

— DIANNA PRICE —

— CPRS —

Tell me your story

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
TELLING AND SHARING
YOUR RECOVERY STORY



YOU ARE NOT DEFINED BY YOUR PAST.

You are built by your story. ♥

Tell Me Your Story

A practical guide to telling and
sharing your recovery story.

Dianna Price, CPRS

*“Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their
story...”*

— Psalm 107:2 (NIV)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my daughter,

Brittani Gale

July 1, 1993 – July 28, 1993

Forever loved, forever remembered.

Free Recovery Edition

This book is provided free of charge through **Dianna's Books & Recovery** because I believe hope, education, and recovery resources should be available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

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My only request is this: if this book gives you hope, pass that hope on to someone else.

Thank you for helping make recovery resources available to everyone.

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Introduction

This book was written for anyone who has ever wondered if their story still matters.

Maybe you are in recovery. Maybe you love someone who is. Maybe you are carrying a past that still feels too heavy to name out loud. Maybe you have survived things you do not yet know how to explain. If any of that is true, I want you to know this before we begin: you do not have to have the perfect words to begin telling the truth.

A recovery story is not meant to glorify pain. It is meant to point toward hope. When shared with wisdom, safety, and purpose, a story can help someone feel less alone, remind them that change is possible, and offer light to a person who may still be standing in the dark.

That does not mean every detail belongs on the page. Some memories need time. Some parts of your life may need protection. Some people's names and private details may need to stay private. Telling your story well means telling the truth with care.

In these pages, I will share what I have learned about writing, recovery, honesty, technology, and purpose. I will also remind you often that your recovery matters more than any manuscript. You can pause. You can skip a question. You can come back later. You can tell the truth slowly.

This is not a book about becoming famous, writing perfectly, or impressing anyone. It is about learning how to recognize the value in what you survived and how to share that truth in a way that brings hope instead of harm.

Your story belongs to you. Your voice belongs to you.

Your healing belongs to you. My prayer is that this book helps you honor all three.

So take a breath. Turn the page when you are ready. We will begin gently, one honest step at a time.

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Part I: Foundations

Tell Me Your Story

Everyone has a story. Some are filled with happiness. Some are filled with heartbreak. Some are still being written. Mine almost ended before I ever had the chance to tell it.

If you picked up this book because you are in recovery, because you love someone who is, or because you are trying to understand what comes after addiction, I want you to know this: you are not holding a book about my life only. You are holding an invitation to look at your own.

This may begin with my story, but it is not only about me. My story is simply the invitation. In these pages, I'll share what recovery taught me about honesty, purpose, safety, service, and hope. The real question is what your story can still become.

Before I could invite anyone else to tell the truth, I had to learn how to tell mine.

Maybe you're wondering why anyone would write a book about addiction. The truth is, I never intended to write one. I carried too much shame to imagine putting my story on paper, and I did not want people to know what addiction had cost me.

If you are carrying shame, I understand why telling the truth can feel impossible. I understand why you may want to hide the worst parts, skip over the painful memories, or convince yourself that no one needs to hear what happened. But the very parts you are afraid to say out loud may be the parts that help someone else feel less alone. Your story does not have to be perfect to matter. It just has to be honest, safe, and true enough to reach the person who needs it.

If someone had told me years ago that writing would become part of my recovery, I would not have believed

them. Writing was not part of my plan. Recovery was not part of my plan. Surviving was not even something I was sure I wanted anymore.

Journaling became the first safe place where I could put words to what had happened. That part of the journey matters, but I will tell it more fully later. For now, just know that one honest sentence became another, and eventually those pages helped me understand that my story could point someone toward hope.

That first book was not written to shock people or glorify addiction. It was written so someone else could look at the wreckage of my life and see that recovery was still possible. Because if someone like me could recover, maybe they could too.

As I continued in recovery, I realized something I had not expected: getting clean was only the beginning. Part of my purpose became learning how to tell the truth in a way that could help someone else.

That does not mean your purpose has to be writing. Maybe your story will come through writing, music, faith, mentoring, counseling, peer support, or simply being the person who answers the phone when someone else is barely holding on. Maybe it will not look like anyone else's story at all. That's okay. Everyone tells their story differently.

