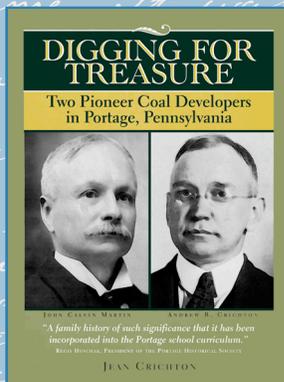
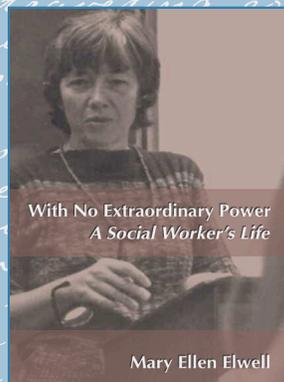
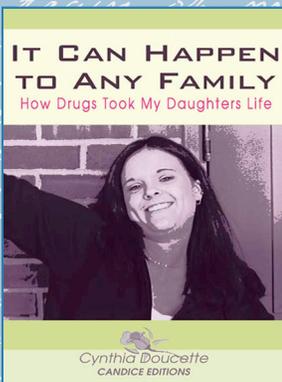
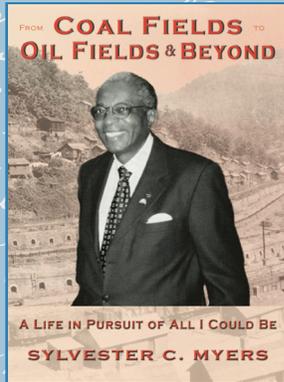
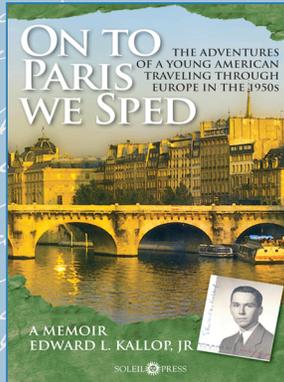
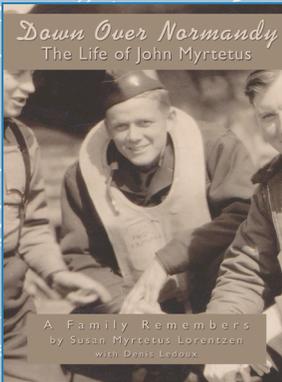


When I was five we lived in the house on the hill. It was a magical place: an old New England farmhouse surrounded by a narrow wood and high grassy meadow overlooking

The Best How-to Available

A Consumer's Guide to Ghostwriting Services

How to Choose and Work With the Best Co-author for You



Denis Ledoux
SOLEIL PRESS

Standing behind the house a row of tall pines- giant pines to a five-year-old! a broad swing with ropes reached up into the

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When I was five we lived in the house on the hill. It was a magical place: an old New England farmhouse surrounded by a nine acre wood and high grassy meadow overlooking the river and the town. there. We trapped rabbit

A Consumer's Guide to Ghostwriting Services

How to Choose and Work
With the Best Co-author for You

by Denis Ledoux

When I was five we lived in the house on the hill. It was a magical place: an old New England farmhouse surrounded by a nine acre wood and high grassy meadow overto

Also by Denis Ledoux

Turning Memories Into Memoirs
A Handbook for Writing Lifestories

The Photo Scribe / A Writing Guide
How to Write the Stories Behind Your
Photographs

What Became of Them
and Other Stories from Franco-America

Mountain Dance and Other Stories

Lives In Translation: An Anthology of
Contemporary Franco-American Writings

Dedication

To all those who have trusted me to write their stories
and to all those who will.
It is my pleasure to co-author with you.

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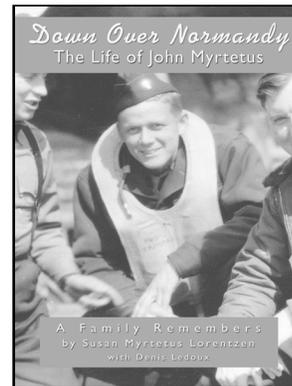
Introduction

“Between you and me, I’m never going to do this,” said the woman on the other end of the phone line, a woman who was signed up for my forthcoming workshop here in Maine.

As soon as she said that—actually as soon as she had announced herself, I thought, “Oh, I suppose this is going to be the usual!” She had registered for several of my Turning Memories Into Memoirs™ workshops and had always, somewhat at the last minute, asked to have the tuition rolled over to the next session to be held in a few months.

“I want to write my uncle’s memoir. I really do. I want to have something to leave to my family—and to whatever little part of the world I can reach with a book. I’m full of good intentions to get this book started at one of your workshops, but I’ve finally admitted to myself it’s not going to happen.”

So far, this was something I had heard several times previously—except the it’s-not-going-to-happen part. Still, I thought I knew what to expect next. She was going to ask to have her tuition rolled over to another session or refunded. Okay, I could do that.



What she said next surprised me. It was to be the start of a new writing experience. A new way for me to help people to write the stories of their lives.

"Would you write this book for me—if I provided the information and was available for interviews? Could you do that for me? It's the only way I'll get my book."

And so began my experience as a ghostwriter. I enjoyed the process of writing this woman's book, and since that first effort, I have co-authored dozens of others for people from all over.

What to expect from this book.

I will distill for you some of my experience as a ghostwriter, an experience gleaned from years of writing books for other people. Each memoir was different, each one a fresh start.

"It takes wit and courage to make our way while our way is making us, with no consolation to count on but art and the summer lightning of personal happiness, but if nothing is certain everything is possible, and that's what gives us our human dignity."

—Tom Stoppard in
The Coast of Utopia

I have also learned from the stories my clients have told me of working with inept ghosts and with "my sister-in-law who was an English major." These cautionary tales, too, are part of this book. You can learn much from these stories.

Read *The Consumer's Guide to Ghostwriting Services* carefully, making note of points that seem to be speaking directly to you and then begin the process of creating your memoir.

If "between you and me" you suspect that you will never get this done on your own, do yourself a favor: find yourself the best ghostwriter for you. You are not likely to be sorry you did.

Good luck.

Chapter 1: When is Working With a Ghostwriter a Good Choice?

You have perhaps been thinking of preserving your story for a long time. You know you want to write about a seminal relationship in your life, or a formative event that launched you in what was to be your future—and yet somehow the story doesn't get written. Something has been in your way; some reluctance has prevented you from beginning the work.

The challenge of writing a memoir—the narrative of your life—is daunting! Even though I have written many books, I can sympathize. Such a long project requires great focus—of time, energy, resources—and many writing skills. There's so much involved that, when you think of it, it's easy to understand why the prospect of investing time and energy to write the story of your life overwhelms you.

"How can I possibly be thinking of attempting such a project?" you ask yourself.

You want to do it because leaving a written memoir is important. It is a legacy to the future—your legacy.

"Success is sweet and sweeter if long delayed and gotten through many struggles and defeats."

