

We all have a story to tell

By Tabitha Wells

?We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect.? ? Ana?s Nin

I was six or seven years old when I began writing regularly.

Sitting underneath the Christmas tree that year was a beautiful, brightly coloured diary--one of the ones with its own special lock and key.

The first entry was silly, as was the next, and the next, and the next. But I filled that diary as often as I could. Most of the time it was just boring little recaps of my day.

As I got older, it began to encompass so much more--thoughts, dreams, stories, poems, whatever came to mind.

Poetry came naturally to me; I was never trained in what to write or the different kinds, I simply wrote them as they came to my mind.

Free-form poetry became a strength. While my fiction was a place for me to escape and find places away from the things haunting me in life, poetry was a way for me to release the darkness, hurts, and pains, buried inside. Sometimes it was by putting into words how I actually felt. Others, it was simply taking the time to admire the beauty and magic of the world around me.

Writing and reading were as necessary to me as breathing. I was that kid who got busted for sneaking their book under their desk during class and filling their course notebooks with stories instead of schoolwork.

Growing up I would never have understood this, but writing saved my life. There is a power in writing I was unaware of. I didn't look deeper or wonder how it was that pouring words out on a piece of paper gave me a freedom I couldn't find in my own life because it simply felt normal.

It felt so normal that for a short period of time, the mere idea others did not write as much as I did--or at all--simply never occurred to me.

It was in high school I began to discover I wanted to be able to share people's stories with the world, to have their tales touch others as much as they seemed to touch me.

My love of storytelling was what pushed me in the direction of journalism. Pushed may actually be somewhat of an understatement--it was more like this inexplicable force driving me forward. I was so confident in where I wanted to study and the path I was meant to take I only applied to journalism at one school. When I was offered early acceptance, I knew I made the right choice.

I have learned a lot about writing and storytelling over the last 12 years. I've had the opportunity to share stories of all kinds; terrifying tales of torture and betrayal, stories of hope and courage, stories causing inspiration, ones that make people angry, ones that make people sad, and ones capable of people to action. I've told stories which have, in turn, helped save another's life and stories so boring I would have rather put my head through a wall than write them.

But perhaps the biggest thing I have come to discover is everyone is a writer, whether they recognize it or not. There is a power that comes from sitting down and telling your own story or pouring out the thoughts swimming in your head--something deeper than the release that comes from merely speaking of it with another person.

The freedom caused from writing has nothing to do with being a good writer or a bad writer, a trained writer, or someone who merely picked up a pen or started hacking away at a keyboard. The greatest power is not the words used, but the story behind them.

I've read stories written by those who could hardly structure a sentence that moved me in a way I cannot describe, some of which profoundly impacted my life, my beliefs, and my theologies. But the impact these words have on me is tiny compared to the impact merely sharing them had on the people who put these words down into a story.

The beauty and magic behind writing your own story is it has a unique perspective nobody else can capture for you.

No-one else sees the world exactly as you see it, perceives things exactly as you do. It's one of the greatest forms of therapy out there, and the best part is, it's completely free.

If you've ever felt a pulling desire to write, to pour your words out on paper, to craft a story, to dabble in poetry, just do it.

Don't let the fear of failure or the idea of not being well-read enough hold you back. You can write just for yourself, or you can write for others. Writing is what you want it to be.

The world really is your oyster, paper your playground, and whatever writing utensil you use is capable of being the most powerful tool you will ever use.

We all have a story to tell. Don't be afraid to get out there and tell it.