

Incorporating Our Pain into Our Story Handout

by Diana Leigh Matthews

Some types of pain include

- Heartache
- Betrayal
- Unanswered prayers/longings
- Strife in relationships
- Grief/loss
- Burnout
- Change in our lives
- Finding oneself
- God working in our lives

Digging Deep

- PTSD
- Characteristics or nuances
- Bad habits or ticks
- Fears
- Struggles

Sharing your story

- Maybe you have a story you want to share
- Change identifying details
- Decide to place it in fiction form instead of a memoir
- Be sure you're not hurting someone on purpose
- Be willing to change names, places, details, etc.

Using our Pain

- Can help provide more dimension to our character
- Help us to tap into our character's emotions
- Show realistic pain, fear, shame, sadness, depression, etc. for our characters

My Story is finished...what next

- Take a break
- Read the manuscript with fresh eyes is the emotion too raw?
- Get honest feedback from a critique group, beta readers, a writing coach
- Do aspects of the story need to be re-written
- Pray and ask God for wisdom and direction
- Is this a story meant just for you but not for others?

In editing, we will fix the bleeding

- Redundancies
- Repeating
- Clarifying the emotion
- Tuning down strong emotions/characters as needed
- Have beta readers provide feedback

Why we write our pain?

- To process or heal
- To bring more depth to our characters
- Because we never know how God will use our situation and book for His honor and glory

When Writing Our Pain

- Pray
- Set aside time to write without interruptions
- We're pulling back the scab
- Allow ourselves to feel

- Allow it to all pour out
- Tune into your senses and visceral reaction
- Take a deep breath when needed
- Be willing to step away if necessary
- Take a walk or treat yourself afterward

On Your Best Writing Life Podcast

Paula Mosher Wallace provides A Three Stage Process to Write Your Pain

<https://www.blueridgeconference.com/podcast/a-three-stage-process-to-write-your-pain-well/>

Ways you may use your story

- Novel form
- In a speech
- In a memoir
- In a non-fiction book
- In a Bible study
- In an article
- In an anthology
- In a devotion
- A children's book

Remember

- You don't have to tell everything
- In fiction, allow your character to learn, grow, and heal from the situation
- In non-fiction, service your reader/listener
- Provide hope before the end
 - Show growth and healing
- Find a new twist on an old topic/subject

In closing

- Our pain can be a good thing
- Our pain can help others
- We have to be ready to share and that's usually once we're through the situation and have had time to process
- Above all, pray and ask for the Lord's guidance ... be willing to submit to His will
- Leave the reader with hope
- Point the reader to God
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

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