—Bronson Alcott

"Anyone at any age is able to fill the story of his or her life."

—E.L. Doctorow

With the help of a ghostwriter, you can realize your dream of accessing the power in your story.

Four types of people who work best with a ghostwriter:

Some individuals do better collaborating with a ghostwriter than attempting the effort alone. Are you one of these people?

1. You have an idea for a memoir, but you know you need a hand to turn your idea into a book.

You realize you will not achieve your dream of publishing a memoir if you attempt to write it alone. In isolation and without an expert editor/writer to support and guide you along the way, you've stalled before you've even begun writing. You don't know where to start or how to keep going, technically or emotionally. Without much previous writing experience—or the energy and time to acquire the many specialized skills to produce a well-written book—your idea for an important memoir remains in your head, unable to emerge.

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

—Winston Churchill

Perhaps you've floundered before beginning, gotten lost in the process of organizing material, become discouraged at all there is to do. And, there really is a lot.

"But, I want to leave a written memoir!" you persist in saying. "What can I do? Writing my memoir is proving harder than I had thought. I'm stuck."

Not to worry! A skilled ghostwriter works with stalled memoirs all the time and knows how to energize a hesitant project and to mentor it to its successful completion.

A ghostwriter can write as much or as little as you want. S/he can offer exactly the help you need to start and keep going by taking your project in hand and crafting your lifestory the way a builder uses your vision to build your dream house.

2. You've written a rough draft—a collection of disparate vignettes and short pieces—that rambles and gets lost here and there.

You've enjoyed the process—somewhat!—and want to continue writing parts of your memoir. But you realize now that you need a professional, experienced co-author to weave together your vignettes, scenes and dialogue, in order to create a coherent and interesting autobiography that conveys you—the collection of experiences that comprise your worldview and life philosophy.

"My autobiography rambles all over the place!" you bemoan. "How can I rein in all this runaway material?"

An experienced lifestory co-author who has "been there and done that" can analyze the quality of your manuscript and take the steps necessary to tie your book of personal stories into a coherent whole, bringing your lifestory to completion in record time. You can participate as much or as little as you want or need to!

3. You've written a lot of your memoir already—and some of it reads well—but you know it needs structural work—more than simple copy editing might provide.

You have read and reread your memoir manuscript—sometimes you feel you are merely staring at it one more time. You know it needs work, but you don't know how to make the necessary changes. Perhaps you are lost in the shaping and the pacing of your story. In fact, what does it mean, you ask, to "shape" and "pace" a book of personal stories? This is where a professional writer—a co-author who has done this many times before—proves useful to you in the realization of your memoir.

The palest ink lasts longer than the most retentive memory.

—Chinese proverb

What's more, you are growing tired of the process. Writing your memoir is more difficult and taking many

more hours than you had anticipated. You are ready for your autobiography to take its place in the world, but

“Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success.”

—Napoleon Hill

you've run out of energy to re-write—for the umpteenth time?—and polish your prose. A good rough draft is one thing—a finished product quite another, you have learned.

Beyond the issue of mustering enough energy for the task, you suspect you simply don't know how to take it to the next stage. Each time you re-read and attempt a revision, new questions arise. You feel more confused than ever. You sense you are not moving forward toward your dream of seeing your lifestory in print. You are perhaps wondering:

- ✓ Are the characters sufficiently delineated?
- ✓ Are the settings detailed so that the reader has a sense of walking through the world as you lived it?
- ✓ Is the authorial persona that narrates your memoir effective?
- ✓ Which transition stories still need to be written?
- ✓ Which stories ought to be eliminated because they don't contribute to your memoir as a whole or to your theme?
- ✓ How do you shape the larger story so that it has more drive?
- ✓ How do you pace the memoir manuscript so that not all parts are given equal treatment, as if they were all equal in your life's progress?
- ✓ How do you challenge yourself to go deeper into the story, to visit meaningful parts of your life you feel reluctant to explore?

Your autobiography ghostwriter can work with all of these questions to create a text that fully expresses and embodies the life you wish to memorialize in your book of lifestories.

4. You know you could write your lifestory yourself over the next months—and years—but you don't want memoir writing to take over your life.

Crafting an autobiography without help from a ghostwriter is simply more than you want to commit to. The learning curve can be steep, and you sense that working with a professional memoir co-writer will move the project along more efficiently.

"I do not want to turn my life over entirely to creating my memoir!" you insist. "What I want is to have my story in writing and not to learn to write my story anymore than I would want to learn to build my own house!"

You can find a partner in the process, a writer who perfected his/her craft years ago. A ghostwriter who meets writing challenges every day is generally able to ease the creation process and speed up the completion of your book.



The End Result

Whoever you are, writing your memoir, a book to pass on to family, friends, perhaps even the world, is a decision you are not likely to regret. Working with a professional—an empathic co-author who spends months or years with you and your lifestory, asking probing questions and offering insight for your consideration—might even alter how you view the events of your life. You may experience your past with more peace and acceptance. As your story manuscript grows and the pages accumulate, you will turn to your ghostwriter with trust and gratitude.

"What is important to me is not the truth outside of myself, but the truth within myself."

—Konstantin Stanislavsky

"Thank you," you will say. "I have wanted a memoir for such a long time, and you have helped me make my story into a book."

But, before that can be, you will need to choose the right ghostwriter for you.



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

—George Orwell

"Everything is taken from one's life. You can call them emotions or thoughts. These are all names for experience."

—Isaac Bashevis Singer

"I would say that the most important duty of a writer is to find what is really his story, his particular story, his unique story."

—Isaac Bashevis Singer

"I'd say, 'Okay, I'll do something and then I'll write.' And then I don't write that day. I don't write the next day. After a month of not writing, I don't know how to write. I forget. If you write every day, it's like another kind of existence."

—Maria Irene Fornes

Chapter 2: It's Okay to Work with a Ghostwriter

In this chapter, you will learn how to initiate the process of finding your ghostwriter. Offered here are general considerations—things to think about that will clear the way for the actual search. In Chapter 3, we will look at particulars to keep in mind as you interview writers and narrow your choices.

You've lived a life that you feel merits a memoir. Perhaps you've launched a business in difficult circumstances and made a success of it; perhaps you have done a “first” and you want people to know it was you; or perhaps you want to celebrate a lost world, a culture that has since disappeared.



You have decided to hire a ghostwriter because you appreciate that a ghostwriter can guide you through the process and write your book the way you want it. But, you still don't feel entirely comfortable. You have reservations. Maybe you have asked yourself:

1. Isn't using a ghostwriter a bit like cheating?

Not any more than using a carpenter to build your

house or a plumber to install fixtures in the bathroom. The ghostwriter you hire has written many books and is not at all daunted at the prospect of organizing 60, 70, or



80 years of scattered, incoherent, and sometimes contradictory life experiences into an interesting and meaningful memoir, one that your kids and, if your ambition goes there, the general public will want to read—and enjoy. You are happy to hire professionals to do other specialized work for you. Why not a professional

ghostwriter to create a better memoir than you can on your own? Doesn't your life deserve as much care and professionalism as your bathroom?

