Zen in the Art of Writing: Releasing the Creative Genius Within You by Ray Bradbury

"Every morning I jump out of bed and step on a land mine. The land mine is me. After the explosion, I spend the rest of the day putting the pieces back together. Now, it's your turn. Jump!" Zest. Gusto. Curiosity. These are the qualities every writer must have, as well as a spirit of adventure. In this exuberant book, the incomparable Ray Bradbury shares the wisdom, experience, and excitement of a lifetime of writing. Here are practical tips on the art of writing from a master of the craft—everything from finding original ideas to developing your own voice and style—as well as the inside story of Bradbury’s own remarkable career as a prolific author of novels, stories, poems, films, and plays. Zen In The Art Of Writing is more than just a how-to manual for the would-be writer: it is a celebration of the act of writing itself that will delight, impassion, and inspire the writer in you. In it, Bradbury encourages us to follow the unique path of our instincts and enthusiasms to the place where our inner genius dwells, and he shows that success as a writer depends on how well you know one subject: your own life.
Reviews of the *Zen in the Art of Writing: Releasing the Creative Genius Within You* by Ray Bradbury

**Quphagie**

Ray Bradbury’s book is actually a collection of previously published essays, pulled together under one roof. Some of the essays were originally book intros while others were published in other books or magazines.

I purchased the book without reading the advertising blurb, seeking to learn secrets from one of my favorite authors. Alas, one of the most prolific and descriptive writers is extremely mundane in his advice to aspiring writers. In short, WORK, RELAXATION, DON’T THINK (caps are Mr. Bradbury’s). Obviously, work is the operative word here, and if you haven’t already been writing on a regular basis, he suggests one to two thousand words a day, every day, for the next twenty years. Have an initial goal of one short story a week, fifty-two a year. What does Mr. Bradbury believe this will bring about? “…I believe that eventually quantity will make for quality.”

So if the book is not a teaching manual, why should one purchase it?

Fans of Ray Bradbury will enjoy the intuitive methods he used to create his stories and books. It was interesting to see how everyday events could produce a spark that he would turn into something wonderful. Writers reading between the lines will learn that each writer must discover his own road to creativity. Mr. Bradbury can point in the right direction, but it is each prospective author’s duty to forge his or her own way.

Along the way, the author shares with us his experiences as he worked his way into becoming a writer as well as the people who helped and shared and celebrated those success with him. Very enjoyable read. Five stars.

**Eng.Men**

Ray Bradbury is my favorite author. He is a true American treasure that not enough people know about. Most people only know him from Fahrenheit 451: A Novel, but there is so much more to read in Ray Bradbury’s world. Try reading The Illustrated Man, Something Wicked This Way Comes, The Martian Chronicles, I Sing the Body Electric: And Other Stories, , Dandelion Wine (Grand Master Editions), and one of my favorites, Bradbury Stories: 100 of His Most Celebrated Tales.

If you ever need to be inspired in your writing, read this book. He will draw the passion of writing out of you, remind you why we do what we do, and slowly build you a blueprint on how to do it daily. I highly commend this book for any writer and any level.

**Quttaro**

This book reminds me of another book that I enjoyed. That being "On Writing" by Stephen King. It’s sort of funny. When I first read "On Writing" I knew nothing of Stephen King’s writing, I had not yet read any of it. It was a strange thing to read an author’s book on writing without ever having read any of that author’s actual writing. Be that as it may, I really enjoyed it. And now I’ve done it again.

This is, strangely enough, my first Ray Bradbury book. As was the case with King’s book however, it didn’t detract from the experience. You can sense from this book Bradbury’s passion behind his writing, just as you could King’s. This is a man who has spent his lifetime writing because it’s what he loves to do. So naturally he has written a book about that writing. I have a feeling that, just like King, this little book will propel me forward into Bradbury’s writing and that I have some wonderful future-experiences ahead of me.
Unirtay

The essays in this book are, and Ray Bradbury admits this, written from the perspective of a person who MUST write: "I have learned, on my journeys, that if I let a day go by without writing, I grow uneasy."

All eleven essays were previously published, over the 30 years prior to the collection's original 1994 publication. There is a little bit of repetition in the stories because of that, but not enough to be annoying.

The essays are, for the most part, rah-rah, get your imagination out cheerleading. Bradbury writes in direct sentences, with lots of energy and plenty of exclamation points. An important lesson is to take your experiences, especially your fears, and use them in your creations. He gives many examples of how this worked in his own writing. I found the most interesting tip in the final essay (the last chapter is poetry): "Remember: PLOT is no more than footprints left in the snow AFTER your characters have run by on their way to incredible destinations. PLOT is observed after the fact rather than before. It cannot precede action. It is the chart that remains when a action is through."

I think plot and action and characters are more of a balancing act, but I understand what he's saying and it's something to keep in mind. I have to admit, though, that I thought "The Martian Chronicles" could have used a lot more PLOT.

Overall, I liked Stephen King's On Writing: 10th Anniversary Edition: A Memoir of the Craft a bit better, but the first part of King's book is a biography which, though interesting, isn't about writing. For me, "Zen in the Art of Writing" is 3.6 stars rounded up to 4.

Happy Reader

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