

Sharing the Beauty of Your Memories



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Fictionalizing your memoir gives you the room to develop more than one book, in which you can alter the timings of events and create even more vibrant

by, Helen Hart of SilverWood Books shares her thoughts.

Writing your memoir can be a truly cathartic experience, where an author will give meaning to specific parts of their life.

Books are a fantastic tool for research and can help ensure that mistakes in history are not repeated. You might have some amazing experiences that need to be shared, and the lessons you've learned could help others who are new to similar roles. Your family might also be keen to hear more about your professional life. For many authors, a book is a fantastic legacy to leave your loved ones and the younger generation. So what are the options for writing your book if you need to protect the privacy of the people you've worked alongside?

We often speak to budding writers who are unable to share their past due to their past careers. When you've had a lengthy career in a sector like public service, you're under the obligation to protect your colleagues and peers by keeping silent, even after you've left office. This can make writing your memoirs seem like an impossible task. However, we believe there are ways to bring your memoirs to life in an intriguing and unexpected way.

It is advised to focus on one or two main themes from your experiences, rather than listing your entire autobiography. Even if you are telling a true-to-life story, it pays to think like a fiction writer and draw the reader in from the opening word.

Sometimes the best stories can still be told after enough time has passed to protect those involved, as shown in the dramatic televised BBC series, *The Serpent*. So, it is possible for you to write your book or draft a series of journal entries to work with an editor, as long as you hold off on publishing your memoirs until the appropriate time. If the parties involved are still in the public eye, you may want to wait as much as ten years before telling your story.

Another way of protecting those who feature in your career experiences is to write your memoirs as a work of fiction. Johnny Tudor had personal experience of writing the biography of Welsh singer and performer, Dorothy Squires, the former wife of Roger Moore. From working on that book, he understood how personal memories can cause pain and suffering to the people involved. From his varied experiences, Johnny reached a point where he wanted to write his memoirs, but turned to fiction to free up his creativity. The setting of the book remains a true reflection of the Welsh valleys, however, he amalgamated his own experiences with those of his childhood friends, creating dynamic characters for his book, *Peg's Boys*.

Fictionalizing your memoir gives you the room to develop more than one book, in which you can alter the timings of events and create even more vibrant characters. If you write a straightforward memoir, your book will appeal to homeland readers who are interested in your former career. However, if you write a gripping story with global appeal, your audience stands to become much wider, provided you put the time and effort into promoting your book. You can also use a pseudonym for your book, if you wish to remain completely anonymous, creating an author brand to promote and sell the books without revealing your identity.

Writing a memoir will leave you with a beautiful legacy for future generations. Everyone can become an author. Everyone has their own story to tell. Let your imagination flow and grab a pen.

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