2. How can another person possibly get my life right?

The ghostwriter did not live your life and is receiving the material secondhand. Questioning your ghostwriter's ability to understand your experience is reasonable, but consider the following:

Your co-author does not make up a life for you out of whole cloth. You and your writer chat regularly (usually by phone), and you send all sort of notes, including any writing you may have already done, photocopies of letters and journals, and annotated photos. Your writer can interview essential players in the story you are writing, people who know you well, in order

to get a complete view of you and your life.

"I must write it all out, at any cost. Writing is thinking. It is more than living, for it is being conscious of living."

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Your ghostwriter writes a manuscript from your conversations and the materials you provided and sends this text to you. You scrutinize the drafts you receive regularly, making sure to note where the text needs amplification and where it needs changes. Your ghostwriter and you

then discuss the alterations, making sure the requisite details are clear. Subsequently, your co-author rewrites and submits the new text to you. The process of reviewing the evolving manuscript is repeated until you are satisfied with the results. The work is never done until you say it is done.

“When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not.”

—Mark Twain

When I undertook to write the life of a client who was an engineer, I warned him that I was not an engineer and knew little about his discipline. After I had been collaborating with him several months, he asked, “Are you sure you are not an engineer? How do you know this stuff?”

I didn't know “this stuff.” He knew it. As a professional ghostwriter, I merely listened and organized everything I heard into a literate manuscript which I submitted to him. That's what a good ghostwriter does. Most of us are highly intuitive, and you'll find the best of us are perceptive, active listeners.

“The cost of living has gone up another dollar a quart.”

—W. C. Fields

3. Isn't using the service of a ghostwriter too expensive?

Having a lifestory written can be expensive, that's for sure. But, so can a house, a car, a second home, a trip to Hawaii next winter, new kitchen cabinets. In the end, a ghostwritten memoir is an irreplaceable legacy that you leave to another generation. You either value it as much as a new bathroom in your home or you don't. It comes down to what you prefer to leave as a legacy—photos of your vacation to Hawaii, or a memoir.

I have worked with millionaires and with working-class people. The desire to leave a legacy is not reducible to dollars and cents. Most people find that it's a lot less expensive than losing their story. But, in the end...

It's a matter of what you value.



"Gauguin says that, when sailors have to move a heavy load or raise an anchor, they all sing together to keep them up and give them vim. That is just what artists lack."

—Vincent Van Gogh

"I work continuously within the shadow of failure."

—Gail Goodwin

"A bad book is as much a labor to write as a good book. It comes as sincerely from the author's soul."

—Aldous Huxley

Chapter 3:

Choosing Your Ghostwriter

You need to find the best writer for you. While the relationship should be a friendly one, ultimately it is a working relationship. No matter how pleasant the exchanges the two of you have, it's your story that's on the line and it's your money paying for it. In this chapter, I offer suggestions for finding the best ghostwriter for you. In a subsequent chapter, I will discuss how to evaluate the ghostwriter(s) as you narrow your search and then select the one for you.

1. Do a web search.

The internet is perhaps the broadest, most inclusive means of obtaining information and certainly the quickest to search. Use search engine phrases such as: *working with a ghostwriter, help writing my memoir, co-author(s)/ ghostwriters for hire.**

* Visit www.turningmemories.com/ghostwriter.html. There you can learn about Soleil Lifestory Network's long experience of memoir collaboration.

2. Review classified ads in writers' magazines.

Here you will find many writers announcing their services. Most will direct you to a web page. *The Writer* and *The Writer's Digest* are national circulation writers' magazines that may prove useful to your process.

3. Ask around.

Inquire from a friend who has used a ghostwriter to collaborate on a memoir for a referral. If you enjoyed a memoir, look at the front of the book on the acknowledgement page for a phrase like, "I want to thank Joe Smith for all his help in making this memoir possible." That is often a clue that the book was written with the help of a ghost. Contact the author to inquire if "Joe Smith" was indeed a ghostwriter and ask either for his/her contact info or for yours to be forwarded to the ghost.

4. Find a local writer.

There may be writers in your community who would be glad to undertake the effort. A writer's organization is a great place to inquire. Perhaps they have members who would welcome the work. A local library or a college may also turn up candidates. Take notice of write ups of local book publications and author readings. These writers too may welcome collaborating with you.

5. Favor a writer who has written books.

Someone who has only written articles or short lifestories has no track record for writing hundreds of pages—which is what a whole life requires—and may be unable to shape your book.

6. Avoid the newly retired English teacher who has always wanted to write.

English teachers have been trained to deconstruct stories, not to construct them. They have spent years

critiquing literature, not creating it. Writing isn't the opposite of critiquing—it's an entirely different skill. In addition, this person is likely to know very little about the writing life and might not be able to counsel you about the ups and downs of the process.

7. Be wary of friends and relatives who tell you they will help.

These people may have been English majors or occasional writers who contribute a gardening article to a weekly newspaper. Like the English teacher, they may not be a good bet. Too often, when you are ready for input, these people end up saying something like: "I still want to help you but I'm just so busy right now." These would-be co-authors have the best of intentions, but your project comes to a standstill as you wait for their schedule to open up—if it ever does.



Think of your handyman brother-in-law who was going to help you with the plumbing in your bathroom. Months later, your new fixtures are still sitting in the garage as your brother-in-law is waiting to be less busy.

A professional writer, on the other hand, is always available as writing is his/her job. Hire a professional to get the job done well and on time.

"Here's how you write a play. You do a lot of writing to figure out what the hell the play's about and throw out three-quarters of that and write it again and find out what that play's about and throw out three-quarters of it and write it again."

—David Mamet

"You can do anything you want to do. What is rare is this actual wanting to do a specific thing: wanting it so much that you are practically blind to all other things, that nothing else will satisfy you."

—Robert Henri

"Tell truth, and shame the devil."

—Jonathan Swift

"Writing is so difficult that I often feel that writers, having had their hell on earth, will escape all punishment hereafter."

—Jessamyn West

"If you are to create, you must invite anxiety in. But then you must manage it. If you can't manage this necessary anxiety, you will block."

—Eric Maisel

Sure I have self-doubts. I just spent three days trying to paint a two-inch rock and thought maybe I'd be better off wrapping produce in a supermarket.

—Maria Mijares

Chapter 4: Your Writer's Publishing Past

Congratulations! You are on your way. You've decided that writing your memoir alone is too big a job for you. You've gone on the internet or visited a local writer's organization and found writers—or writing companies—that seem to fit your needs. Let's say two or three writers make your short list. How do you evaluate them so as to make the best choice? After all, your memoir is very important to you, and you are finally ready to begin this major undertaking. You want it done right.

1. Ask each writer for writing samples.

First of all, you should like the writing your co-author has done. Do you find his/her work compelling? It is even more important to assess whether or not the writing of your co-author fits your own style. If you tend to be insightful and elegant in your speech and the writer in question writes like he's doing copy for an action movie, you probably don't have a good fit.