The important part is finding a way to tell your story that keeps you safe, grounded, and connected to your recovery.

For me, writing became that safe place. I learned that I can help people without putting my own recovery at risk. This book is not here to tell you what your purpose should be. I cannot do that.

I found mine through trial and error, through honest reflection, and through learning what I could offer without losing myself.

Your journey will probably look different. What I can do is show you what I have learned. I will tell you what worked, what did not, and the truth, even when it is uncomfortable.

I will not soften addiction to make it easier to read. I will not pretend recovery is perfect. I will not lie to you. Anything less would be dishonest.

That is why I'm asking you to read this book with an open heart. Not as a spectator watching my life from a distance, but as someone brave enough to notice where my story touches your own.

My hope is not that you finish this book thinking I have an incredible story. My hope is that somewhere along the way, you will stop and think...

"This book is about me."

Because if that's what happens...

You'll realize something that took me a long time to learn.

Your story still matters. No matter how broken you feel. No matter what you have done. No matter how much shame you are carrying.

Your story is not over. And one day, it might be the reason someone else survives.

Tell me your story. Not because it has to be perfect. Not because it has to impress anyone. Because somewhere, someone may need the hope only your truth can give.

Encouragement: You do not have to be ready for everything today. One honest page, one honest memory, or one honest prayer can be enough to begin.

Reflection Questions

What part of your story feels ready to be named today?
Where has shame tried to convince you that your story does not matter?

What is one safe, honest step you could take toward telling the truth?

Your Story Still Matters

Before we talk about tools, timelines, chapters, or publishing, I want you to hear this clearly: your story still matters. It matters if you are early in recovery. It matters if you have relapsed before. It matters if you are still learning how to forgive yourself. You do not have to have a perfect ending before your life can carry hope.

Addiction tries to convince people that the worst chapter is the whole book. Recovery teaches us something different. It teaches us that pain can become wisdom, survival can become service, and truth can become a light for someone who feels alone.

You may not know yet what your story is supposed to become. That is okay. You do not have to know the whole path today. For now, it is enough to believe that what you survived has meaning, and that one honest sentence can be the beginning of something healing.

Encouragement: Your story does not need a perfect ending before it can carry hope. If you are still here, there is still meaning in what you have survived.

Reflection Questions

What does it mean to you that your story still matters?

What part of your survival could become hope for someone else?

What would change if you believed your life still has purpose?

Part II: Why Tell Your Story?

Why Your Story Matters

If you've made it this far, you may still be asking yourself one question: **Why?** Why would anyone care about my story? I'm not famous. I'm not a doctor. I'm not a counselor. I didn't invent anything. I just survived.

If that is what you are thinking, you are exactly who I wrote this book for. Most people believe their story is not important because they lived it. They assume everyone else has experienced the same things.

They think,

"It wasn't that bad."

Or...

"Someone else has a better story than mine."

Or maybe...

"I'm ashamed of what I've done."

If you've ever thought those things, you're not alone.

The truth is, people are not looking for perfect stories. They are looking for honest ones. They are looking for someone who says, *"I've been where you are."* Those five words can change a life.

Sometimes we think people need another expert. Sometimes what they really need is another survivor. Someone who understands because they have lived it. Someone who does not speak from a textbook, but from experience.

That is why peer support works. It is why support groups work. It is why recovery meetings have helped millions of people. It is why one honest conversation can sometimes mean more than a hundred lectures.

People connect with people, not perfection. Your story reminds someone that they are not alone. Your story

gives someone permission to hope. Your story quietly says, *"If I survived... maybe you can too."*

That does not mean you have to write a book. In fact, many people never will. That is okay. The goal is not to become an author. The goal is to find a healthy way to tell your story.

Maybe that is writing. Maybe it is speaking. Maybe it is mentoring someone who is just beginning recovery. Maybe it is sharing at a meeting, making music, creating art, recording a podcast, having a conversation over coffee, or simply choosing to live differently today.

There isn't one right way.

There is only **your** way.

One of addiction's greatest lies is that your life is over.

That you're too broken.

Too damaged.

Too ashamed.

Too far gone.

Recovery tells a different story.

Recovery says your past doesn't disappear...

But it doesn't get the final word either.

Your survival has value.

Not because everything you did was good.

Not because you're proud of every decision.

