



The Kite and the String: How to Write with Spontaneity and Control--and Live to Tell the Tale

Alice Mattison

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A targeted and insightful guide to the stages of writing fiction and memoir without falling into common traps, while wisely navigating the writing life, from an award-winning author and longtime teacher

Writing well does not result from following rules and instructions, but from a blend of spontaneity, judgment, and a wise attitude toward the work—neither despairing nor defensive, but clear-eyed, courageous, and discerning. Writers must learn to tolerate the early stages, the dreamlike and irrational states of mind, and then to move from jottings and ideas to a messy first draft, and onward into the work of revision. Understanding these stages is key.

The Kite and the String urges writers to let playfulness and spontaneity breathe life into the work—letting the kite move with the winds of feeling—while still holding on to the string that will keep it from flying away. Alice Mattison attends also to the difficulties of protecting writing time, preserving solitude, finding trusted readers, and setting the right goals for publication. The only writing guide that takes up both the stages of creative work and developing effective attitudes while progressing through them, plus strategies for learning more about the craft, *The Kite and the String* responds to a pressing need for writing guidance at all levels.

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