2. Determine if the writer has created long pieces.

An author who has only tackled articles and short

lifestories may not have the stamina to produce a 300-page memoir. A long piece requires more structure and pacing than a short one, and that is a skill not every writer possesses. Your memoir will require much time, energy, and money of you and you do not want your project to serve as a training ground for someone who is learning to write.

3. Choose a writer who has already worked in the memoir genre.

Experience with fiction or poetry is not the same as experience with writing memoir. If you wanted to learn to play tennis, you wouldn't choose someone highly skilled at ping pong—even if both use balls and if rackets

“Do you know the difference between education and experience?”

Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't.”

—Pete Seeger

and paddles resemble each other. Memoir writing has its own requirements, and you will be well served by hiring someone who has previously succeeded at this genre. That said, an intuitive and skilled writer in another genre may prove to be a quick study for writing your memoir.

4. Read excerpts of the writer's prose.

Do you like his/her style? Do you feel that his/her voice is compatible with yours?

It is important to get a sense of your co-author's body of work. Be sure to read samples of what s/he writes for herself/himself. A ghostwriter may have been constrained stylistically by the subject matter or by the person who did the hiring. People in my profession sometimes feel that we could have done better on a particular book given more leeway by the person who commissioned the memoir. (Let this be a caveat to you about getting hung up on cost. Your ghost may want to do a rewrite to tighten the book stylistically and thematically but you want to save

money and force the termination of the project. You end up with a finished product—your book of memoirs—that is a shade of what it could have been. This has happened to me on too many occasions with my clients.)

5. Look into the writer's publishing history.

People hiring a ghostwriter often ask themselves, "Is being published important? Is being published in certain venues or by certain publishers crucial?"

This would seem to be a "no brainer." A published author is *bona fide*, a true professional, you may think.

I disagree: publication history ought not to be an automatic deal maker. More important is the writer's congruence with your thinking/feeling style and his/her ability to turn out a good story, one that fascinates you. An unpublished memoir whose style you appreciate is more valuable to you than a published memoir that you do not enjoy.

6. If the writer is self-published, look at the track record his/her book(s) achieved.

Is not an independently-published book that sold 25,000 more impressive than a book by a large publisher that sold 1,000? But if you are writing for a small, well-defined group and are thinking of self-publication, this whole consideration of sales is also not relevant.

7. If it is your goal to work with a prominent publishing house, examine the publishing experience of the prospective writer to see if it opens any doors for you.

Not necessarily. If a writer was published many years ago or if the publisher has merged with or been acquired by another, larger house, the writer probably



no longer has any contacts within the company. Either way, your co-author's publishing past might be irrelevant in terms of networking or finding entrée.

8. Know your audience.

Many memoir writers intend to write a book that will appeal to a small group of readers—people of their ethnic group, colleagues in their profession, their family and friends. If one of these is your audience, publication history with a large publisher is irrelevant.

Ultimately, the most important considerations in choosing a ghostwriter are probably compatibility, writing style, and understanding of psychology. The success of your book will not rest in the writer's publishing history but in his/her ability to write a captivating story that is told in your style, your voice.

Outreach is not the same as writing. Do not confuse the two. The sales part of your book will come from your marketing, if you intend to handle that, or from the efforts of the publishing house that may take you on.



"Everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment."

—Viktor Frankl

"For my very first play I made a complete outline. Then I started to write it and found the characters heading off in another direction, completely in opposition. Now I don't make an outline at all. I begin—I just put the paper in and go."

—Neil Simon

Chapter 5: Know Your Writer

Collaborating with a ghostwriter can be incredibly stimulating, especially as your dream of holding your memoir comes closer and closer to reality. If you aren't careful in your choice of a co-author, however, this scenario may never come true and your dreams can quickly become a nightmare.

Before you hire a ghost, ask for writing references and check them out. If you have any doubt about the reliability of the reference, ask the writer for another.

Here are five questions for your potential ghostwriter's former clients:

"You can never get all the facts from just one newspaper, and unless you have all the facts, you cannot make proper judgements about what is going on."

—Harry S. Truman

1. Was the writer able to meet deadlines?

Deadlines can either be intermediate or final. An intermediate deadline can refer to the pace of writing (50 pages a month, for example) or a hard date when the draft copy is due. A final deadline is when the book is to be turned over to the printer. If the writer did not meet deadlines, was there a good reason—one being that the

person who commissioned the story kept changing parameters (and probably the length) of the memoir.

Was re-negotiating timelines with the writer easy to do?

Even if deadlines are not important to you, you will still want to know if the writer can focus on your project. Projects that take too long can lose their energy.

2. Was the writer reliable about keeping in touch?

It is unsettling to be left without responses to your questions and concerns. Did s/he return phone calls and e-mails in a timely fashion? When responses came, did they address the reference's concerns or gloss them over? If the writer had to take longer to complete part of the memoir, did s/he let the reference know right away?

"Men are all alike in their promises. It is only in their deeds that they differ."
—Molière

3. Is the writer a non-judgmental listener?

Listening is an essential skill in a co-writer. It is important that your ghostwriter listen to the story you are telling and neither impose his/her own ideas on the story nor judge it. Keep in mind that, while you certainly don't want a writer who questions your life's actions, you need your ghost to read closely and offer critiques.

"Judgements prevent us from seeing the good that lies beyond appearances."
—Wayne Dyer

Offering critiques is not the same as being judgmental. Very often, a writer's feedback will consist of responses like, "You say your mother was supportive, but the example you gave does not reflect that. Can you give me another example?" Or, "Is the word 'supportive' the best word for what you felt?"

Be open to his/her suggestions about structure and story, but remember that your voice and the events of your life are what is most important in your memoir.

4. Is the writer curious and knowledgeable about history, geography, and politics?

A good writer will expand on the setting of your story so as to give it a “bigger picture.” A skilled professional can set a story in a context that will give it more presence. (If appropriate, for example, your immigrant ancestors can be placed in the framework of the general immigration of your ethnic group, rather than as an isolated phenomenon.) Your story will seem—because it will be—more substantial for the historical reference. Your ghost does not need to be an expert in the field, but s/he should be willing to do the necessary research to set your story in its proper context and make it come alive.

“For me context is the key—from that comes the understanding of everything.”

—Kenneth Noland

5. Is the ghostwriter a pleasant person to work with?

You’ll be working together closely, so make sure the ghost you choose has a positive attitude and a personality that meshes well with yours. After all, you’ll be spending a lot of time together.



“The artist moves in a circle to reclaim the past.”

—Eleanor Munro,

“Even when people learn about the physical and psychological manifestations of anxiety, they are still vulnerable to ignoring or misreading signals at critical times.”

—Michael Kerr

"To create presupposes love for that which one creates."

—Erich Fromm

"The meaning of life must be conceived in terms of the specific meaning of a personal life in a given situation."

—Viktor Frankl

"Just looking at a blank sheet of paper is an absolute guarantee of failure."

