

# The Writer's Workshop



from Diana Scimone  
[www.peapodpublishing.com](http://www.peapodpublishing.com)  
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Welcome to the latest issue of **The Writer's Workshop**, an e-letter designed to help you write your book.

My fact-finding trip to Thailand for PawPaw's Pals was excellent; you can read more about it in the "Inspiration" section below.

Don't forget to download a copy of my new e-book, **How to Write a Book**. It's packed with how-to information, practical direction, and step-by-step instructions to help you take your book from dream to reality. It contains the first seven issues of **The Writer's Workshop**, plus lots and lots more. You can download it with a few clicks of your mouse at [www.peapodpublishing.com](http://www.peapodpublishing.com). Just \$14.95, it's a great investment that will help you finally write the book you've always dreamed of writing.

## 1. How to Write a Book: Lessons from Broadway

Last weekend I was in Washington, D.C. for PawPaw's Pals, and my sister, Nancy, invited me to go to the Kennedy Center to hear a talk by Stephen Schwartz. Schwartz has written music and/or lyrics for many Broadway shows including *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *Children of Eden*, and the current Broadway hit, *Wicked*. He collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on *Mass*, and with Alan Menken on the scores for the Disney animated features *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He also wrote the songs for the DreamWorks animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*.

Do you think we can learn something about writing from someone with such stellar credentials?

Schwartz said that one of the questions he's asked most often is, "How do you write a hit song?" His answer applies not just to writing songs, but also to writing books: "Just keep moving forward, and keep writing. If you are a writer, it's helpful to have written something."

Translation for book writers: "You can't publish what you haven't written."

Schwartz also talked about the organizing aspect of writing. For example, after he acquired the rights to turn *Wicked* the book into *Wicked* the musical, he didn't immediately sit down at the piano

and start writing songs. Instead, he spent an entire year working on the outline for the musical. "I knew the open, and the end of the first act, and the ending, and I worked on the rest." Keep that in mind as you spend months (maybe even a year) laboring over your book's blueprint (a.k.a. outline).

Later, Nancy and I had an opportunity to talk with him for a few moments. We asked about his writing schedule—and as soon as he answered, I knew I would share it with you in **The Writer's Workshop**. He said he forces himself to write every single day, and if he doesn't....he paused to indicate it wouldn't get done. He's an early-morning writer, because that's his most creative time of day, although he usually goes back to it in the afternoon to work on what's he's written.

So there are three valuable pieces of information we can learn from one of the world's most successful writers:

1. Keep moving forward, and keep writing. If you are a writer, it's helpful to have written something.
2. Spend a lot of time on your outline (a.k.a. blueprint).
3. Force yourself to write every single day, because if you don't, it won't get done.

You can read more about Stephen Schwartz at [www.stephenschwartz.com](http://www.stephenschwartz.com).

## **2. Tip of the Month: Write it down!**

How many brilliant thoughts do we lose each week because we didn't write them down? (I know this from personal experience.) Keep a pen and paper in every room and in your car, and get ready to jot down those pearls of wisdom that flow in the most creative (and usually inopportune) moments. You'll tell yourself, "I'll remember that," but you won't unless you put it on paper.

## **3. Inspiration: Through your pain, you'll discover your message.**

Her story was heartbreaking, and now she was trying to write a book about it. I met "Anne" at a recent writer's workshop, and as we worked on her book, it was obvious she had no idea the pain it would cause to relive that tragedy. But God had given her an important message to share with others who had also experienced tragedy. She could have decided it was too painful to relive the experience, but she chose to go through it again as she works on her book. Out of that will come a message for others.

You, too, may have experienced a trauma that is the foundation of your book. It may not be pleasant to go through it again, but your book will not get written unless you do (you could still write it, but it would not be nearly as compelling).

My recent **PawPaw's Pals** fact-finding trip to Thailand involved a lot of pain—not my own, but encountering the pain that many Thai girls have gone through as they've been sold or kidnapped into the pros titution trade. Child trafficking for s ex is a multi-billion dollar business, and the stories I heard were heartbreaking. I could choose a less painful subject to focus on, but that's not where

God is calling me—and if you have a “painful” book to write, you understand that call. Not long after I founded PawPaw’s Pals to help children in disaster and crisis situations around the world, God told me clearly that He did not want me just to “throw money” at the problem and not get emotionally involved. The only way to really help these children was to feel His heart for them—and often that is painful.

Most people in Thailand have no idea of the dangers of child trafficking, and can easily fall prey to it when a shameless person offers to educate their daughters in the big city or get them good jobs to help support their families (“Just sign here, and I’ll take care of everything.”). They have no idea that their daughters—some as young as 5 years old—are being sold to brothels where they’ll be abused and exploited.

As a result of my fact-finding trip to Thailand, PawPaw’s Pals will put together an anti-trafficking awareness campaign—called “Not For Sale”—for Thai children, parents, schools, and the community. We’ll write children’s books, comic books, posters, curriculum, and other anti-trafficking awareness material. Once we test “Not For Sale” in Thailand, we’ll make it available to other countries where child trafficking is also a crisis.

If you’d like to contribute to this ongoing effort, you may make a donation by [clicking here](#), or by sending your check payable to PawPaw’s Pals, Inc., PO Box 952949, Lake Mary, Florida 32795-2949. PawPaw’s Pals, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your donation is tax deductible. Thank you for partnering with us.

You can see some photos from my trip here: [PawPaw’s Pals Thailand photos](#) (click on “view slideshow”). These are not pictures of the rescued and at-risk children, whose identity we want to protect, but other photos I took on the trip.

#### 4. The Last Word

Do you need additional help writing your book? Diana offers personalized coaching to writers all over the world. If you’ve always wanted to write a book, but didn’t know how, a 90-minute coaching session by phone or in person will give you the tools and direction you need. Diana’s practical and encouraging style will help you finally write the book you’ve dreamed of writing. To set up a coaching session, or to schedule writer’s workshops or book signings: [diana@peapodpublishing.com](mailto:diana@peapodpublishing.com).

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**The Writer’s Workshop** is edited by Diana Scimone, president of Peapod Publishing, Inc. Diana is a writer, editor, journalist, children’s book author, and writer’s coach. Her writing has taken her to more than 40 countries, including Sudan, China, India, Kenya, Singapore, Korea, Thailand, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. Diana is author of *Adventures with PawPaw*, a series of children’s books about a little

dog who travels to a different country in each book, introducing young children to other countries and cultures ([www.adventureswithpawpaw.com](http://www.adventureswithpawpaw.com)).

Diana is also founder and president of PawPaw's Pals, Inc., an international relief agency helping children in disaster and crisis situations around the world. Donate to PawPaw's Pals at [www.pawpawspals.org](http://www.pawpawspals.org) PawPaw's Pals is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and all donations are tax deductible.

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PO Box 951599

Lake Mary, Florida 32795

USA

[info@peapodpublishing.com](mailto:info@peapodpublishing.com)

[www.peapodpublishing.com](http://www.peapodpublishing.com)

[www.pawpawspals.org](http://www.pawpawspals.org)