

Blog du Jour

Up at Bat: Bill Boggs 'So You Want to Write a Book?'

By Bill Boggs

 0 comments

Posted on August 16, 2022



Bill Boggs with his book "The Adventures of Spike the Wonder Dog"

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In recognition of Dan's presenting sponsorship of the [2022 East Hampton Artists & Writers Charity Softball Game](#) on Saturday, August 20, we are giving participating artists and writers free rein to write whatever they want in this space this month. Here, television icon, playwright and talk show host [Bill Boggs](#) writes about bringing his book to East Hampton Library's Authors Night.

SO YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK?

This Saturday evening (August 13) is one of the premier attractions of the summer in East Hampton — [Authors Night](#), which benefits the beautiful East Hampton Library.

Hundreds of writers will gather under a huge, hopefully, well-ventilated tent, to mix, mingle and sign their books for the throng that will attend. Many authors will be presenting their latest of several highly acclaimed books, others will be novices with their first work, some books will be from top-tier publishing houses, others will be self-published. I'll be there with my satirical novel, *The Adventures of Spike the Wonder Dog*, published by Post Hill Press.

But enough about me ... well, actually just a little more, so you can see where I'm going here. The irreverent *Spike* novel (The dog narrates it) is my third book, the first was a romantic novel, *At First Sight*, published in 1980, early in my career as a TV talk show host. The second, *Got What it Takes?*, published in 2007 by Harper/Collins, was a self-help book based on my interviews with highly successful people about the internal resources they employed to reach the heights that they'd achieved in life. As a result of *Got What it Takes?*, I traveled around the country giving talks on some of the behavioral elements I uncovered connected to success, and I was hired to contribute profiles for the PBS TV show, *My Generation*.

During my several years on the speaking circuit, hundreds of people approached me telling me that they'd always wanted to write a book, and then promptly listed the reasons why they didn't think they could do it. How's that for creating a self-fulfilling prophecy for yourself? I always tried to encourage them in the best way I could, and a few possibly listened because they ended up sending me their books.

Undoubtedly, many who attend Authors Night are going to walk away from the stimulating experience wishing that they'd been part of the literary action by being one of the writers sitting at a table signing books. Maybe you weren't there, but you're reading this now remembering the great idea you've had for years for a novel, or a memoir, or a collection of short stories, or a business primer, or a children's book, whatever — just stay away from telling stories narrated by cheeky canines — that's my genre.

Maybe at this moment, I've lit the spark in you once again to the idea of writing your book. What does it take to make it happen? What does it take not to be the person who for all of their life talks about a great idea they have for a book, but never writes it? What does it take? Foremost, RESOLVE. Declaring to yourself that you have a commitment to creating something and then, throwing yourself in. Many days before I sit down to work, and I am writing comedy, I say to myself, "Let it Rip!" Please don't visualize that annoying, omnipresent Nike swoosh when I say this, but, "JUST DO IT."

I'd suggest embracing the idea that a small amount of time, even a couple of days a week over a long period of time, will produce huge results. During the entire process of writing *Spike*, and the sequel I've just completed *Spike Unleashed*, (Yes, folks, he's coming back), I never wrote for more than an

hour and 45 minutes on any given day.

The first step I'd suggest is disarmingly simple: Without worrying about the long road ahead, without programming yourself for defeat before you start by telling yourself you're too busy, or that can't really write, or by worrying that if you become a writer you'll start drinking too much (that hasn't happened to me ... yet), and with no concern for the results — sit down to write, and see what comes forth.

Likely, you'll be surprised that something finally did happen and you have a page or two. You're started. (I could end the essay here, but they need more words.) With that tiny bit of wind in your sails, figure when the best part of the day is for you to write. In my case, I blocked out mid-afternoons, and avoided meeting people for lunch on the days I planned to work on *Spike*. For the first novel, I had to write in the mornings, around 6 a.m., before I'd go jogging and head off to work on my daily live TV show. You can find the time; it's there. You will have to sacrifice, but when in life have you achieved something without sacrifice?

While writing, try to put yourself in an environmental situation where you achieve a state of "deep focus" — no pinging phones, no distractions. One email or phone call interruption can pull you away from the flow that is your most productive mental state, and it can take several minutes to get back in that groove.

Have the ability to make notes at all times. You will find that once you are writing and creating, a force will be with you subconsciously that can feed the process. Don't trust yourself to remember random good ideas, always jot them down. If you and I ever meet, ask me to show you one of the small Moleskine notebooks I have with me at all times.

Be prepared to write badly, remembering that nothing can happen until it's on the page. Editing and polishing your work is a key to good writing. On *Spike Unleashed*, I just completed my third full edit and polish of the material. For me, the editing does not take the deep focus of the creative writing, and it is immensely fulfilling to start back on the first page and see what you've created. Writing a book is both a mentally mystical process, and a pure practical test of your commitment to manifest it.

Beyond anything else, I believe you've got to believe that you can write the book. Use what you have, write what you know, rid yourself of excuses, sit-down and make it happen.

Spike and I will hope to see you some warm August evening under a tent on Authors Night. Good luck.

Bill Boggs, who lives in Springs, is an Emmy-winning TV host, producer, professional speaker, as

well as the author of three books. His latest is the acclaimed satirical novel, [The Adventures of Spike the Wonder Dog: As Told to Bill Boggs](#). It's available at Amazon, bookstores and anywhere books are sold. Find Boggs on [BillBoggsTV](#) on YouTube, on Instagram [@realbillboggs](#) and at [billboggs.com](#).

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