Not because your story is perfect.

Your story has value because you survived it.

And survivors have something no textbook can ever give
someone.

Experience.

The purpose of telling your story isn't to impress people.

It isn't to make money.

It isn't to become famous.

The purpose is much simpler than that.

Someone else is standing where you once stood—
confused, scared, ashamed, and convinced they are the
only person who has ever felt this way. Your story may
become the first light they see.

Maybe they'll never know your name.

Maybe they'll never meet you.

Maybe they'll never have the chance to thank you.

But somewhere...

Someone may decide to ask for help because they heard
your story.

Someone may stay alive because they realized recovery is
possible.

Someone may believe in themselves for the first time in
years.

Not because you had all the answers.

But because you were willing to tell the truth.

That's why stories matter.

Not because they change the past.

Because they can change someone else's future.

When I wrote my first book, I thought I was telling my story. I wasn't. I was leaving a light on for someone I would probably never meet. That's what I hope this book helps you do.

Your story isn't valuable because it's extraordinary. Your story is valuable because it's true. Someone needs to hear it. Maybe they have been waiting longer than you realize.

Encouragement: Someone may need the truth you are afraid to tell. Go slowly, but do not let shame convince you that your life has nothing to offer.

Reflection Questions

Who might need to hear the hope inside your story?

What lie has kept you from believing your experience has value?

How could your truth help someone feel less alone?

How I Told My Story

Let me make something clear before we get started. I am not a writing instructor. I am not an English professor. I am not going to teach you the “correct” way to write a book.

I have written two books. I am working on my third.

That is it. I am just going to show you how I did it.

If something in this chapter helps you tell your story, use it. If it does not, leave it behind. There is no single right way to tell your story. There is only the way that works for you.

When people hear someone has written books, they may assume there was a big plan behind it. That could not be further from the truth. I never planned on writing a book. Honestly, I had too much shame, and the idea of putting my addiction on paper sounded impossible.

Something shifted when my sponsor suggested I start journaling. She did not tell me to write a book. She did not tell me to become an author. She just encouraged me to write down what was already inside me, one thought at a time.

Somewhere along the way, those journal entries turned into *Do You ParTy?*.

I never saw that coming.

Looking back now, I realize something important. Writing was not just helping me tell my story. Writing was helping me understand it.

That is when I discovered something about myself. I do not think very well with my fingers. I think out loud.

If you watched me write, you might be surprised. I do not spend hours staring at a blank screen trying to find the perfect sentence. I talk. I tell stories. I answer questions. I explain things the same way I would if

someone were sitting across the table from me with a cup of coffee.

That is why I use voice dictation whenever I can.

Technology finally caught up with the way my brain works. Instead of worrying about typing every word perfectly, I can just tell my story. Then I go back later and organize it.

That is also why I use AI. Not because AI writes my books. It does not. My story belongs to me. My experiences belong to me. My recovery belongs to me.

I use AI because it helps me ask better questions. It helps me slow down, think deeper, and remember things I might have skipped over. But AI does not write my recovery for me. It does not own my story. It does not know what I lived through. It only helps me bring out what is already mine.

Sometimes AI asks better questions than the ones I would have asked myself. A question makes me remember something. That memory becomes a paragraph. That paragraph becomes a chapter. Eventually, those chapters become a book.

I also use different tools for different jobs.

I use Microsoft Word because that's where my manuscript lives.

I use Copilot to help organize ideas, improve flow, and catch things I might miss.

I use AI conversations to explore memories, find themes, and challenge my thinking.

After I've written something, I don't just read it.

I listen to it.

Hearing my own words read back to me helps me catch awkward sentences, repeated ideas, and places where something does not sound like me.

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that first drafts are supposed to be messy.

Don't fall in love with your first draft.

Finish it.

Then make it better.

Then make it better again.

Every chapter I write gets rewritten.

Sometimes several times.

Not because the first version was bad.

Because every revision makes my message clearer.

I also learned something else.

Don't try to sound like somebody else.

Don't write like your favorite author.

Don't write the way your English teacher wanted you to write.

Write the way you talk.

People don't connect with perfection.

They connect with honesty.

My books have never been about perfect grammar.

They've always been about telling the truth.

Sometimes the truth is ugly.

