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# 心灵鸡汤

作家是怎样炼成的

## Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul

Jack Canfield  
Mark Victor Hansen  
Bud Gardner

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——作家是怎样  
炼成的

CHICKEN SOUP  
FOR THE WRITER'S SOUL



Jack Canfield  
Mark Victor Hansen  
Bud Gardener



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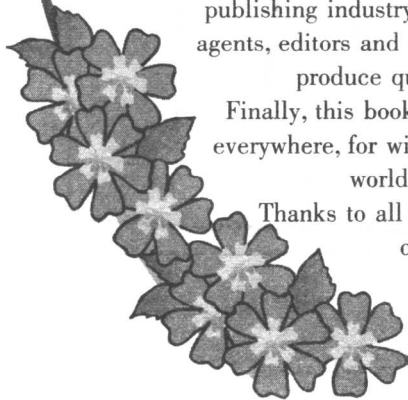
This book is dedicated to all the beginning and professional writers, journalists, novelists, freelancers, poets, screenwriters and cartoonists throughout the world who are striving, through their written work, to make the world a better place. Your heartfelt articles, poems, short stories, novels, nonfiction books, plays and cartoons enlighten, enthrall and entertain readers throughout the world.

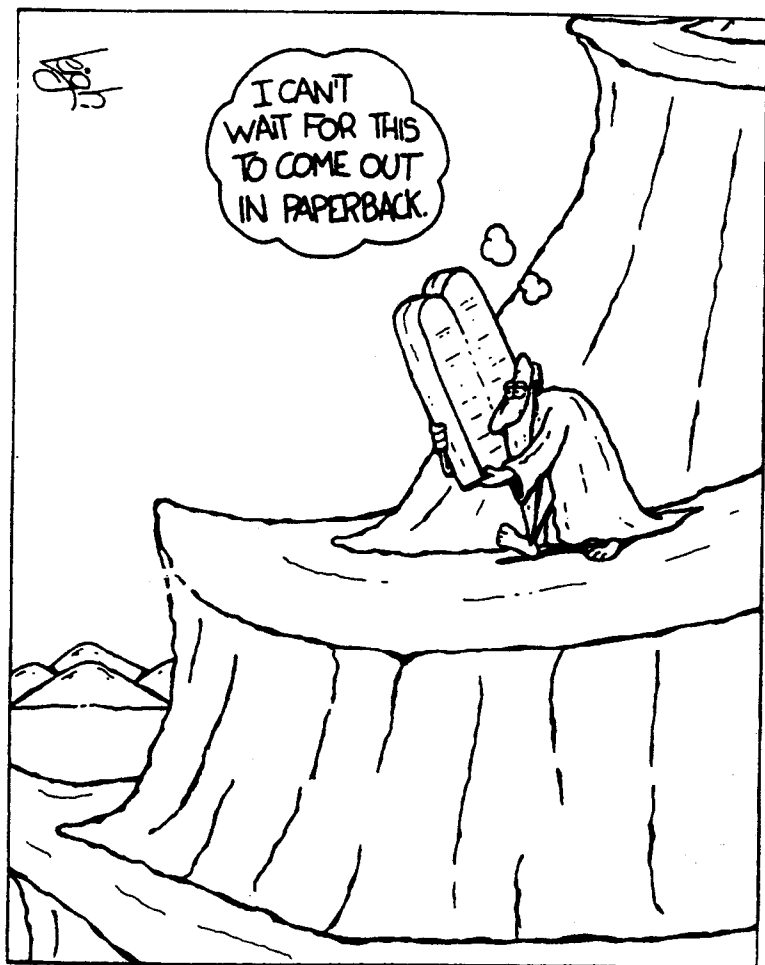
We also dedicate this book to all the English, journalism, creative writing and reading teachers, at all levels in our educational system, who have dedicated their lives to inspiring our future generations to express themselves through the written word.

In addition, this book is dedicated to the Maui Writers Foundation, the sponsoring organization of the Maui Writers Conference and Maui Writers Retreat, annual writing programs that are changing the face of the publishing industry by bringing bestselling authors, agents, editors and publishers together with writers to produce quality literary properties.

