Introduction

We think of great writing in English, especially of writing that revolves around social change and commentary, and we think of writers like B R Ambedkar, Arundhathi Roy and William Dalrymple. Writing that is bold and incisive, and has both clarity and vision. And most of us shy away from even setting pen to paper (metaphorically). Because if we cannot write well, why write at all? Right? **Wrong!**

We all have stories to tell. And ***writing is a tool we can use to share these stories***. Every one of us can get better at the craft of writing by simple, old-fashioned practice. Let's say we start today and keep at it for a year. We will obviously be much better writers a year later than we are today. Pretty much like anything else, *writing is a craft*, a skill that can be honed. I am not arguing here that talent is nothing. But someone who practises diligently is way ahead compared to the gifted person who does not put in any practice.

It is just as important to *get good at editing* as we are at writing. Maybe, even better. At least once a day, I remember the words of one of my mentors, V S Jayaschandran, from my days as a 20-something trainee in a large newsroom. He would hand us our edited copies and tell us, sometimes sardonically, "There are no great writers, only great editors." Not a statement that was taken lightly at an ego-ridden place like a news desk.

As I grew as a writer, I began to understand what he meant. He was not referring to the superiority of editors over writers. Rather, he was talking about how the writer should learn to approach their work from the eyes of an editor. An objective pair of eyes makes all the difference. In fact, most times, this is actually what separates good writing from great, memorable writing.

> To better emphasise the need for good editing, here's a quote from one of the wittiest of writers.
> “Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very’; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.” - *Mark Twain*

How will this book help you become better writers?

This is not a book about language or writing styles or grammar (Ok, there is a teeny bit of grammar, but we'll keep it fun!). What this book will help you with is in thinking through ideas, structuring them, putting your thoughts in order and creating better stories. There are tips and hacks, a little bit of explanation about each, and also suggest ways in which it can be put into practice. Wherever possible, I have also included exercises that you can try out.

All of this helps, if you are actually willing to put in a little time each day towards writing. Maybe *20 minutes a day* is all you can give. You can use the tips in this book to make the best use of those 20 minutes of writing. Happy writing!

> “A word after a word after a word is power.” - *Margaret Atwood*



Revision #7
Created 2024-08-20 07:45:32 UTC by Sumi
Updated 2024-10-03 05:52:02 UTC by Sumi