Sometimes it's embarrassing.

Sometimes it makes people uncomfortable.

Write it anyway.

If you soften your story because you're afraid someone will judge you, you may soften the very part someone else needs to hear.

That doesn't mean you have to tell everything.

Some parts of your story belong only to you.

But if you choose to tell it...

Tell the truth.

And don't wait until you think you're qualified.

If I had waited until I felt like an author...

I'd still be waiting.

The only qualification I had was this: I survived.

The rest I learned by doing.

Maybe writing isn't your purpose.

Maybe your story will be told through music.

Maybe through art.

Maybe through faith.

Maybe through mentoring one person.

Maybe it will be encouraging someone every morning
with a text message.

Whatever your way is...

Find it.

If writing is something you've always wanted to do, don't
let fear convince you your story isn't worth telling.

It is.

You don't have to write the next bestseller.

You only have to tell the truth.

Because somewhere out there is someone who needs to
know they are not the only one.

Maybe your story is exactly what they need to hear.

Maybe...

It'll change their life.

Encouragement: You do not have to know how the whole book will come together. Start with the next true sentence and let the rest grow from there.

Reflection Questions

What helped you begin telling your story in the past?

Do you think better by writing, speaking, recording, or talking with someone?

What is one true sentence you could write or say today?

How You Can Tell Yours

Before we get practical, I want to say this clearly: telling your story is not just about getting words on a page. It is about learning how to hold your story safely, honestly, and with purpose. The tools matter, but your recovery matters more. As we move into the steps, go slow. Stay grounded. You are not trying to force a book out of pain. You are learning how to turn what you survived into something that can help someone else.

Now let's shift from my story to yours.

The last chapter showed you how writing found me.

This part is meant to help you start, one step at a time.

I'm not giving you rules. I'm giving you a path you can try.

Take what helps. Leave what doesn't. But if your story has been sitting inside you waiting for a way out, this is a place to begin.

The next few chapters will walk you gently from courage into action, starting with the tool that can help you begin when the blank page feels too big.

Encouragement: You are not moving from courage into pressure. You are moving from courage into support, one gentle step at a time.

Reflection Questions

What support would make telling your story feel safer?

What part of your story feels easiest to begin with?

What pressure do you need to release before you start?

What AI Can Do for Your Story

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is simply a tool that can have a conversation with you, ask questions, organize information, and help you think through your story one step at a time.

Think of it as a patient interviewer who never gets tired. It can ask one question, wait for your answer, and then ask the next question based on what you already shared.

The words are still yours. The memories are still yours. The recovery is still yours. AI is not here to replace your voice. It is here to help you find it, organize it, and keep going when the blank page feels too big.

Encouragement: AI is only a helper. Your voice, your memories, and your recovery remain the heart of the story.

Reflection Questions

How could AI help you ask better questions about your life?

What boundaries would help you feel safe while using
AI?

What do you want to make sure stays in your own voice?

You Don't Have to Be a Writer

One of the biggest fears people have is, “I’m not a writer.” Good. You do not have to be. You do not need perfect grammar, perfect punctuation, or a perfect plan. You only need a willingness to answer one honest question at a time.

If you can send a text message, record a voice note, or tell your story to a friend, you already have a way to begin. A book is not born all at once. It grows from small honest answers.

Encouragement: If you can answer one question honestly, you can begin. You do not have to feel like a writer to tell the truth.

Reflection Questions

What fear comes up when you think, “I’m not a writer”?

What is one way you already tell stories in everyday life?

How could you begin without needing the words to be perfect?

You Are Always in Control

This may be the most important sentence in this book: you are the boss of the conversation. If AI asks a question you are not ready to answer, you can say, “Let’s skip that,” “I want to talk about something lighter,” or “Let’s come back to that another day.”

AI does not get offended. It does not judge you. It simply follows your lead. You get to decide the pace, the depth, and what belongs in your story.

Encouragement: You are allowed to pause, skip, restart, or change direction. Your story should follow your healing, not rush ahead of it.

Reflection Questions

What questions would you want permission to skip?

How will you know when you need to pause?

What phrase could you use to slow the conversation down?

Protect Your Story and Your Privacy

As you begin writing, remember that your story belongs to you. Until you are ready to publish it, protect your identity and the identities of other people in your story.