—Anna Held Audette

"The writer by the nature of his profession is a dreamer and a conscious dreamer."

—Carson McCullers

Chapter 6: Asking the Ghostwriter the Right Questions

The information from your prospective ghostwriter's former clients should have answered your most pressing questions and confirmed your decision to pursue working with her/him.

You are probably ready now to hire the ghostwriter in question, but hold off for a bit longer. First, find the answers to the following questions:

1. Will the ghostwriter “work for hire” or will s/he want a stake in the product?

A for-hire writer is paid either by the hour or by the project and has no legal authorship rights. The rights to such a book are entirely yours. This is the most usual arrangement for a memoir of a person who has no public presence—no fame.

A writer who works with a financial investment in a project does have legal rights, as do the inheritors of that writer on his/her death. While sharing the rights

“The author must understand that he/she is a writer for hire and has no control over copyright or over editorial changes made to the text.”

—Richard Curtis

may be a way for you to reduce the up-front expense, it does mean that, if you are successful at marketing the book, you will have to share the profits. This is clearly more of an issue if you are famous or are writing about your relationship with someone famous. Obviously, such fame will assist in the marketing and may increase profits—which would be why the ghost wants a cut.

For most memoirs, however, there is little for the ghostwriter to gain by having legal rights to the book.

2. How will the authorship of the book be attributed on the jacket?

This is important if you are using the book to establish your credibility as an expert and thus promoting your career. Listing a co-author on the book's cover may lessen your perceived expertise in the eyes of the reader. The reader may presume that any technical or specialized information was the work of the ghost, even if it was you who developed that material.



Most ghostwriters insist on minimal acknowledgement within the book. If the name of the ghostwriter does not appear on the cover, the writer uses this credit to prove to prospective clients that s/he is a previously published co-author. The mention may read like this: "I want to thank Joe Smith for

all his invaluable assistance in writing this book." It's just that simple and discreet. Work this out with the writer before your collaboration begins. It will make both of you feel more comfortable. For most memoirs, this is an easy issue to resolve.

3. Will the writer hand over all the final, digital documents for you to reuse?

It's entirely possible that in a year or two, you could

have lost contact with the writer. With final files of the text and artwork, you will be able to go into reprint without contacting the author (if you do not share the rights). Be sure you have the files in hand to proceed independently. Some writers may insist on keeping the files exclusively. This is not to your advantage. Do not agree to it—especially if this is a for-hire arrangement.

If the author has a financial stake in the sales rather than just a for-hire relationship, s/he is likely to insist on retaining some control by holding on to the final files. This is another reason to engage someone as “work for hire.”



“To write this book I must come fully alive, care about life, and heal my own soul, for creativity is life-giving and demands that of me.”

—Melody Beattie

“Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement. Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant.”

—Winston Churchill

"Learning when 'enough is enough' is the discipline of a lifetime."

—Gail Godwin

"Making a movie is like climbing a mountain. The higher you get, the more tired and breathless you become, but your view becomes much more extensive."

—Ingmar Bergman

"I know a painting is finished when it looks all greasy and shiny and I'm happy."

—James Rosenquist

"Let us so live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry."

—Mark Twain

Chapter 7: Becoming Clear About Your Needs

Once your financial arrangement is negotiated, it's time to know your needs and to communicate them clearly. Consider the following when negotiating a working relationship with your writer:

1. Can the ghostwriter meet your deadline?

As you develop your memoir project, you may become aware of a natural deadline, such as a family reunion or a birthday. Can your writer meet this date? This should be determined before the ghost and you commit to each other.

A book without a deadline may lose its momentum. Even if you do not have a firm deadline, you do not want the project to drag so that you lose your energy to turn out a quality product. Select a meaningful end date to work toward. If you don't have a special occasion on the horizon, "Next year at this time" is a workable timeframe!

If you have a fixed deadline, it should be significant. Don't introduce needless tension into the relationship by selecting an arbitrary date that does not give you and

"A deadline is negative inspiration. Still, it's better than no inspiration at all."

—Rita Mae Brown

your writer sufficient time to do the work. Most likely, s/he has a number of clients and is doing the best possible job to meet all of their needs. Pick a completion date that works for you both and stick to it.

2. How many other projects does the writer have and can s/he comfortably fulfill them in the time before your (real) deadline?

This is especially important if your deadline is in the near future. Before you engage a writer, mention how important the end date is to you and ask if meeting it is possible. (If it is not, you need to change the date or find another writer.)

“A goal is a dream with a deadline.”
—Napoleon Hill

3. Will the writer be available when you are?

Inform the writer about times when you will be away and not available to work with him or her. If you plan to be absent for protracted periods of time (i.e., a month, six weeks, etc.), the co-author must know this as soon as you know.



Most ghostwriters must keep their schedules full as writing is their source of income. Since their income depends on billable time, they do not welcome surprise gaps. Knowing when you will be out of town for your nephew's graduation or otherwise unavailable because you are on your Caribbean cruise, your ghostwriter can affect a schedule shift towards other projects that will meet her/his income needs as well the needs of other clients while you are unavailable. Additionally, your writer can rearrange his/her schedule to be more at your disposal later when you are ready to resume collaboration.

4. Does availability extend to being in touch with you when you need to be in contact?

How will communications be conducted—e-mail, telephone, or in person? Be sure that your preferred method will be possible. Some memoir clients insist on meeting with the co-author in person and will drive long distances to sit with the ghostwriter; others prefer phone calls, and still others want all communications to be by mail or e-mail. The choice ought to be yours, and the ghostwriter ought to conform to it. You are paying the bill. Be prepared to pay for travel time if you insist on in-person visits from your ghostwriter.



Other than short telephone communications (“Is our meeting on Monday?”), expect to pay for the writer's time during telephone sessions and for e-mail feedback.

5. Are you available for consultations?

Frequent consultations (usually by phone) allow the co-author to keep on the right course in writing your memoir. With regular contact, you can constantly correct any false leads s/he may make. It's always more expensive to go back and reroute the work. I am always surprised by clients who say, “Just keep on writing. I'm too busy right now to have a telephone check in.” I am also dumbfounded by individuals who cancel a meeting because they have scheduled an appointment at the hairdresser's. Writing your lifestory is important—make it a priority in your life.

“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.”

—Ernest Hemmingway

6. Are the ghostwriter's life views compatible with yours—at least in as much as it will affect the project?

How compatible emotionally is the writer with your

project? You may find a candidate whose writing style you enjoy and whom you find likeable as a person, but you aren't a good fit for reasons of politics or religion. A born-again Protestant or a devout Catholic is not a viable co-author possibility for a book on your pro-abortion career. The ghostwriter would not be emotionally available to really open your book up to all its possibilities. S/he will inevitably have an emotional resistance to your message and that will affect the text—and your message.

7. Is the ghostwriter's working style going to be compatible with yours?

There are many working styles that can get the job of writing your memoirs done, but your ghostwriter's ought not to be a difficult or stressful

“Style is that which indicates how the writer takes himself and what he is saying. It is the mind skating circles around itself as it moves forward.”

