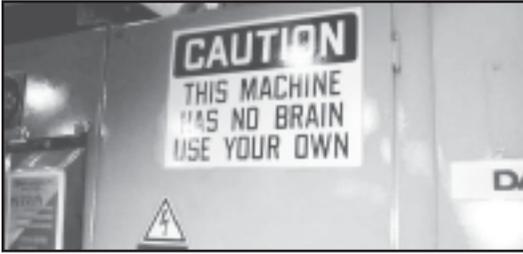


WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW – HELP OR HINDRANCE?



Write What You Know. It's something that is often given as advice for first-time writers. Type these words into Google and you'll find website after website and post after post discussing the topic.

Write What You Know is a great idea on paper. You want to write, but aren't sure where to start. It makes sense to look at the world around you. This way you're not coming up with an idea from scratch; there's an information base.

Write your story, write about something that's happening in your family, or from your family's past. Use someone real as your main character. Use your hobby or your current job as the subject matter. Use your experience and your experiences.

The concept can also be rather limiting. What if there's nothing in your life that interests you as a writer? And there are so many characters, subjects, topics, possible ideas out in the world that you'll know nothing about. Should they be out of the question to writers starting out?

Every piece of advice can be shaped to suit your writing. Here's how to use Write What You Know to your best advantage:

Write What You, and Everyone Else, Knows

Every human being is an expert on emotion. What do you know about love, hate, happiness, fear, jealousy? Use emotion as your information base.

Write your thoughts on the basic emotions. Think how a character would act and react with each emotion. Not only is emotion a great place to start with your story and your characters, it also acts as a way to instantly connect to your audience. That connection is vital to the success of your work.

Write About Something You Know Nothing About

It's important to write from a place of knowledge, that's really what Write What You Know means. If you're writing in a realistic vein, the details need to reflect the situation. Otherwise, your audience will be jolted out of the world you're trying to create.

But there's no reason why you can't take a topic you know nothing about and make yourself an expert. Research an unknown subject, create a character who exists in the middle of the subject and you're on your way.

Further to that, why not research a subject you're already familiar with? Every subject can benefit from research; you never know what you're going to find out and what may take your work in a new direction.

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Write From a Place Of Passion

You know what fuels you as a writer. That's what you should write about. Do you feel passionately about the environment? Make the environment central to the plot. Passion is what divides mediocre writing with amazing writing. If you always write from a place of passion, whether it's a subject or even the act of writing itself, you'll never be at a loss for material.

When to Write What You Know

There's no reason you can't take the advice. Use your experiences, use your history. The problem arises when writers bind themselves in with reality. They use a 'real' situation and try to recreate that situation on the page. They don't deviate. They stay within the lines. Unless it's non-fiction, every piece of writing needs a creative eye and imagination. That's the fun part of being a writer!

The key is not to take Write What You Know too literally. That's not being a writer.

Use your creative tools to take what you know to the next level.