- Use a passcode or biometric lock on your phone.
- Download AI apps only from official app stores.
- Avoid sharing passwords.
- Use first names or aliases when discussing other people.
- Leave out addresses, case numbers, Social Security numbers, or other sensitive information.
- If your story includes legal matters or highly sensitive events, remove identifying details until you are preparing a final manuscript.

Your goal is not to tell everything. Your goal is to tell the truth safely.

Encouragement: Protecting your story is not fear. It is wisdom. You can be honest and careful at the same time.

Reflection Questions

What details in your story need privacy or protection?

Whose identity do you need to guard as you write?

What would it look like to be honest and careful at the same time?

Before You Begin

Before opening an AI app for the first time, take a deep breath. This is not a test. You cannot fail. There are no wrong answers. You are simply having a conversation, one memory, one question, and one page at a time.

When you are ready, you can begin with a simple prompt: “I’d like you to help me tell my life story. Please act as a patient interviewer. Ask one question at a time, wait for my answer, and do not overwhelm me.”

Here is the path we will walk through together: gather your story safely, let honest questions bring memories to the surface, organize those memories into themes, shape them into a manuscript, edit without losing your voice, and prepare to share your work when you are ready.

What You'll Need

You don't need thousands of dollars to write a book.

You don't need a publishing company.

You don't need an English degree.

You don't even need a computer to get started.

Here's what I recommend.

Start Here

- A story you are willing to tell.
- A smartphone.
- An email address.
- A free ChatGPT account or another AI assistant willing to interview you.
- Honesty.

That's enough to begin.

You do not have to understand the whole publishing world before you begin. You just need a way to start collecting what is already inside you.

When You're Ready

If you are going to invest in one writing tool, I recommend Microsoft Word. Not because it is the only way to write a book, but because it became the place where I could collect my thoughts, organize my chapters, listen to my own words, and keep everything together. For me, it gave my story one steady place to live.

It's where I organized my manuscript, moved chapters around, listened to my book using Read Aloud, and used Microsoft Copilot to help improve grammar, clarity, and flow.

Could you write a book without Microsoft Word?

Probably.

Would I?

No.

For me, Microsoft Word became my writing workshop.

Don't Write Your Book Yet

The biggest mistake I almost made was trying to write a book before I had collected my story.

Don't worry about chapters.

Don't worry about grammar.

Don't worry about publishing.

Just tell your story.

The book will come later.

Encouragement: You do not need to understand every step before you take the first one. Begin simply, and let confidence grow as you go.

Reflection Questions

What do you already have that is enough to begin?

Where will you keep your story as you collect it?

What first prompt feels gentle enough for today?

Let AI Interview You

If a question brings up more than you expected, you can stop. You do not owe the page every answer at once.

Pause, breathe, talk to someone safe, or come back another day. Your story should never have more power over you than your recovery does.

Instead of asking AI to write your book, ask it to interview you. Have it ask one question at a time.

Answer honestly. Let it ask follow-up questions. Those conversations become the raw material for your book.

You are not writing a manuscript yet. You are collecting your memories.

Before you save or share anything, remember that your story may include other people's names, places, or private details. You can change identifying information, leave out details that are not yours to tell, and protect anyone who does not need to be named for your message to matter.

After each conversation, save what you wrote. Copy it into Word. Email it to yourself. Put it somewhere you can find it again. Don't trust yourself to remember where everything is later.

Encouragement: Every answer you save is progress. Even a messy conversation can become the raw material for something meaningful.

Reflection Questions

What is one question you would like AI to ask you?

How will you save your answers so you can find them later?

What memory feels safe enough to explore first?

When the Questions Bring Up Feelings

Sometimes an interview question will reach deeper than you expected. A memory may come back fast. A feeling may rise up before you are ready. That does not mean you are doing anything wrong. It means your story is connected to real life, real pain, and real healing.

When that happens, pause. Put the phone down. Take a breath. Step outside if you need to. Call your sponsor, counselor, peer support worker, pastor, mentor, or someone safe. Your recovery matters more than finishing a chapter.

You can tell AI, “Let’s stop for today,” or “Please summarize what we talked about and ask me something lighter next time.” You are allowed to slow down. You are allowed to skip a question. You are allowed to protect your peace.

