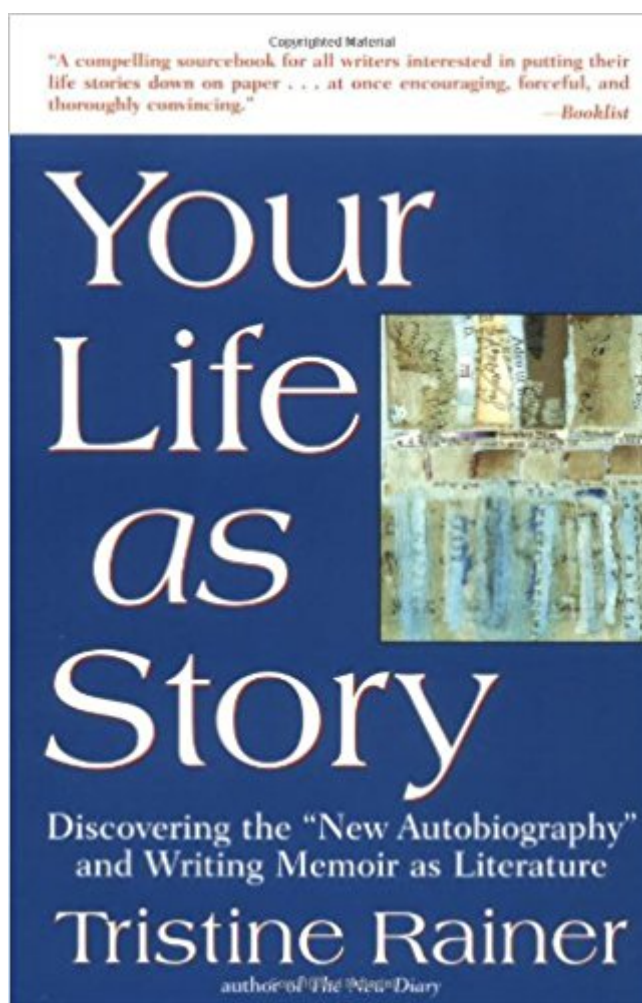


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Your Life As Story: Discovering The "New Autobiography" And Writing Memoir As Literature



Synopsis

In *Your Life As Story*, autobiography expert Tristine Rainer explains how we can all find the important messages in our lives. Like Mary Karr or Frank McCourt, we can shape those stories into dramatic narratives that are compelling to others. Blending literary scholarship with practical coaching, Rainer shares her remarkable techniques for finding the essentials of story structure within your life's scattered experiences. Most important, she explains how to treasure the struggles in your past and discover the meaning within those experiences to capture the unique myth at work in your life.

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Customer Reviews

Every person's life tells a story, but few of us dare to consider our own story worthy of being written. Tristine Rainer shows us how to apply the structure of story telling to an ordinary life to give it shape, meaning, and clarity. Learning the tricks to becoming a better autobiographic writer may not lead to getting published, nor should that be the goal. Rather, it is a process that helps us re-remember the past so that we can better understand the meaning of the present. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In *The New Diary*, written 20 years ago, Rainer held that the diary as a literary genre is "a tool for personal growth and for realizing creative potential." This, her latest effort, purports to be a hands-on guide to the craft of autobiographical writing, but it is more like a self-help guide to finding

peace and self-fulfillment. Rainer defines the new autobiography as "the application of story structure to...life experiences to give them meaning. It's reading your life as if it were a dream." Her guide is weak on story structure, and only in the final two chapters and appendixes does she address the mechanics of editing and submission (including Internet publishing). For Rainer, the motivations of the writer supersede the quality of the writing and the expectations of the intended audience. Not recommended for serious writing collections, though libraries with writing groups may want to consider because of the support and encouragement offered to the novice. Denise S. Sticha, Seton Hill Coll., Greensburg, Pa. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book does an excellent job of prodding one to dig deeper, asking pointed questions and directed short exercises to get you thinking. In writing my memoir, I had a hard time going beyond the surface events and revealing myself. This book asked me just the questions I needed to consider to remove my focus from events and to look at my inner emotions and conflicts. Reading the book and doing the exercises provided throughout results in a very helpful compilation of thoughts and structure that can give shape to a story. I found the book's style to be sometimes overly chatty, especially at the beginning. But despite the fluff, all of the meat is in there, providing very useful tools to writers seeking to make a compelling story from their life experiences. Take your time to go through this book slowly, doing the exercises in order. It took me several months. But at the end, I had a vision, an outline, and some very useful first draft material. I was finally on my way to putting together a manuscript. Follow Rainier's instructions and it will happen.

For our 50th wedding anniversary, my husband gave me two diamond anniversary bands. I gave him a packet of poems and promised to write the story of our love. Not exactly a fair exchange. I worked for eight years, but finally admitted I was stuck. Someone suggested "Your Life as Story." I ordered the book. Most of my copy is highlighted in yellow and I did at least 18 of the insightful exercises. It took days. But then I moved forward and my book came out April 2010. This Path We Share—This Path We Share: Reflecting on 60 Years of Marriage—has won several awards. Thank you, Tristine Rainer!

Tristine covers all the bases for the craft of writing memoir and personal narrative. Great examples. Very readable. My memoir will be of much higher quality because of her book. My writing partner and I agree, this is the best one we've read so far. My writing partner is widely read in the field and

I've read several. We highly recommend it.

I suppose I shouldn't rate this until I'm finished, but I'm afraid I'll forget. I'm reading it, now. So far, it is the best memoir book I've ever encountered. It gives all sorts of different ways to approach memoir, and the short exercises she suggest go well with her explanations (NB: the exercises are optional). Mostly, the author throws out different ideas or ways of thinking about what one wishes to write. This is wonderful for someone who knows they want to write a memoir, but who hasn't quite got a handle on what, where, when or why? I am only halfway through; I hope that by the end, I will be more cognizant of my direction. NB: This is also great for people who have started memoir, and come back to it, years later. The book can be reread many times with fresh insights.

Rainer's book is the best I've read about viewing and writing your life as a story. She brings scholarship and practical advice to the art of putting your life in perspective through story structure. Tons of examples and exercises to help you find your voice. Highly recommend it.

This book was used in my memoir writing class. The book is very helpful - thorough, engaging, and practical. We used some of the exercises in the book as in-class and homework assignments and I found them all to be relevant and helpful.

Rainer has magically woven together the ingredients to cause would be memoirists to overcome their fears and dive in with plenty of back up ideas to help us out of any difficulties. Truly understand why this is top rated New Autobiography tome. Its just swell.

I wanted to start writing about my life since I have no family near whom I can pass my stories down to. If you want to learn how to write your life story this a must read book.

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