



Weinberg on Writing: The Fieldstone Method

Gerald M. Weinberg

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Gerald M. Weinberg -- author of more than forty books and more than 400 articles over a forty-year career -- reveals his secrets for gathering, organizing, and discarding writing ideas.

Drawing an analogy to the stone-by-stone method of building fieldstone walls, Weinberg shows writers how to construct fiction and nonfiction manuscripts from key insights, stories, and quotes. The elements, or stones, are collected nonsequentially, over time, and eventually find logical places in larger pieces.

The method renders writer's block irrelevant and has proved effective for scores of Weinberg's writing class students, who have collectively published more than 100 books. If you've ever wanted to write a book or article -- or need a fresh approach to your writing career -- try what works for Weinberg and gather your best ideas into beautiful stone walls.

Gerald M. Weinberg is one of the most influential thinkers in computer science. Weinberg on Writing isn't a computer book, though -- Weinberg describes his life and practices as a writer, enriching the text with more than 40 exercises appropriate for individual or group study.

Inducted into the Computer Hall of Fame in its inaugural year (in the same class as Bill Gates), Weinberg's career highlights have included computer programming at IBM for Project Mercury (which put the first American in space), serving on the faculty of famed family therapist Virginia Satir, consulting for Fortune 500 companies through his firm, Weinberg & Weinberg, and teaching thousands of technical professionals how to improve their communication skills.

Weinberg on Writing: The Fieldstone Method Details

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Johnny Graber says

The Fieldstone Method is a simple and easy to apply method for writing. It doesn't matter if you write a book or just a text for work. When you collect good ideas in a more organized way, then you can use those "fieldstones" for your work. Not all will fit and maybe you are better off by ignoring many in your collection. But when you have nice sentences or useful images that bring ideas to the point, go ahead and use them.

"Are Your Lights On?" is a great book by Gerald M. Weinberg that still defines for me his writing. The Software Quality Series had many ups and downs and is a good reminder that even with a method like this one, you still may write books that are not that good. However, an author who wrote more than 40 books knows definitely how to organize his work to get such an output.

So far I don't have much experience with this method, but it's an interesting idea that is worth following up. I therefore can recommend you this book when you have to write much and often need to search for ideas.

Cindy says

Writing lessons. Usefull when you experience a writer's block.

Ernestasia Siahaan says

I got hooked from the very first advice it gave. This is not the typical "write for your market" kind of thing. This really talks about the creative process of writing, starting from having the heart to write, all the way to life after publishing.

Suitable for writers of any genre : fiction, non-fiction, technical, etc.

Johanna Rothman says

I've been working on improving my writing for about 20 years. When I was inside organizations, I asked some of my colleagues to review my memos and reports. I gained valuable insights. ("A verb, JR, a verb. Please.") But once I started my consulting business 11 years ago, I needed more help with my writing. My early reviewers gave me useful and helpful feedback. But it wasn't until I took Jerry Weinberg's writing workshop that I was able to take my writing to the next level.

If you want to take a writing workshop but don't feel you have the time or the money to spend a week at a workshop, buy this book. Work through the exercises--yes, all of them. Listen to Jerry's advice, such as "Never attempt to write something you don't care about" or "Writer's block is not a disorder in you, the writer. It's a deficiency in your writing methods--the mythology you've swallowed about how works get written."

I'm proof these techniques work. I've published three books, over 100 articles, and am working on my next few books. One of the techniques Jerry suggests is that you have many fieldstones, chunks of work in progress. In progress may mean you've written two words. It may mean you've written several chapter-like things. It may mean you've written 50 words. Fieldstones allow you to make progress on any piece of work, which can allow you to finish more writing projects than you could imagine.

If you want to start your writing career, or if you want to write better, or if you want to revitalize your writing, buy this book.

Liz Logan says

I have read hundreds of how-to-write books, and this may be the best. It is very unlike the others, really stunning in the originality of its pragmatism.

Bricoleur (David) Soul says

"With wit, charm, humor, and wisdom, Gerald Weinberg shows you exactly how to become a more *effective consultant*" says the Goodreads' description for one of my favorite books Secrets of Successful Consulting.... well simply substitute **effective writing** for the italicized words and you've got the gist of this book.

Studded with lots of examples and exercises for the reader, the book could help writers of all genres and all skill levels; the most important lesson is not to just fight through "writers block" but to leap around it and Weinberg seems to have found a metaphor, "the Fieldstone Method," that will work if faithfully practiced. But then the proof of this statement will have to, for me, wait for its actual use in practice!

I must admit that the "reading" was so good I skipped those exercises best done in teams. That said, the self discovery that came from the solitary exercises I did complete was great enough that I will be going back through the book, at a more leisurely pace, to ensure that I make use of the remaining ones - something I have never, in any book of this nature, had any interest in doing. That in itself is testimony to the power of the book.

Alex says

I've read a lot of books on writing and this is my favorite by far.

Phil says

Good idea! Kind of left me on my own figuring g out how to implement it - Weinberg's nuts and bolts don't work for me.

Sebastian Stabinger says

Even though I am "only" writing for scientific purposes I found this book very inspiring.

Andrew says

Documents the approach the author used to complete many of his works. Useful, but the end drags.

Miguel Ángel Alonso Pulido says

Lo siento, pero el método del campo de piedras de Gerald Weinberg no es adecuado para mí, ni le veo utilidad para la escritura de ficción. Hay algunos puntos destacados en todo el libro, pero en general no le he visto ninguna utilidad. Por supuesto, ese es solo mi punto de vista, el tuyo puede variar.

Lily Kirsch says

I miss you, Grandpa Jerry. Thank you for giving me, and the rest of the world, the gift of your spirit and your writing.

(Still not sure why you put a picture of Camille in this book and never used one of me... but I guessss I won't take off any stars)