Take Care of Yourself

Your story doesn't have to be perfect.

It doesn't have to be dramatic.

It doesn't have to impress anyone.

It only has to be honest.

People can feel it when you're being real.

Don't try to sound like someone else.

Write the way you speak.

That's what makes your story unique.

Writing about addiction, trauma, loss, or painful
memories can be emotionally exhausting.

Take breaks.

Go for a walk.

Talk to someone you trust.

Pray.

Listen to music.

Play with your pet.

Get some rest.

Remember this:

Your recovery matters more than your manuscript.

There will always be another day to write.

You get to decide what you are not ready to write yet.

Just because something happened does not mean it has to go on the page today. Some memories need time.

Some need support. Some may never belong in the book, and that is okay.

Encouragement: You are allowed to protect your peace. The story can wait when your heart needs care.

Reflection Questions

What signs tell you that you need a break from writing?

Who is one safe person you can reach out to if writing brings up hard feelings?

What memory needs more time before it belongs on the page?

Build a Simple Timeline of Your Life

A timeline gives your memories somewhere to land. It does not have to be perfect. It does not have to include every year. It is simply a way to see the shape of your life before you try to turn it into chapters.

You might begin with simple sections: childhood, before addiction, active addiction, the turning point, early recovery, life today, and what you know now. If those labels do not fit your life, change them. The timeline belongs to you.

Ask AI to help you build it gently. You can say, “Help me create a simple timeline of my life. Ask one question at a time, and do not rush me.” One memory at a time, your story will begin to take shape.

Encouragement: A timeline is not a test of memory. It is only a gentle map, and you can fill it in at your own pace.

Reflection Questions

What life seasons would you include in your timeline?

What turning point stands out when you look back?

What part of your timeline feels safe to fill in first?

Tell the Truth

Telling the truth does not mean telling every detail. It means being honest about what you choose to share.

Some parts of your story may still be too tender. Some details may involve other people. Some memories may need more healing before they belong on a page. That does not make your story less powerful. It makes you wise. Tell the truth you are ready to tell, and protect the parts of you that still need care.

If you are unsure whether a part of your story is safe to share, ask someone you trust before you publish it. That might be a sponsor, counselor, peer support worker,

pastor, mentor, or steady friend. You do not have to make every decision alone.

Encouragement: You can tell the truth without telling everything.

Wisdom, privacy, and recovery can all belong on the same page.

Reflection Questions

What truth are you ready to tell now?

What truth may need more healing before you share it?

Who could help you decide what is safe to include?

Find the Story Inside the Memories

After you've answered enough questions, you'll begin to notice patterns.

Certain memories connect together.

Certain themes keep appearing.

Those themes eventually become chapters.

Don't force the organization.

Let the story reveal itself.

When the same idea keeps showing up, pay attention.

That might be a chapter. When two memories seem connected, put them together and see what happens.

You are not building the whole book in one day. You are sorting through the pieces.

Encouragement: You do not have to see the whole book yet. Trust the pieces that keep rising to the surface.

Reflection Questions

What memories keep rising to the surface?

What themes do you notice repeating in your life?

Which memory might belong beside another one?

Turn Your Conversations Into a Manuscript

Now it's time to open Microsoft Word.

Start copying your conversations into one document.

Group similar ideas together.

Move things around.

Delete repeated stories.

Expand the parts that need more detail.

Slowly, you'll watch a manuscript begin to take shape.

Encouragement: A manuscript begins as pieces. If it feels messy, that does not mean you are failing. It means you are building.

Reflection Questions

What pieces of your story have you already collected?

What ideas seem to belong together?

What repeated material could be saved, moved, or removed later?

Edit Without Losing Your Voice

Grammar matters.

Clarity matters.

Good editing matters.

But don't edit away your personality.

Your readers aren't looking for perfection.

They're looking for you.

Use editing tools to make your writing easier to understand—not to make it sound like someone else wrote it.

Encouragement: Editing should make your story clearer, not smaller. Keep the voice that sounds like you.

Reflection Questions

What parts of your voice do you want to protect during editing?

Where does the writing need more clarity?

What should remain raw, honest, or simple because it sounds like you?

