, and the future are dissected into smaller chapters. Writing is not taught; neither is style, grammar, nor any how-to of any kind. Instead, Majors gives readers a glimpse into the daily life and lessons of one already enthralled with the undertaking that is writing. This is an honest, serious, readable chronicle that teens will appreciate for the raw truth and emotional connection to a fellow writer. Personal anecdotes pepper the chapters to teach the lessons needed to be successful. Those with an unrealistic view of the life of a writer may be surprised and discouraged. However, the author won't dampen the spirits of those who feel a calling. A must-read for serious aspiring writers.

Booklist:

This nonmanual is a highly readable memoir stuff with tips and information about the myriad aspects of pursuing a writing career by one who has carved a niche for herself in that world, namely with YARN (Young Adult Review Network). Majors' mission is to provide "therapy for writers" and to counterbalance those discouraging words of caution foisted upon budding young scribes. Her joy (and, yes, her misery and heartache) in being part of the writing world and her love for the craft are apparent throughout. Tales of her experience are juxtaposed with bits of solid, practical advice and information. Majors hasn't had her breakthrough--she's not a Stephen King or Stephenie Meyer--but she's proof that there is a place in the writing world for those who aren't superstars. She is friendly, savvy, hip, easy to identify with, and definitely in touch with her teenage writer-self. Great reading for anyone interested in the biz, thought-provoking for those looking at any career, and good for folks wanting a pleasant nonfiction read.

Kirkus Reviews:

Clearly, Majors knows what shes talking about, and readers will recognize they're getting advice from someone who knows.

An upbeat and honest guide for teens already considering writing careers.

Publishers Weekly:

Candid, honest advice and reflection from a writer whos been there.

Boston Globe:

In *This Is Not a Writing Manual*, Kerri Majors manages to combine the best of two publishing genres memoir and advice in a highly readable book. Drawing deeply on her own experiences, Majors demystifies the world of publishing. She is candid about the difficulties of making a living and a career in this field though she remains upbeat, offering practical tips about managing time and finding a writing buddy.

Young Adult Books Central:

A realistic look at the life of a writer told in accessible, anecdotal prose makes *This Is Not A Writing Manual* a solid tool in any new writer's belt.

The Horn Book's Out of the Box blog:

Majors draws from a wealth of personal experiences to encourage, cajole, console, and advise budding young writers. Some of the information is useful right away: eavesdrop as much as possible, watch guilty pleasure soap operas because they are fodder for engrossing drama, create opportunities to write, and find a writing buddy. Some advice is for tucking away until later, such as how to cobble together a living as a writer or deal with feelings of competition and envy when your friend who's also a writer gets a book deal and you don't, or vice versa. Those who are gung-ho about a career in creative writing will probably get the most out of this not-a-manual, but future journalists, editors, and those who write for fun won't feel completely left out, either, thanks to a handy list of writing resources in the back of the book.

I applaud her candor in sharing both the highs and lows of her writing career so far. Of course, Majors' views offer one perspective and are unique to her life, but what

might be most helpful about her book is her inclusion of topics aspiring young writers might not otherwise consider.

The Page Sage:

This Is Not a Writing Manual is awesome for many reasons, but especially its accessibility. It's written in a way that is open and honest, and that is applicable to all kinds of writers. Majors talks a lot about her own novel-writing experience, but the lessons she shares can be applied to any category- short story, poetry, etc. Her advice isn't at all preachy, either--really, it's just her writing story and how she has learned through experience.

That's another aspect I really appreciated--her anecdotes are so relatable and often funny in an I-know-exactly-what-she-means kind of way. And through the telling of Major's writing life, the reader gets a clear sense about how much she loves to write. This is an author who is really, truly dedicated to her craft and that passion gets the reader excited to write! I'd read a chapter and immediately want to go off and get writing!

5 stars

ccriley.com:

Finally, something that just wrote about writing, not how to get published or how to sell. I wanted --needed-- a book to tell me that all writers go through the same struggles. This book is exactly what I needed.

In the introduction, Majors states that the book is not a manual, textbook, guidebook, or handbook Good, because I definitely wasn't looking for any of those things. She goes on to say that she likes to think of the book as therapy for writers. Yes. I had found exactly what I was looking for.

I really loved this book. I loved it so much that I'm trying to miraculously find enough money to purchase a copy for all of my learners who participate in Writers Block Writing Club. I want them to read this at the age that I wish I could have read it. I loved it so much I went to the author's website and left her a comment! So, if you are writerly, go buy this book! You won't regret it!

Francisco X. Stork, author of *Irises*:

This Is Not a Writing Manual is a personal book in the best sense of the word. Kerri Majors' advice is hard won. It comes from her own joys and disappointments, her hopes and unwavering dedication to writing. The book, as the title says, will not teach you how to write. What the book will do is take you, like a trusted friend, through some of the decisions you will need to make in order to be a writer. It's practical and heartfelt wisdom will prepare you for the challenges and fulfillments of the writing life.

Blythe Woolston, author *Black Helicopters*:

When I was a writing teacher, I met many talented, passionate young writers who wondered how to move forward. I sincerely wish I'd had Kerri Majors' *This Is Not a Writing Manual* to help them. Never prescriptive, always honest, this book is a genuine resource that grapples with the real work of writing -- finding courage, finding time,

and finding a way.

John Cusick, literary agent and author of *Girl Parts*:

A personal and invigorating memoir of the creative life, *This Is Not a Writing Manual* offers wisdom, camaraderie, and inspiration for newbies and veterans alike.

Allen Zadoff, author of *Boy Nobody*:

I wish I had a time machine so I could go back and read this book twenty years ago. It would have saved me a lot of time, grief, and paper. The good news is you can read it now.

AM Station:

I have just read the BEST WRITING BOOK. EVER. Hands down.

I feel like my writing life has over gone a complete makeover. I am seriously mind blown by the sheer awesomeness of TINAWM (This Is Not A Writing Manual).

Who should read this book

Every single writer in the world. Whether you are 12 or 72, you NEED to read this book. It doesn't matter if you're just beginning your first-first draft or if you're J.K. Rowling. The book seems to be marketed toward teenagers, but every writer has much to learn from TNAWM. READ THIS BOOK!

Why should you read this book

Because I told you to! Duh.

Seriously, though, there is so much information to be gleaned from this book. It covers everything from sitting down and writing to drawing inspiration from everyday life to publishing and everything in between.

It encouraged me to BE A WRITER.

It challenged me not to compare myself to other writers. It showed me that publishing a book and being a successful writer IS POSSIBLE. It taught me never to write about something that I am not passionate about. It challenged me not to be afraid to leave one WIP and begin another. It affirmed my belief that there is a seriously awesome writing community. It challenged me not to let my insecurities get in the way of my writing and to better channel that energy.

And honestly That's only the very beginning.

Kerri Majors affirmed me, challenged me, made me laugh, and made me think. I could probably write a whole book about how much I love her book. You should read this book because I GUARANTEE you that you will be challenged. You will learn something new. You will be encouraged and be inspired.