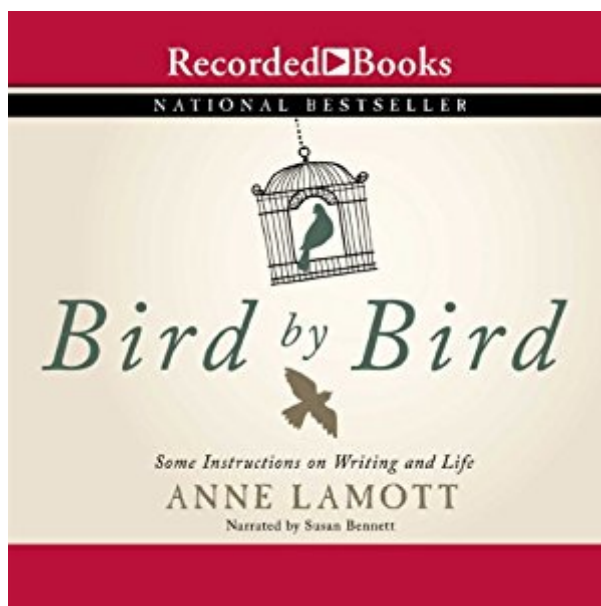


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# Bird By Bird: Some Instructions On Writing And Life



## Synopsis

A New York Times best-selling author of both fiction and nonfiction, Anne Lamott was also the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. As much a guide to writing as an exploration of the emotional challenges of being a writer, *Bird by Bird* offers a candid and often humorous look at how to tackle these varied obstacles.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

Brene Brown mentioned this book and now I know why. I'll read it again as I get to the next phase of my book, but for now *Bird by Bird* was just what I needed. Each week I refer to two nuggets that are helping me get going - just write! ONE: Keep a list of small assignments that I can work on when I get stuck. TWO: Let go of having to know/see the entire journey and just the headlights that shine light on the road just in front of me... I'm an amateur writer working on my first fiction book and Anne Lamott's get my fears, gremlins and BLOCKS!!!

When I took a travel writing class, this book was (rightfully) recommended. The author demonstrates the meanings of succinct and effective while adding punch and humor. Anyone who writes either creatively or technically will find it humbling, engaging and useful. Thanks, Anne Lamott!

If you are a writer or just think you might be a writer, read this. It is inspirational as well as informational - and funny. I'm reading it again as soon as I finish.

This book was recommended to me by a friend, and I wish I could remember who it was so I could thank them. It's just such a wonderful book which I would recommend for everyone who loves to write and struggles with all the insecurity and doubt that comes with the territory. Lamott packs no punches when talking about how hard the writing life can be and how few people who set out on this journey will actually be successful in conventional terms. She points out that even those who are lucky enough to get published will find it's not the life-changing experience they expect it to be. While not discouraging people from following their dreams she reinforces that writing is its own reward and that exploring your own dark places and having the courage to write your truth can be incredibly enriching and empowering on its own. I learnt so much about writing and life from this book and my Kindle highlighter went into overdrive. This is a book I see myself returning to for years to come for its great wisdom and inspiration. Oh, and did I also mention it's very funny with lots of LOL moments? Here are just a few of my favourite quotes:

On lacking drive: "If you find that you start a number of stories or pieces that you don't even bother finishing, that you lose interest or faith in them along the way, it may be that there is nothing at their centre about which you care passionately. You need to put yourself at their centre, you and what you believe to be true or right. The core ethical concepts in which you most passionately believe are the language in which you are writing"

On writer's block: "The word block suggests you are constipated or stuck, when the truth is you are empty....If you accept the reality that you have been given - that you are not in a productive creative period - you free yourself to begin filling up again."

On truth: "The great writers keep writing about the cold dark place within, the water under a frozen lake or the secluded, camouflaged hole.....Your anger and damage and grief are the way to the truth. We don't have much truth to express unless we have gone into those rooms and closets and woods and abysses that we were told not to go into....Tell the truth as you understand it. If you're a writer, you have a moral obligation to do this. And it is a revolutionary act - truth is always subversive."

On giving: "You have to give from the deepest part of yourself and you are going to have to go on giving, and the giving is going to have to be its own reward. There is no cosmic importance to your getting something published, but there is in learning to be a giver....What your giving can do is to help your readers be braver, be better than they are, be open to the world again."

On bad reviews: "I have gotten prepub reviews that said I was a treadmill on the underpants of life.....if you are a writer, it is going to happen to you."

On writing as its own reward: "As a writer, one will have over the years many experiences that stimulate and nourish the spirit. These will be quiet and deep inside, however, unaccompanied by thunder or tremulous angels."

This is by far the best-narrated audio book I have ever listened to. Period. Susan Bennett brings the words to life, in a conversational way that is so genuine, so convincing, that she seems to be the very author of the words. I found myself hanging on every sentence, and the time flew by as I listened. Of course, Anne Lamott created an amazing and interesting book. The book, after all, is the source of all the humor, joy, surprise, and tears that these words brought to me as I listened. But I've heard portions of the same book narrated by Anne Lamott herself, and I found her narration to be dry and oddly emotionless. Susan Bennett's narration, on the other hand, contains nuances, inflections, modulation, and tonal variation appropriate to not only every passage, but even word by word. "Bird by Bird" is a worthwhile read in and of itself. But this is an unparalleled narration that transcends the source. It is rare that a narration is worthy of the content, and even more rare that a narration actually makes a book better. But that is precisely what Susan Bennett has accomplished. Update - I wrote this review of the Audible Audio Edition of "Bird by Bird", narrated by Susan Bennett. I didn't realize it would be posted with all reviews of all formats of the book, so I addressed the narration, rather than the book itself. There are plenty of reviews focused on the merits of the book, and you can read those if that is your interest. The sole purpose of this review is to inform you of the quality of the narration in this audio version. I would also like to point out that there are two Audible Audio versions, one narrated by Anne Lamott herself, and this one that I reviewed, narrated by Susan Bennett. Trust me, the narration by Susan Bennett is the version you want.

This book was, as many have already said, a great combination of sad/funny/realistic. I enjoyed the breath of fresh air with regard to the myth of publication. Ultimately, I found this book to be more a comedic way of understanding the ins and outs to writing rather than actual instruction on the art and science of writing.

Right at the start, Lamott tells us that "good writing is about telling the truth." The writing life is a tough road, but Bird by Bird is a wonderful guide that shines a warm light over it. If you don't know where to start, or if you feel oppressed by perfectionism or the infamous writer's block, this book has some advice for you. You will learn to treat your characters as living (fictitious) beings, and that they dictate the plot. Bird by Bird is not a rulebook, but it reads more like a friendly conversation. I recommend it to all kinds of writers.

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