

The Barefoot Writer

7 Toxic Habits That Could Wreck Your Writing Career

The Invisible Glicken of Barefoot Living

How to Choose the BEST Writing Opportunity for You

Barefoot Writer John Forde at Le Cafe Metro on Place Maubert, in the Latin Quarter of Paris

PLUS: 8 Easy Tips for Better Writing • The Hottest Way to Boost Productivity • Travel Writing's Priceless Perks • 5 Quick Ways to Get Motivated • And Much More!

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The invisible Glicken of Barefoot Living

From International Executive to Beachfront Barefoot Writer

Sally Eastwood started her career overseas on the corporate track, yet now she's a successful freelance writer and author on the West Coast. Her first book, *101 Things To Love About Laguna Beach*, was published in December 2013. Read on to learn how fate led her to Barefoot Writing and how passion for a fulfilling lifestyle fueled that change and prompted her to make a life-changing decision.

You started adulthood in England with a law degree. How'd you wind up in California as a freelance writer?

Great question! When I decided to study law, it was really about creating a direct career path. However, over the years at university, I realized that being a lawyer was not the life for me, but the degree did help me get into what I ended up doing: working in the automotive business. I started with a British car company after graduation, moving around England wherever needed. Seven years later, I was offered an expatriate assignment in the U.S. So, my first trip to the U.S. was for a period of two years, with two suitcases in hand, and no idea what I was getting into! Again, I moved whenever I was asked, enabling me to rise to an executive position.

In 2000, the company's headquarters transferred to California, and I discovered Laguna Beach. That was when I fell in love: I finally found the place I knew was home. In 2007, the HQ office relocated back to the East Coast, and I made the difficult decision to stay in Laguna Beach, leaving behind a 23-year career. I wrote a lot for my work — presentations, speeches, and video scripts — and I wanted to explore whether I could be successful writing on my own.

What's the most rewarding part of being a writer?

Seeing the pieces I've written published in magazines and online, and having people say they really enjoyed reading them. There's nothing like that thrill of seeing your byline in print!



Sally on the hiking trails near her house with Owen (left) and Piper

You recently published a book — can you share what you've learned from that experience?

Like many writers, I dreamed of writing a book, and always thought that fiction was the route I would go. I took a small writing class about three years ago, to hone my storytelling, and after finishing a homework assignment for class one weekend, I started to write a list of all the things I was grateful for. After scribbling for a while, I realized that many items on the list were about living in Laguna Beach.

I kept writing more and more, until I had a very long list, and an urge to expand on every item. *101*

Things To Love About Laguna Beach was born. I had a very clear vision of what I wanted the book to be, and that included unique illustrations. I asked a friend of mine, a talented watercolor artist, to join me on the journey, and she agreed. We both sat down one morning at a beachside restaurant in Laguna, and brainstormed how to divide the book into categories, and what illustrations she should create.



Sally (left) at her book launch event, with her publisher (middle) and her collaborator/illustrator Helen (right)

As luck would have it, another writer friend of mine urged me to meet the owner of a boutique publisher in Laguna Beach, who was looking to publish books about the town. I couldn't believe my ears! I contacted her, and within two months we had a book contract. Four months later, the book was written, and the illustrations painted. Ten months after signing the contract, the book was out!

What I learned from this experience is that when you are totally passionate about a project, the ideas and the words flow, you talk to others about it in a way that also excites them, and you generate incredible support along the way.

What writing projects do you plan to tackle next?

I'm currently working on projects for a couple of clients, including regular blog posts, bios for a

new company's founders, and a website for that company. I'm also considering writing another non-fiction book — I have two ideas, but my time is tight, and they are on the back burner for now!

How do you factor social media into your freelancing business?

I have my own website, and I keep that short, with easy-to-digest pieces of information. I place links to my published work there, and also links to my social media sites. I created a dedicated Facebook page for *101 Things To Love About Laguna Beach*, and update that with fun stuff about the book, and about Laguna Beach in general. There's also a YouTube channel, which contains videos on the "Making of" the book and our book launch event.

Who has had the biggest influence on your writing career?

Definitely my writing instructor from the Laguna Beach writing class, Christine Fugate. She's a documentary filmmaker and a film professor at a local university. Christine taught me how to find my own unique writing voice, rather than thinking about how I "should" write. She also gave me the chance to work with her on magazine and newspaper projects, and opened doors for me to get my work accepted at other publications. Her trust in me elevated my desire to write well and not let her down!

What's the single most important tip you can share with up-and-coming writers?

Find your own voice. Don't try to emulate anyone else's way of writing, because you will struggle to get it right. When choosing clients, always ask what their tone of voice is, and who they are as a brand. If that's a good fit for you, then you've got a potentially long working relationship ahead. If not, then neither of you will be happy, and it is okay to gracefully decline. My "voice" is light-hearted and fun, while still being professional. I'm grateful to be able to work with clients who have the same point of view! ■