Finally, this book is dedicated to all the readers everywhere, for without you, the great works of the world would lie dormant.

Thanks to all of you for keeping the spirit of writing alive.





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## Introduction

Maybe once in a lifetime, along comes a book that makes a real difference in the life of a writer. *Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul* is that book. The mission of this book—to turn you, *America and the world onto the value of writing*—has attracted some of the finest authors in the world to share their stories with you. You'll recognize many of their names because you have read their work before. However, you may not know how they began writing, struggled to get published, faced rejection, focused hard on their own work, and finally realized their dreams by becoming published authors. They have revealed their life stories here for you.

You'll learn how Sue Grafton wrote six unpublished novels before she sold '*A*' *Is for Alibi*, the first of fifteen bestselling mystery novels. Or read how Steve Allen, a TV personality and author of more than fifty books and 8,000 songs, was accused of plagiarism; how Catherine Lanigan overcame a university professor's cruelty to—after waiting fourteen years—publish bestsellers *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile*; how Ernest J. Gaines, who couldn't go into a public library until he was fifteen years of age, checked out his first book and declared "I'm going to be a writer" and is



## INTRODUCTION

now an icon in American literature; how Barnaby Conrad helped shape the young Alex Haley's writing career; how Gene Perret practiced writing hundreds of jokes for Bob Hope long before Bob Hope ever hired him; how Hugh Prather, frustrated with his writing career, began writing personal notes that became his bestseller *Notes to Myself*, eventually selling five million copies; how John Tullius's uncle mentored him toward a fulfilling writing career; and how Lois Duncan wrote her way through college, tripling her income as she learned.

These and many, many more great stories await you.

As you read these marvelous stories, you, too, will feel their passion and will be inspired to try your own hand at writing. You will begin to find your own writing voice, to experience value moments ("Ahas!") as you write, to overcome rejection, to gain the courage to persevere, and, by writing fine stories, you'll remake a world. We urge you to read these stories over and over again to capture the valuable lessons, insights and wisdom found within.

We believe this book will sustain you during times of challenge, frustration and failure, and will guide you to new levels of seeing, feeling, perceiving and being. We hope *Writer's Soul* will become your life-long companion, inspiring you to open your heart and rekindle your spirit again and again, motivating you to become the best writer you can possibly be. In short, let this legacy of heartfelt stories touch you deeply, enabling you to clearly understand, as writer Jennifer Martin puts it so well in this book, "how sacred is the written word that paints portraits on our souls."





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# HOW I BECAME A WRITER

When I want to read a good book,  
I write one.

*Benjamin Disraeli*





## Ronny's Book

At first glance, Ronny looked like every other kid in the first-grade classroom where I volunteered as the Reading Mom. Wind-blown hair, scuffed shoes, a little bit of dirt behind his ears, some kind of sandwich smear around his mouth.

On closer inspection, though, the layer of dirt on Ronny's face, the crusty nose, and the packed grime under his fingernails told me he didn't get dirty at school. He arrived that way.

His clothes were ragged and mismatched, his sneakers had string for laces, and his backpack was no more than a plastic shopping bag.

Along with his outward appearance, Ronny stood apart from his classmates in other ways, too. He had a speech impediment, wasn't reading or writing at grade-level and had already been held back a year, making him eight years old in the first grade. His home life was a shambles with transient parents who uprooted him at their whim. He had yet to live a full year in any one place.

I quickly learned that beneath his grungy exterior, Ronny possessed a spark, a resilience that I'd never seen in a child who faced such tremendous odds.

I worked with all the students in Ronny's class on a one-on-one basis to improve their reading skills. Each day, Ronny's head twisted around as I came into the classroom, and his eyes followed me as I set up in a corner, imploring, "Pick me! Pick me!" Of course I couldn't pick him every day. Other kids needed my help, too.





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On the days when it was Ronny's turn, I'd give him a silent nod, and he'd fly out of his chair and bound across the room in a blink. He sat awfully close—too close for me in the beginning, I must admit—and opened the book we were tackling as if he were unearthing a treasure the world had never seen.

