

Some Thoughts on the Business of Writing

The first business of writing is writing. Carve out regular time to write amid the daily bustle of work and family.

Trust that the imagination is a renewable resource and that if it's finished for the day it will return tomorrow. The only way to harm the imagination is to try to hoard it.

Eliminate any grandiose view of yourself as a writer; rather see yourself as a ditch digger who cleans up after herself, a craftsman who knows the importance of scaffolding and when to dismantle it.

See the first draft as an opportunity for fluency, to generate material and to be surprised by everything you encounter, as in life. The first draft's not the place to polish sentences.

If you're writing stories collect material from everywhere. Learn the art of seamless synthesis. Cannibalism and gluttony are fair game. Find a supple method for repurposing what you ingest.

Develop an ear for authenticity in your work and use that measure of true north as your compass during multiple rewrites.

When editing, dispassionately toss away your good lines and anything else that doesn't serve the whole.

Read voraciously the kind of books you want to write and very different books as well.

Give up illusions about hitting it big; maybe hope to be a working stiff who writes one good book after another.

Bart Schneider
Creative Sonoma
April 2, 2016