

## Writing your Memoir

*“Writing a book is a long, exhausting struggle, like a long bout with a painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.”*

--George Orwell

All Unificationists--good ones, bad ones and those in between, have a “story to tell to the nations.” Or at the very least, you have a tale to share with your family and friends.

The way I went about writing my story in *Tahoe Boy*, was to compose a list of events in my life that remained as lasting memories. In my case, (from childhood to the present) they were of the things that were vivid and meaningful to me. Don’t bother listing them chronologically or in order of importance. Then file it away. You can add to your list when new memories surface.

The most important thing a first time writer must do is to find his or her “own voice,” or way of telling your story in words that others can easily read. I love what Ernest Hemmingway said about writing *The Old Man and the Sea*. He said he never set out to write about some bigger-than-life drama. He merely tried to tell a story of a “real old man, a real sea and a real fish.”

Writing honestly about your self in an autobiography/memoir is not as easy as it sounds. We all have selective memories and are inclined to remember things as we want them to be remembered. The important thing is not to “write for others,” or what you think they need to hear. Write for yourself and those who are closest to you. Don’t start with a story in mind. Let the events in your life tell your story. Then you and your reader, will both be wondering where it ends up.

Don’t read too many other books while you’re writing (*except mine*). They’ll intimidate you and keep you from finding your own style. Be prepared to re-read and re-write everything you’ve done countless times. A good book is the result of a “craft” that can be learned with enough trial and error. The “art” comes when the craft is completed.

A couple of publications I found helpful were: “*Robert’s Rules of Writing—101 unconventional lessons every writer needs to know*,” by Robert Masello, and “*Your Life as Story*,” by Tristine Rainer. Good luck.....PatHickey@tahoeboy.net