—Robert Frost

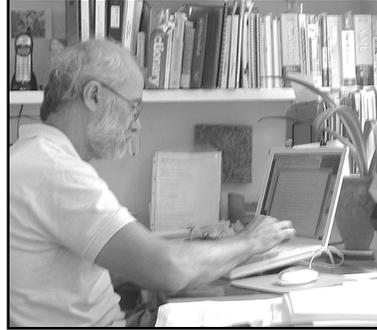
one for you. If your relationship with your co-author is not characterized by a high degree of congruence between the two of you, you will ultimately be stressed—and frustrated. Since you are paying the bill, congruence is weighted heavily on meeting your needs first.

8. What is the writer's feedback style?

If you like supportive feedback (a response that feels like someone is holding your hand), look for feeling-oriented responses as you interview the prospective co-author. But, if you enjoy “telling it like it is,” you may be turned off by what you perceive as a coddling approach. You need a thinking-oriented person who likes “plain” talk. A writer who is blunt and direct may be perfect for you, but may seem tactless and abrasive to the feeling person.

9. What medium will the ghostwriter use to return copy to you?

Will the writer work on a computer or on a print out? Some ghostwriters will send you all their writing—original copy, edited text, suggestions—within a digital file. This makes sense if you are comfortable with communicating via email. Or, would you prefer corresponding through the post? And again, phone chats may work best of all. Decide which form you prefer and make that known up front. Experienced ghostwriters have used every medium and want you to be at ease.



10. Does the writer's writing style meet your own thinking style?

As with feedback style, the ghost's writing style must feel comfortable to you. You don't want a co-author producing text that does not sound like you. If you are a terse person, a rambling style may not suit your story. If you are a concrete person, a writer who is full of images and metaphors may not be right for your memoir.

“When we see a natural style, we are astonished and charmed; for we expected to see an author, and we find a person.”

—Blaise Pascal

11. Does the writer feel comfortable keeping the story yours?

You do not need to have your life changed. You want your story written as it happened, not revised or embellished to suit your writer's preference or ego. Assess this through your initial conversations with the writer and by asking his/her references if s/he was content to stick to the facts of the subject's life.

12. Is this a person that you like and respect?

You will be in a long and intimate relationship with your co-author. It ought to be a comfortable one. Listen to your intuition. If the ghostwriter does not, for whatever reason, feel like a good fit for you and your story, do not embark on such a personal journey with him/her. Otherwise, you may have a long time to regret your decision.

"I used to think getting old was about vanity—but actually it's about losing people you love. Getting wrinkles is trivial."

—Eugene O'Neill



"It is easy—terribly easy—to shake a man's faith in himself."

—George Bernard Shaw

"In the beginning, to throw pots, I worked for a long time to get the clay centered. I soon discovered that if I were not centered myself, the clay would not become centered."

—William Galbreath

"To sustain the same attitude long enough to pull off a piece that takes months and months to do gets tiresome, which means that I can't worry about how I feel when I paint. I have to go into the studio and paint whether I feel like it or not."

—Chuck Close

Chapter 8: Establishing a Financial and Procedural Relationship

The future of your relationship—the “smooth sailing” you so much want—will depend on how well and clearly you agree from the start on the financial and procedural aspects of your collaboration. Be sure you come to agreement on the following:

1. Work ought to be performed by the hour rather than by the project.

While it is tempting to choose a per-project fee as that seems on the surface to be the more economical one, a project-fee arrangement is generally a troubling one. As the payer, you want more for your money. You want your book to develop organically and to grow as it needs to. The writer, as the service provider, wants to minimize changes to the manuscript so as to be able to fulfill the project objectives in a way that is profitable for him/her. How could you blame the ghostwriter for thinking of his/her needs—or you for thinking of yours? In this way, a project fee leads to conflict.

A per-hour fee may seem to be a set up for the writer

to stretch the project out so s/he can charge you more. This is not usually the case. The writer is a professional whose career depends on lining up projects and working efficiently.

You are not buying an interchangeable product such as a plumbing elbow. More than anything else, you want to ensure that your memoir is a quality product. Buy the time of the best writer you can afford.

2. Ask the writer to submit to you in writing all the procedural requirements that will help you and him/her to move the project along.

This includes how to format a manuscript you send, how to submit photos, etc. This clarity will help keep fees down as your ghostwriter will not have to work around your way of doing things.

3. Request regular billing so as to keep tabs on the amount of work being performed and the amount of charges being levied.

This works two ways: the writer usually appreciates being paid regularly and you will certainly appreciate not being slammed with months of fees that add up to the thousands of dollars. A consistent payment schedule can also help you to assess the final cost of the project.

4. Understand what is billable and what is not.

Though your relationship is friendly, do keep in mind that it always remains a professional one. When you call to chat about your cute granddaughter, will you be billed for your co-author's time? While such billing may seem off the wall to certain talkative clients, the ghostwriter has a right and a need to protect her/himself against endless unprofessional contact with clients who sap away at office time. On the other hand, the memoir subject ought to be able to call to ask for an update on the project without being charged for doing

so. Clarity about billing can go a long way towards averting future conflicts.

5. Establishing an end-date for the completion of a project is an effective management tool.

Perhaps you don't have a compelling deadline for finishing your memoir, but consider this: your ghostwriter most likely has several projects going on at the same time. If you do not express any concern for when your book is to be finished, your memoir may be moved to the bottom of his/her pile.

6. Ask the advice of the ghostwriter, rather than tell her/him, about how to structure your memoir.

A client can tell the ghostwriter s/he wants a certain treatment. A person who has not written much may really mean "effect" rather than "treatment." For instance, "I want a lot of feeling in my memoir" is a call for effect not treatment. Tell the writer what effect you are hoping for and let him/her proceed to write. You have hired a professional writer for a good reason! Use the expertise of your writer.

"She generally gave herself very good advice, (though she very seldom followed it)."

—Lewis Carroll

Treat your writer as the professional s/he is, and you will receive great service. *"I have some idea in mind, but*



"I have some idea in mind, but the result is always very different from what I really had in mind."

—Raphael Soyer

"The more forthright I become in my statements, the more I learn from the reactions of others."

—Alice Miller

"If I show my husband a poem, he says, 'I don't think that's too hotsy-totsy,' which puts me off. I try not to do it too often. My in-laws don't approve of my poems at all."

—Anne Sexton

"It's my experience that very few writers, young or old, are really seeking advice when they give out their work to be read. They want support; they want someone to say, 'Good job.'"

—John Irving

Chapter 9: How Much Does a Memoir Cost?

Of course, you want to know how much ghostwriting your memoir will cost you. Depending on the desired length, it may take months or even years to complete your book—and that time adds up to money.

Keep these considerations in mind as you attempt to assess the cost of a ghostwritten memoir:

1. Asking, “How much will it cost to have my memoir written?” is a bit like asking, “How long will it take to cross the lake or the bay?”

