



Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life

Natalie Goldberg

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Natalie Goldberg, author of the bestselling *Writing Down The Bones*, teaches a method of writing that can take you beyond craft to the true source of creative power: The mind that is "raw, full of energy, alive and hungry."

Here is compassionate, practical, and often humorous advice about how to find time to write, how to discover your personal style, how to make sentences come alive, and how to overcome procrastination and writer's block -- including more than thirty provocative "Try this" exercises to get your pen moving.

And here also is a larger vision of the writer's task: balancing daily responsibilities with a commitment to writing; knowing when to take risks as a writer and a human being; coming to terms with success and failure and loss; and learning self-acceptance -- both in life and art.

Wild Mind will change your way of writing. It may also change your life.

Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life Details

Date : Published October 1st 1990 by Bantam (first published 1990)

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Author : Natalie Goldberg

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From Reader Review Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life for online ebook

Brklynlockhart says

I have read and reread this book 4 times since buying it in July. What I learned was how fine tune my writing practice everyday and find time to write through out the day!

Literary Mama says

Natalie Goldberg's Writing Down the Bones and Wild Mind. The first was given to me around 2000 as I tried to infuse my academic prose with life. This book gave me the freedom to scribble outside the lines. Don't doubt, just trust yourself and go, she seems to say. I bought Wild Mind shortly afterward, and off I went.

Read Literary Mama's full review here: <http://www.literarymama.com/reviews/a...>

Lyn says

Natalie's writing is so refreshing and full of enthusiam about writing. I love how she broke each chapter with a try this, made you feel like you had your cheerleader encouraging you to take the next step. There are lots of good writing tips for all levels of writers and poets alike.

I never thought about how a writer feels when they reach the ending of a story. A good author lives with their character day in day out and then closes the door. It's got to be like losing a best friend.

I feel like she is not just another author but a friend helping me take the plunge into the writing world with my eyes wide open.

Desiree says

A good read. I will come back to it when I have writer's block or feel like I need to explore things that I haven't. I especially enjoyed it given that I'm from New Mexico, where the author resides. It's a little bit odd, of course, but I suppose you wouldn't pick up a book called Wild Mind expecting it to be tame.

Ruth Charchian says

Wow! Natalie Goldberg is phenominal. This is a remarkable book. Her approach is significantly different from other books on writing and much more suited to my style of "just do it." She gets you started with topics to prime the writer's writing pump. It is amazing what you know that you don't know you know. I dare anyone who reads this book to read it and not be compelled, inspired, and stimulated to pick up a pen and write like crazy.

Emma Sea says

I enjoyed this more than *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. I find Goldberg's writing infinitely relaxing. After I read *The True Secret of Writing: Connecting Life with Language* I even looked into doing a Vipassana meditation retreat. Beginners have to start with a 10-day retreat. That's 10 days of vegetarian food, including only fruit after midday. I decided just to keep reading Goldberg's books instead.

Amber says

This is a great book if you want to write. I love reading and writing, so this book amazed me, even as a high school student. Natalie Goldberg has a way of teaching you to pull out everything inside of you and slap it caty-whampus on a page. It is, very simply, a book on how to find your inner writer, whether you have any intentions of being a writer professionally or not. It has you start out with morning pages (although I think that's what they call them in "the Artist's Way") and then gives you a "try this". It gets you writing in a therapeutic way. A must-read for anyone who is experiencing writers block, or who simply wants to write more often!

Side Note: recently heard a speaker at a conference on writing, and HE also recommended this book. It's old but good! No offense, but I'm not willing to loan out my tattered copy. You could probably find it on amazon for a penny though :)

Erasmus Guerra says

Wild Mind is Natalie Goldberg's follow up to the classic how-to book *Writing Down the Bones*. I'd read both books in the early '90s, *Bones* on a long bus ride from South Texas to New York, and *Wild Mind* soon after when Goldberg was doing a reading in the city. I'd always meant to dip back into it for a re-read. Finally, after more than a decade, while feeling a bit aimless in my writing life, I pulled it off the shelf.