I watched his dirt-caked fingers move slowly under each letter as he struggled to sound out “Bud the Sub”. It sounded more like “Baw Daw Saw” when he said it because of his speech impediment and his difficulty with the alphabet.

Each word offered a challenge and a triumph wrapped as one; Ronny painstakingly sounded out each letter, then tried to put them together to form a word. Regardless if “ball” ended up as “Bah-lah” or “bow”, the biggest grin would spread across his face, and his eyes would twinkle and overflow with pride. It broke my heart each and every time. I just wanted to whisk him out of his life, take him home, clean him up and love him.

Many nights, after I'd tucked my own children into bed, I'd sit and think about Ronny. Where was he? Was he safe? Was he reading a book by flashlight under the blankets? Did he even have blankets?

The year passed quickly and Ronny had made some progress but hardly enough to bring him up to grade level. He was the only one who didn't know that, though. As far as he knew, he read just fine.

A few weeks before the school year ended, I held an awards ceremony. I had treats, gifts and certificates of achievement for everyone: Best Sounder-Outer, Most Expressive, Loudest Reader, Fastest Page-Turner.

It took me awhile to figure out where Ronny fit; I needed something positive, but there wasn't really much. I finally decided on “Most Improved Reader” —quite a stretch, but I thought it



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would do him a world of good to hear.

I presented Ronny with his certificate and a book—one of those Little Golden Books that cost forty-nine cents at the grocery store checkout. Tears rolled down his cheeks, streaking the ever-permanent layer of dirt as he clutched the book to his chest and floated back to his seat. I choked back the lump that rose in my throat.

I stayed with the class for most of the day; Ronny never let go of the book, not once. It never left his hands.

A few days later, I returned to the school to visit. I noticed Ronny on a bench near the playground, the book open in his lap. I could see his lips move as he read to himself.

His teacher appeared beside me. “He hasn’t put that book down since you gave it to him. He wears it like a shirt, close to his heart. Did you know that’s the first book he’s ever actually owned?”

Fighting back tears, I approached Ronny and watched over his shoulder as his grimy finger moved slowly across the page. I placed my hand on his shoulder and asked, “Will you read me your book, Ronny?” He glanced up, squinted into the sun, and scooted over on the bench to make room for me.

And then, for the next few minutes, he read to me with more expression, clarity, and ease than I’d ever thought possible from him. The pages were already dog-eared, like the book had been read thousands of times already.

When he finished reading, Ronny closed his book, stroked the cover with his grubby hand and said with great satisfaction, “Good book.”

A quiet pride settled over us as we sat on that playground bench, Ronny’s hand now in mine. I at once wept and marveled at the young boy beside me. What a powerful contribution the





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author of that Little Golden Book had made in the life of a disadvantaged child.

At that moment, I knew I would get serious about my own writing career and do what that author had done, and probably still does—care enough to write a story that changes a child's life, care enough to make a difference.

I strive to be that author.

*Judith A. Chance*





## A Writer's Journey

HOW I BECAME A WRITER

For a long time when I was asked how I started writing, I would say that I started writing in that Andrew Carnegie library in Vallejo, California, 1949. But for the last few years, I have come to realize that my apprenticeship as a writer happened many years earlier. Until I was fifteen years old, I lived on a sugarcane plantation in south Louisiana. Many of the old people on that plantation had never gone to school a day in their life. My aunt who raised me told me that I should write letters for the old people who could not write, and read their letters for them when they received mail. Writing the letters was a task that I did not look forward to doing, because the old people had little to say after, "Dear So and So, how are you? I am well and hope you are the same." After that they became quiet, and it was my duty to create the letter by asking them questions, and then adding some observations of my own. They always wanted you to write on both sides of the sheet of paper, but they had not said enough to fill even half the page on one side. So if you wanted to go out and shoot marbles or play baseball with your friends, you had to think, and think fast, which I did. I wrote about the weather, about the vegetable gardens in the backyard, and any other little thing that seemed important—but quickly as I could, so I could be free to play with my other brother and my friends who were not required to do this kind of work. The old people would pay me a nickel or maybe tea cakes and milk. I did not realize that, at the time I was sitting on the floor near their chairs, I was training to be