Many factors will affect the time of the crossing: the wind, the distance from one shore to the other, the design of the boat itself, the number of people on the boat, whether or not you wish to cross directly or whether you would like to make a few forays into coves and inlets.

“That which costs little is less valued.”

—Miguel de Cervantes

In the same way, there are many factors that will affect the cost of your memoir. How much have you already written? How much of the materials (letters, photos, articles, journals) have you collected and annotated? How much will you participate in the writing

itself? (Some people regularly turn in pages of text while others prefer to let the co-author do all the composition.) Will the ghostwriter do the final copy edit (commas, periods, etc.) or will you assign that to family and friends who are “good at that sort of thing?” Read the word of caution on page 23 about soliciting help from well-meaning friends who may have some experience writing as a hobby.

If cutting costs is important, do as much of the work yourself as you can. Most ghostwriters will not have a problem with this. If cutting costs is not important, do as much as you enjoy.

2. Working with a ghostwriter will cost a lot—that’s a fact. So will a winter trip to Hawaii or a new kitchen.

You can shop for a ghostwriter based on price—and you may end up with a bargain-basement memoir. You can shop based on quality—and you will get a quality book. There’s a difference between being prudent and compromising the memoir of a lifetime.



“Afford” is often a matter of valuing rather than of dollars. Here at Soleil Lifestory Network, we’ve worked with millionaires for whom the cost of the project was inconsequential and with waitresses and lumberjacks who were concerned with the bottom line but who wanted more than anything to have the book they had always wanted—a written record of the memories and events of a life. What did the waitress and the lumberjack have in common with the millionaires? It was this: they believed in the importance of leaving a written legacy.

3. What will be the cost of not hiring a ghostwriter and foregoing your story?

If you do not preserve the story of your life or of

your parents, that of your business venture, or that of your ethnic group, the story will be lost. After you are gone, no one will have access to it. That is the price of not writing. It will be as if you or these people who are dear to you had never existed. Is that what you want to happen?

“It costs you something to do the right thing.”
—Zora Neale Hurston

4. After telling your ghostwriter how much you will be contributing to the writing of the book, s/he ought to be able to share a “ball park” figure with you.

This figure will most likely be based on a “per 100 pages of manuscript text turned in.” This will not—and cannot—be a hard and fast figure. Have more in reserve than this “guess-timate.” Writing your memoir will likely cost more than anticipated—everything costs more.

5. Okay. So how much?

My best guess is that a quality ghostwriter will cost you (in 2012 dollars) in the vicinity of \$8,000 to \$14,000 per hundred pages, depending on how much text you contribute, as suggested in #1 above. Any less than that and you are probably dealing with an amateur writer who may be difficult—or unprofessional—to work with.

6. If you sell copies of your book, will you be able to recoup these expenses?

Most writers we have worked with recoup printing and at least some ghostwriting costs once their sales reach 600 to 1,000 copies. If you need to pay yourself back for expenses, marketing your book is an excellent way to do so. Many folks enjoy the contact with the public selling their books affords them, but this is not everyone’s “cup of tea.”

“Life is inherently risky. There is only one big risk you should avoid at all costs, and that is the risk of doing nothing.”

—Denis Waitley

Unless you are willing and able to devote yourself

to more extensive marketing to sell 1,500 and 2,000 and more books, you will probably not realize a profit. One woman I worked with sold 2,200 copies of her memoir. Not bad for someone who had never sold a single book before.



"I didn't understand that I needed management and publicity and all those things that were anathema to the old me in order to be efficient and have people hear what I create."

—Joan Baez

"I had a guilt complex about pushing my art, so much so that every time I was about to show I would have some sort of attack. So I decided it was better simply not to try. Nowadays, however, I am making an effort to change."

—Louise Bourgeois

Chapter 10: Tips for Saving Money

Working with a ghostwriter can be expensive, but never as expensive as your family losing your story because you did not write it.

Because each project is a unique event, **it's fairly impossible to predict the cost of writing your memoir.** Here are some tips to help you control the final price.

1. Your research and your preparation are crucial.

Perhaps you have already worked out the scope of the book, spent time recalling anecdotal details, assembled the photographs and support documents, written some text or even a rough draft—this may be the single most important factor in keeping costs down. If you improvise this work in the ghostwriter's presence, you are doing so on billable time. (But, do not hesitate to ask questions and comments. This will stimulate your memory and creativity.)



2. The text you provide will save ghostwriting time.

The quality (insightfulness, completeness, coherence) of the rough material you provide helps keep costs down. This text does not need to be particularly well written—just as good as you can make it. Your text may be written in snippets or even in outline form. Type what text you have as a computer document to send to the ghostwriter. (A ghostwriter would have to charge for transcription into a digital document, so doing this yourself is an easy step to save you money.)

“When you’re fifty, you start thinking about things you haven’t thought about before.”
—Eugene O’Neill

Your co-author can rewrite or edit what you send. What I love about receiving this initial and unpolished document is the client’s voice and vocabulary which helps me to create new text in the same vein.

3. Accompanying materials matter.

The writer can quote from these materials or use them to generate text quickly. If anything is not clear, make notations on the photocopies. In this way, the writer can access your artifacts quickly and meaningfully. A ghostwriter can extract material from photocopied material that will astound you. You may even find yourself saying, “I saw the same information but I had no idea I could use it for my memoir—and certainly no idea I could say it so interestingly!”

4. Use your interview sessions wisely.

After your working meetings, your co-author will produce text based on your recollections. It is your job to give your ghostwriter all the information s/he needs to develop a manuscript that portrays your life. Those who prepare before an interview will provide their ghostwriter with better quality source material than clients who come cold and spend large chunks of billable

time trying to remember things that may have happened long ago. Mine your memory beforehand and think through the details on your own before the meetings. Doling out dribs and drabs of material over the course of many meetings as you try to remember your story and piece it together inhibits your writer's ability to create a coherent text. Inevitably, s/he will have to re-interpret what has already been written. It is a waste of time (and money) to force our ghost to rewrite.



And remember, meetings with a co-author are not the time to chat about your morning, your grandchildren or what you watched on TV last night. All meetings are billable.

5. Be available for telephone meetings and for reviewing chapters as soon as they are written.

Make yourself available to the ghostwriter and your project will move along more swiftly. The more your co-author has to guess and improvise your story the more you will spend—especially if you want extensive revisions later. Your ghost can work more efficiently with the text if s/he is revising close to the time s/he generated the text. A week later, the ghostwriter is still in the flow of what s/e has recently written. A month or two later s/he will have to spend time getting back into the material. Responding as soon as possible keeps the writing going seamlessly.

“All the time I’m not writing I feel like a criminal. It’s horrible to feel felonious every second of the day. It’s much more relaxing actually to write.”

—Fran Lebowitz

6. Be an active participant in the process.

An engaged client reads the text the ghostwriter

sends—carefully, every time, in a timely manner. Speak up about any changes you wish to make or have made. The time when the text is new is also the cheapest opportunity to make changes. Later the writer may introduce a draft based on earlier writing that s/he thought you wanted. At that point, s/he may have to do major rewriting for consistency.