The book not only reintroduced me to the rules of writing practice, but it also relaxed my soul with its grounded prose and Goldberg's knack for bringing a reader into the present--not just waking me up to the words on the page, but to everything going on around me. This time around, while I still highlighted wonderful "Try This" exercises interspersed between the short, anecdotal chapters, I was also able to see the narrative threads of Goldberg's Zen teacher's failing health, her migrations between Minnesota and New Mexico, and stories of her early life in suburban Long Island.

I was also able to appreciate the story of Goldberg's own journey while writing her first novel *Banana Rose*. She generously allows readers to witness human moments of both creative euphoria and post-book emptiness.

This is one book I recommend for would-be writers and those looking for a literary tune-up. It took me more than a decade to give this book another read. I hope I don't take nearly as long until returning to it again.

Marlena Frank says

This is very much a book that is difficult to rate for me. At times I was annoyed with Natalie (affectionately called Nat in the piece), and at other times I completely sympathized with her. She is both the wise sage seeming to know more about the art of writing than you ever guessed, and at other times she seems very distant and naive.

At one point she talks about how she had a job that required her to go in once a week, and found that this was too much for her to handle and got in the way of her writing. So she quit the job and spent the rest of her time focusing on her piece. Not many people I believe are able to make such a choice so casually, and I would wager that most writers have people in their lives that rely on their day job paycheck. It's naive to think that everybody could do this on a whim, but at the same time I have to admire Natalie for not beating around the bush here. She comes right out and tells you this even though it might come across negative to the readers. That's fine bravery there.

Although I don't always agree with Natalie, I found her book be quite inspiring. She gets you to think about writing in new ways, and she gets you to feel more comfortable writing. At one point she says that writing is just like mastering any other skill such as running. You get better at it with practice, and as they always say with experts, the better you get the more difficult it becomes to instruct beginners. You're with Natalie through her ups and downs, though her questioning search for identity, and her beautiful mix of zen and writing. I would certainly be interested in reading her other novel, *Writing Down the Bones*, since it's typically seen as a better guide for writers than this book. However I highly recommend reading this. Her prose is calm and smooth, and you feel like she's chatting to you across a cafe table sipping some herbal tea.

Just be prepared to accept Natalie as who she is and keep an open mind. You'll be greatly rewarded if you do.

Violeta Nedkova says

Most writers refer to *Writing Down the Bones* as a good book to read, but I'd have to say that I enjoyed the sequel better. *Wild Mind* promotes what Goldberg calls *Writing Practice*, which is when you free-write until the nonsense turns into sense. It's a collection of essays that touch on life and art issues and it is truly one of my favorite books on writing to date.

Rainey says

I found that this book gave me great creative sparks. At the time my engine wasn't really turning over but I think it could be a good read when you're stuck.

Drew says

I just finished reading Natalie Goldberg's book on writing. I don't know how the book ended up in my hands but now that I'm writing, I was intrigued. Overall, I was disappointed. Parts of the book I found classist and other parts bordered on racist. The book is part of Bantam's New Age collection, so there's a lot the author tries to convey in a spiritual/philosophical vein. However, her tone seems to conflict with the message she says she wants to convey. As for the book's structure, I don't think there was any. There was no flow between sections, no organization, no building upon previous lessons. This work should have been edited down by about 100 pages and forged into a coherent progression.

There are two things I'll take away from this book that are incredibly useful. First, she gives four things you must do in order to be a writer and do writing: (1) keep your hand moving; (2) lose control; (3) be specific; and (4) don't think. I liked these so much I printed them on an index card I keep in front of me while I write. Second, her advice to would-be writers: "If you want to write, write. This is your life. You are responsible for it. You will not live forever. Don't wait" (p. 45).

Pilar says

This morning, I read five chapters and finished *Wild Mind*. I was immersed in Natalie Goldberg's writing. I love this woman. Her writing is rich and beautiful. She is really a gifted writer. Each chapter brought to life an analogy or personal reflection. I enjoyed gleaning the nuggets she shared throughout the book.

