

Excerpt from *Why Become a Christian? A Spiritual Memoir*
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At the end of each chapter, to help you write your spiritual memoir, I share

My Writing Process and Insights:

When I first began writing this book some three years ago, I did not know it would become my Spiritual Memoir. It was only after feedback from several individuals, followed by several re-writes, that I realized the need to pose and answer the following six questions to establish a clear focus for me and for my writing. When I teach Writing Courses, I get students to pose and answer these same questions to focus them and their writing; feedback says this is helpful.

To aid your writing, I'm going to answer the following six questions at the end of each chapter. You will see times when I went astray, and had to refocus and rewrite. In those chapters where there is nothing new to say for particular questions – especially How? When? Where? – I omit the question.

- 1) **Why write?** My original text described my converting from Humanism to Christianity – but this was too autobiographical (had to delete 20,000 words and several chapters). After doing several rewrites due to an unclear purpose (Why?) and audience (Who?), I did this current re-write for two purposes: 1) to share my Spiritual Memoir and 2) to inspire/guide readers to write yours – to slow the advancement of Atheism.
- 2) **What to write?** I began with my already-written worldview poem based on James Sire's 1976 book, and wrote Chapter 3 as a short synopsis of his well-organized 2009 fifth edition. Next, I transcribed 50+ hours of audiotaped Presentations I had given to compare Christianity to Humanism and New Age; this quickly produced 40+ pages of text that are now Chapters 12 & 13 (originally much earlier). I put my BBB Models into PowerPoint slides, and saved these Models as jpegs for easy insertion into my book. Nothing else was definitely decided for inclusion, which is why I had to do several re-writes. Guiding Principles: 1) start with "chunks" already written or easily written to create motivation for starting; 2) make sure What aligns with Why and Who, to reduce re-writes. Also: ***answer all of these questions thoroughly before writing anything, making sure all answers align (are not incompatible).*** For this last re-write, I inserted into this Foreword my 3 BBB Models and inserted into upcoming Acknowledgements the poems about my Mom and Dad – so I can refer back to this material in later chapters (to reduce redundancy). For similar reasons, I quote the Parable of the Prodigal Son (my favorite parable) because it tells my "story," is memorable (see SUCCES concept under **Tips** below), and I refer back to this a lot. I briefly describe the most influential authors I cite throughout my memoir.
- 3) **Who is audience?** Originally, I wrote a textbook for college students – so they would avoid Humanism and New Age. This content was academically slanted, with lots of references (too many) and bullet points to be discussed (text did not flow in a readable manner). In the next rewrite, the potential audience was Bible Study Groups; the questions for them became the Application Questions in this final writing. When my audience finally changed to seniors and those I wanted to inspire to write your spiritual memoir (using mine as a guide), I had to rewrite all text.
- 4) **How to write?** Decided to use Word for Mac for easy uploading as an eBook or printed book. Did Internet searches and downloads for ideas, content, references, Bible passages, etc. Always began by hand writing key ideas/etc. as bullet points on the backs of old business cards, in pencil, so I could easily add/delete/modify and re-sequence them on a large table (story boarding). Before doing word processing, I always penciled a quick list of main ideas, concepts, words, etc. to be typed in more detail (I pencil/jot down ideas faster than typing them). Guiding principles: 1) employ divergent thinking (research; main ideas; spread out) before convergent thinking (focused writing/typing); 2) make sure your writing style is appropriate for Who and Why. In this last rewrite, I modified my analytic style to be more free-flowing and readable by my audience [Who] and to match my purpose [Why]). I always knew I'd be sole author (no co-author or ghost writer needed).
- 5) **When to write?** When distractions are less, especially at night (into wee hours). Typically, at scheduled times, but also when especially inspired. This did not change.
- 6) **Where to write?** I've always liked to write papers on large tables so I can see notes/books/etc. For each initial version of this book, I spread out everything on our large dining room table, so I could see everything (like puzzle pieces) and do quick story boarding; I did initial word processing there. I did revisions and proofing in my office where distractions are less. This did not change.