Early changes are cheap changes! The absolute worst time to change text is when the ghostwriter sends you what was clearly supposed to be a final copy.



When I handed in the final text along with design and illustrations to one client, she shared with me that she did not like my treatment of her story. This came after several approval (“sign off”) steps, so I was

amazed at the seeming turn around. When I asked her why she had waited until this late hour to confide her misgiving to me, she said, “You’re the professional and I didn’t want to contradict you.” This proved costly for her and disappointing for me.

From the first moment you feel dissatisfaction with the text—tone, organization, shaping—speak to your ghostwriter and indicate what sort of treatment you would prefer. Discuss the process with the ghostwriter to allow him/her to make modifications that will please you. Your ghostwriter wants to provide you excellent service, but you must share your preferences with him/her. Otherwise the process will be flawed.

7. Access secondary material in advance.

Secondary material—newspaper clippings, journals, and any other artifacts that the ghost can use to generate text—are valuable. You can go through it and make notes about what portions to use. Of course, your co-author can review and select this support material on

his/her own without your input, but this will cost you. If you are concerned about price, do this work yourself.

8. Remember: length has a direct relationship to cost.

You may have a small commemorative project for a family member or business event, or you may have an entire lifetime of experience and achievement to be recorded and explained. A project that is twice as long is likely to cost more than twice as much since writing a longer piece requires more attention to pacing and shaping the manuscript. Economy of scale does not apply here. That said, choose to write the memoir you want to have, not the memoir that saves you money.

In my years of experience, I have noticed that many individuals start wanting a smaller project, then once it has begun, they realize the once-in-a-lifetime nature of the undertaking and decide to include all. This adds to the price, but it is most often a wise decision. Working with a co-author can help you to realize the depth and breadth of your lifestory. This is not a time to save as much as it is a time to invest in your written legacy.

9. Is there a way of setting a cost ceiling?

Sure. Provide a figure you want to work within. Ask your co-author to advise you when s/he has billed at half that figure. Your ghostwriter and you together can estimate how far you are in covering the material of the memoir as you conceive it. Then s/he can offer an estimate as to how much it will cost to finish the story (based on current rate of production). If you have invested half of what you thought you would and you are at the halfway point or beyond in writing your story, you are in luck.

Your co-author can wrap up your story at any price you want—but s/he can't necessarily tell the whole story you wish to have written for that price.

Have you ever been on a trip and you saw some-



thing you wanted to buy, but decided you'd spent enough and decided to forego the purchase, only to regret not having it once you were back home? "Why didn't I get it when I was there?" you lament. In the same way, when you've gone to the trouble of hiring a ghostwriter and are taking pains to craft a substantial memoir, that is not a good time to forgo including a section of your lifestory because you want to save a little money. That is being penny wise and pound foolish. Later you are likely to regret having omitted something important from your personal narrative. But it will be too late to include it. You have 500 or 1,000 copies of your book but it does not contain that something which is essential to your story. You were attempting to save on final cost. Was that really such a good saving?

Remember that you will probably write a memoir only once in your life. Most of the people I have worked with are one-time and only-time writers. Be sure you have the memoir you want for the ages, for the generations yet to come—not the memoir that has saved you money.

"There is nothing as easy but it becomes difficult when you do it reluctantly."

—Terence

"It's all a struggle. I don't know what should be there until it gets there."

—Susan Rothenberg

Chapter 11: Your Sendoff

By now, I hope you are enthused with the idea of how you can succeed at writing your memoir. That's what a professional ghostwriter is there for—to help you make your dream come true.

Follow the guidelines set out in this book and you will find that working with a ghostwriter is possible—and not so hard.

I've gathered all the tasks suggested throughout the book into a worksheet which you can download free at www.turningmemories.com/ghostwriter.html.^{*} Print it out and, over the next weeks, find yourself checking off task after task. Soon you will be ready to throw yourself a book launch party!

Good luck and be in touch if I can help.

^{*} Visit www.turningmemories.com/ghostwriter.html for instructions on downloading the free worksheet.

A Consumer's Guide to Ghostwriting Services

Soleil Directory

Resources for
Lifewriters, and Photoscribes

Soleil Press —

Founded in 1988 by author and teacher Denis Ledoux, Soleil Press is the publishing arm of the Soleil Lifestory Network, dedicated to producing high-quality instructional materials for people who preserve their personal and family stories through written memoirs and lifestory photograph albums.

We also offer ghostwriting, coaching for writers, and book production services—design and pre-press preparation—for those who want to self publish their memoirs.

Lifewriting —

■ **Turning Memories Into Memoirs**

A Handbook for Writing Lifestories24.95
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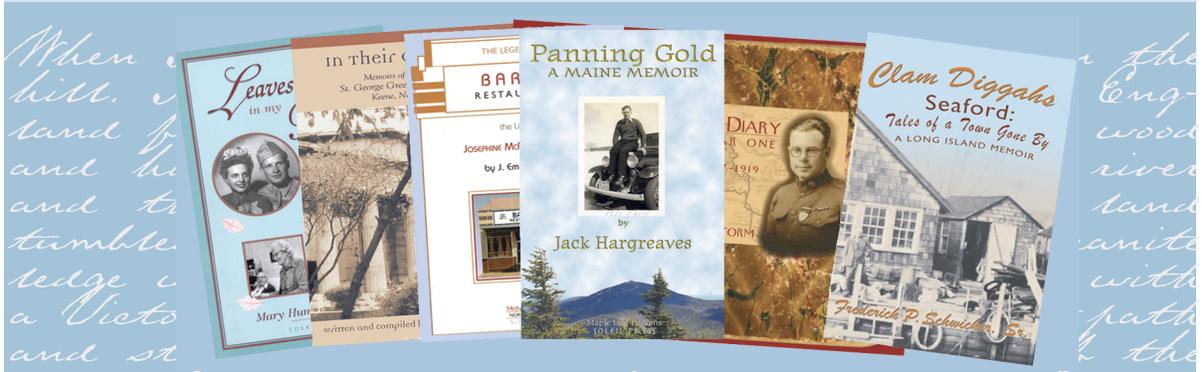
When I was five we lived in the house on the hill. It was a magical place: an old New England farmstead by a river and the

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Denis Ledoux has helped thousands of people to write memoirs since 1988 through workshops, tele-classes, coaching, editing, ghostwriting, and book production. He had ghostwritten, or actively edited, a long shelf of memoirs for individuals who did not know where to turn to have a book they would be proud of and which would present their lives well to coming generations.

Twice a Maine Writing Fellow and once a recipient of a Maine Fiction Award, he heads a team of lifewriting professionals whose goal is to create memoirs of a lifetime for clients. He lives and works in Maine.

Standing behind the house a row of tall pines—giant pines to a five-year-old—a broad swing with ropes reached up into the land farmhouse surrounded by a nine acre wood