Learn From Others

When I got stuck, I went looking for the next answer. Sometimes that answer came from YouTube. Sometimes it came from a simple search. I did not try to learn everything at once. I learned what I needed for the next step, applied it, and came back to the page.

Encouragement: You do not have to become an expert overnight. Learn what you need for the next step, then come back to your story.

Reflection Questions

What is the next skill you need to learn?

Where could you look for a simple answer?

How can you keep learning from turning into procrastination?

Get Ready to Publish on Amazon KDP

Publishing is not nearly as scary as it looks. Take it one step at a time. Create your manuscript. Choose a cover. Write your book description. Upload your files. Review everything carefully. Then click "Publish."

It is not always easy, but it can be done one step at a time.

Before you publish, slow down and look at the basics. Is the manuscript finished? Have you listened to it or read it out loud? Have you checked the formatting? Does the cover reflect the heart of the book? Does the description tell readers what they are about to receive? Take your time with those questions. Your story deserves that kind of care before you send it into the world.

The hardest part is not publishing. The hardest part is believing your story is worth telling.

Encouragement: Publishing is a process, not a judgment. Take one step, check your work, and give yourself permission to learn.

Reflection Questions

What part of publishing feels most intimidating?

What can you check before sharing your manuscript publicly?

What would help you see publishing as a process instead of a judgment?

Don't Count Pages. Count Purpose.

One of the first questions people ask when they think about writing a book is: *"How long should it be?"* The better question is: *"Did I tell the story that needed to be told?"*

Some stories need more pages. Some need fewer. There is no magic number that makes a book valuable. A book doesn't change lives because it's long. It changes lives because it's honest.

Don't add pages just to make your book look bigger. Readers can tell when words are there to fill space instead of saying something meaningful.

At the same time, don't rush through the parts that deserve to be told simply because you're worried your book is getting too long.

Tell the truth. Tell it clearly. Then trust that it is enough.

When I wrote my first book, I wasn't thinking about page counts. I was thinking about survival. I was trying

to explain what addiction had done to my life and what recovery had given back. The number of pages didn't matter. The message did.

The same is true for your story.

Whether your book is sixty pages or three hundred, someone who needs your story will never ask, “Why wasn't this longer?” They'll be grateful you had the courage to write it at all.

Don't measure your progress by the number of pages you've written. Measure it by the truth you've been willing to tell.

Every honest page is progress. Every memory you face with courage is progress. Every sentence that helps someone feel less alone has already done something worthwhile.

Recovery taught me that healing happens one day at a time. Writing taught me that books are created the same way.

One page. One memory. One honest conversation at a time.

Eventually, those pages become chapters. Those chapters become a manuscript. And before you know it, you're holding a book you never believed you could write.

Encouragement: Don't try to write a long book. Write an honest one. If your words leave one person with more hope than they had before they opened your book, you've already written something that matters.

Share Your Story Safely

Success is not measured by bestseller lists. Sometimes success is simply having the courage to tell the truth. If

your story helps one person feel less alone, then your words mattered.

Encouragement: You do not have to share everything with everyone.

Sharing safely still counts. One person helped is enough.

Reflection Questions

Who is a safe first audience for your story?

What parts of your story should stay private for now?

How will you know you are sharing from hope instead of pressure?

Keep Telling Your Story

Publishing a book is not the end of your story. It is just another chapter. Keep growing. Keep learning. Keep living. Keep encouraging others. Because someone out there may be waiting to hear exactly what you have survived.

If you have made it this far, I hope you understand something: your story does not have to be finished before it can have meaning. You are still living it. You are still learning from it. And when the time is right, you can tell it in a way that honors your healing and reaches the person who may need to hear it.

Tell your story.

It might be the reason someone else believes they can survive theirs.

Encouragement: Your story can keep growing with you. You are not only writing about who you were; you are living proof of who you are becoming.

Reflection Questions

How has your story changed as you have grown?

What do you want your story to offer someone else?

What is one way you can keep living the message you hope to share?

Resource Guide: Safe & Effective Recovery Storytelling

Telling your story is powerful, but telling it safely matters too. This guide gives you places to start when you want to share your truth without putting your recovery, privacy, or peace at risk.

If you want to learn more about sharing your story safely, these are good places to start. They can help you think about your words, protect your well-being, and tell the truth in a way that brings hope instead of harm.

