

Writing with Your Ears

50 Soulful Secrets
for Writing with Freedom



Jennifer Ann Gordon

The intent of this work is to make available to a busy and media-saturated public what amounts to a quick-reference manual that can help everyone, through examples, increase their connection with the universe... with the spiritual side of themselves.

Writing with Your Ears

by Jennifer Ann Gordon

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Praise for *Writing with Your Ears*:

"I've read, 'Writing with Your Ears' and I loved it! I really did. It is insightful, funny, thought-provoking and just plain wonderful. It provides inspirational and practical tips for how writers can embrace (or re-embrace) the joy of writing. I even started writing again, which I stopped doing because it was too damn hard, until I realized I wasn't employing Secret #7 -- Write So a Five-Year-Old Can Understand It."

- DAVE CHAMBERLAIN, CEO
Kovars, Sacramento, California

"I thoroughly enjoyed 'Writing with Your Ears' and learned a lot. Gordon condenses so much wisdom into every Soulful Secret. Impressive!"

—RAFAEL GUZMÀN AMO
Dublin, Ireland

"Wow, 'Writing with Your Ears' is genius! Everyone should read it, as each "soulful secret" can be applied to so many other things in life. If not writing, than exercising, getting that degree, opening one's self to a relationship, being a better parent...."

For example, Secret #18 – The Synonym Game. An architect could play the Synonym Game to free her mind when designing different ways to accomplish the same result. Beyond writing help, Gordon delivers 50 life-truths. Bravo! Just wonderful!”

—CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT, CEO,
Quoria Foundation, San Francisco, California

“‘Writing with Your Ears’ is, for me, akin to ‘zen and the art of communicating.’ There are so many inspirational, essential notes filled with wisdom, wit and warmth within this personal primer. Jennifer Ann Gordon imbues readers who are facing the challenging vitality of a blank page to approach it with self-awareness and love (of self and of the audience). There are keys within this book to unlock not just writers, but communicators of every kind. My favorites include the gift of listening without judgment, the courage embedded in vulnerability, and the treasure nestled in the ant-like exploration of subject matter.”

—KIM CHANDLER McDONALD, CEO
Flatworld Integration, Sidney, Australia,
Author, *Flat World Navigation* and
Innovation: How Innovators Think, Act and Change Our World

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First Edition

*“‘Know thyself’ is the imperative of the writer
and the real work of writing.”*

JENNIFER ANN GORDON

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SECRET #2: Every singleday

Writing at least 100 words (one short paragraph) daily is life-changing.

Any suggestion that you don't have time to write one tiny paragraph, or that you don't know how, or that you've nothing to write about is the *anti-you*.

"Inspiration exists, but it has to find us working."— PABLO PICASSO

If writing daily feels like trying to "run through Jell-O" (a great description from my friend Molly), remember that you can even write, "I don't want to write. Jennifer Ann Gordon is mean and doesn't know what she's talking about. I don't have a thought in my head. I don't have the time. Writing is stupid." Et cetera. Before you know it, you'll have your paragraph and the anti-you will be exhausted. Keep going, no matter what. And, *every singleday*.

If you're having trouble getting into the writerly rhythm, you can assign your writing to a specific time/ritual/task you do each day. Coffee? Ah, time to write a paragraph! Or, I must write a paragraph before I brush my teeth. Or, I am going to write a paragraph each morning while I sit on the toilet and groove. You get the gist. The key is to challenge each thought to see if it's truly in your best interest or is the conniving *anti-you* (Secret #3). The key is to write no matter what. Period.

SECRET #40: Babybrilliance

Many people who long to write experience performance anxiety when it comes to their writing. Their natural inclination to express themselves feels shackled, manacled, imprisoned. Soul-suffocation.

Extemporaneous intelligence. Spontaneous brilliance. Instinctive resourcefulness. We all possess, express and, unfortunately, sometimes repress, our capacity for on-demand intelligence. On-demand creativity. The right ideas right now, right here, always accessible. The *write* ideas, *write* now, *write* here, always accessible.

Performance anxiety is fixated on the rating of an end result. It's oblivious to the beautiful listening process and the opportunities (and demand) to create, intuit and learn that every moment of writing affords. Writing is doing; it's never static or perfunctory.

But performance anxiety is not anyone's natural state. It is learned, ingrained, trained, brained. And it is bullshit. Performance anxiety is not in our DNA, or *Divinely Natural Attributes*. It is not in our original, incomparable blueprint. Babies aren't born with performance anxiety and, as adults, we can all be free of it. *Babybrilliance* is the key (I concocted *babybrilliance* because I couldn't find one word in English to describe the optimum way to learn).

BABYBRILLIANT – The quality of being present and completely engaged, as to make no differentiation between work and play; complete freedom from self-consciousness; curious. Also, babybrilliance (noun); babybrilliantly (adverb).

We need to know who we are. We need to know who we are not. When we are being ourselves, we are not performing, but simply *being*. If we are not performing, we cannot have performance anxiety. And for whom should we perform? When we're curious and excited to learn, we aren't occupied with "performing" for anyone for any reason.

When I was in college, I steered clear of my fellow students before a test. Rather than wait in the hallway or classroom and participate in the anxious chatter about the test and how "not ready" people were, I'd go off by myself and prepare mentally. How did I prepare?

Of course, I studied, but not right before the test. Cramming always made me feel more jumbled. I found solitude somewhere. I got quiet inside. I committed to enjoying the test, yes, *enjoying* the test as an opportunity to learn.

I also affirmed that intelligence was never absent and that, even if I didn't know how to answer a problem, I could *listenlistenlisten* and figure it out (*Secret #15*). This approach still works well for me whenever performance anxiety tries to muscle its way into my thinking. (There were a few instances when I couldn't study for a

test due to circumstances beyond my control, yet was able to reason through the problems and did fine.)

I've shared this methodology with students in high school and college, and they've responded with awe. They enjoyed taking the tests they previously dreaded. And, they did well. Why? They relaxed. They were themselves.

Trusting our innate extemporaneous intelligence, spontaneous brilliance and instinctive resourcefulness—seeing the opportunity to write as an opportunity to listen and learn in real time—removes performance anxiety. *Babybrilliance*.

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