I'm eager to start her first book called *Writing Down The Bones*.

Wild Mind by Natalie Goldberg is a great book which I highly recommend to all writers on any level. There is something for everyone in this book.

To read more of this review, please visit <http://www.ordinaryservant.com/?p=1077>

Debbie Petersen says

Since I read *Wild Mind* and *Writing Down the Bones* practically at the same time, I have them in my head as one book. One bit of advice helped me with my morning pages, when I am stuck and sitting there knowing I have to write three pages longhand before I get up and feeling completely blank and distracted by everything else I have to get done today (wow...run on sentence!) Simply start with "I remember"...before this, my morning pages were really just daily journaling of complaints and worries, but with "I remember" I was suddenly writing about climbing a tree to read Nancy Drew and how much I hated swim lessons. While I was writing, several deer appeared in my yard looking for food, so I wrote about that. Before I knew it, I was out of *Monkey Mind* and in full-fledged *Wild Mind*. I got my copy from the library, but I may have to buy it.

Erica Chang says

the best book i've read about writing so far. not a lot of technical instructions but rather soulful and that's

what writing's really about in my opinion

Nicole says

Natalie Goldberg has definitely been a writing guru and true inspiration for me over the years. This book, along with her other book, *Writing Down the Bones*, sit on my desk as books I can open I be reminded why I write and how to get into the meat of how to write.

"You have to let writing eat your life and follow it where it takes you. You fit into it; it doesn't fit neatly into your life. It makes you wild..." she writes.

Her books morphed me from writing as a "lust" into writing being a "passion" for me. She also taught me how to write 'as though taking a friend's hand and showing him or her the pleasure you have in something and then writing as though you were sharing it.'

Her words have moved me and transformed me as a writer.

Jacqueline says

I love reading books on writing and came across this Kindle one. I purchased and read it in a week. I think it's a good book, well worth reading. It has many good writing exercises throughout. I grew tired of a few of the stories by the end (the drug taking, the rant about not needing a degree, etc.). The bit about getting a degree being a waste seemed ridiculous to me, especially since early on she made a point via Hemingway in say that "...if a writer knows something, even if he doesn't write it, it is present in his work." So that seems to contradict her rant about not needing and never using her degrees. Overall this is a good book and worth reading.

Amelia says

Five years of HE has given me both a horror of writing and an appreciation of its necessity. I'm reading this in an attempt to get over the horror. Natalie G is ever-so-slightly *woo*, but in a good, proper zen way rather than a bullshit way. She writes beautifully. And she inspires me to get on with writing like no-one else.

Marc Vosburgh says

I hate writing and I hate to read much. So when I had to read a book about writing I was not excited at all. When I got the copy of *Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life* and started to read it, I caught myself wanting to read more and trying all the "Try This" that I could. Natalie Goldberg approach to writing is completely different from what most people are taught. She breaks down the 238 page book into 62 chapters and 35 "Try This" exercises. Each chapter is very short usually about two or three pages in length and focuses on a certain aspect of writing. *Wild Mind* also focuses on getting rid of what Goldberg calls "Monkey Mind." It's that little critic that says I stink at writing. "So our job as writers is to not diddle around our whole lives in

the [monkey mind:] but to take one big step out of it and sink into the big sky and write from there. Let yourself live in something that is already rightfully yours-your own wild mind" (33). Throughout the book Goldberg teaches us to throw out the conventional way of writing and to just let our pen move on the paper and wait for our wild mind to just write. Throughout the book Goldberg gives 35 different exercises to try to help understand and develop the concepts that she talks about. As a student going through school I always struggled to write papers because I could never get what was in my mind onto the paper because of the editor in me wanted to correct everything from the start. With this book and all the exercises that are included in it, my writing as become better and easier. I have learned many new things that I will carry with me the rest of my life.

Jean Marie Angelo says

I had a group of writer friends years ago who met regularly to do these exercises. Was like spiritual food. Highly recommended for anyone living the creative life.