1. Messaging & Changing the Language

Words carry weight, especially when we talk about addiction and recovery. When you're ready to look at how to frame your journey, search for these tools:

- **Faces and Voices of Recovery (*Our Stories Have Power*):** This training toolkit teaches you how to speak and write about recovery using solution-focused, non-stigmatizing language. It is all about shifting the focus from the wreckage to the hope.
- **Shatterproof (*Addiction Language Guide*):** A quick guide on how to use person-first language.

It helps you talk about the person before the disease—focusing on *a person in recovery* rather than labels that carry old shame.

- **SAMHSA (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*):** Search their site for recovery storytelling guidelines and peer support standards. They offer great insights on how sharing honest experience helps others heal.

2. Standard Boundaries for Safe Storytelling

Before you publish or share, check in with yourself using these standard rules of thumb:

- **Share from your scars, not your open wounds:**
If a memory still brings back overwhelming pain or makes you feel unsafe, give it time. Write about the things you've processed and made peace with.
- **Focus on the solution over the “war story”:** A good recovery story does not spend ninety percent of the time in the dark. Give people enough truth so they know you understand, but spend your energy showing them *what changed* and *how you live today*.

- **Protect others and respect anonymity:** Always remember that your story touches other people. Change names, alter identifying details, or ask permission when sharing memories that involve family or friends. If you participate in 12-Step programs, protect those traditions by keeping full names and specific meeting details off public pages.

3. Quick Searches to Help You Build Your Book

When you're ready for the technical side, don't let the process overwhelm you. Just go to YouTube or Google and look up one step at a time:

- *"How to outline a recovery memoir"*
- *"How to use dictation and speech-to-text for writing"*
- *"How to use Microsoft Word Read Aloud for self-editing"*
- *"Formatting a manuscript for Amazon KDP"*
- *"Designing a simple book cover for KDP"*

Remember, you do not have to learn everything today. Learn the next step. Try it. Then come back to the page and keep going.

Encouragement: You do not have to carry the whole publishing journey at once. Learn the next step, take it gently, and keep coming back to hope.

Recommended Next Steps

If you have made it to this point, take a moment to recognize what that means. You have not only read about telling your story; you have begun thinking about what your own truth may become. That matters. You do not have to rush from inspiration into pressure. The next step is not to finish everything today. The next step is to begin safely, honestly, and gently.

Start small. Choose one memory, one question, one page, or one conversation. Let that be enough for today. A story is not built all at once. It grows through attention, courage, patience, and care.

1. Create a safe place for your story.

Decide where your writing will live. That may be a notebook, a private document, a folder on your phone, or a Microsoft Word file. Keep it somewhere you can find it again, and protect it with care. Your story

deserves a safe home before it becomes something you share.

2. Begin with one honest prompt.

You do not need a perfect opening line. Begin with something simple: “What do I want people to understand about what I survived?” or “What part of my story am I ready to tell today?” Answer without judging yourself. Let the first draft be honest before you ask it to be polished.

3. Use AI as a helper, not an author.

If you use AI, let it interview you gently. Ask it to move slowly, ask one question at a time, and help you organize what you have already said. Remember that your memories, your voice, and your recovery belong to you. AI can help you shape the story, but it cannot replace the life behind it.

4. Protect your peace while you write.

Some memories may bring up pain. That does not mean you are doing it wrong. Pause when you need to. Talk to someone safe. Pray, rest, walk, breathe, or come back another day. Your recovery matters more than any manuscript, chapter, deadline, or dream.

5. Review before you share.

Before you publish or post anything, read it carefully. Ask yourself: Is this true? Is it safe? Does it protect other people's privacy? Does it offer hope instead of harm? If you are unsure, ask someone you trust to read it with you before you put it into the world.

6. Keep going one step at a time.

You may write a book. You may write a letter. You may share at a meeting. You may encourage one person quietly. All of it matters. The goal is not to become famous. The goal is to let your survival become a light for someone who needs to know recovery is possible.

Your story does not have to be perfect to be powerful. It only has to be handled with honesty, wisdom, and care. Begin where you are. Tell the truth you are ready to tell. Protect the parts that still need healing. And remember this: someone may be waiting for the hope only your story can give.

Encouragement: You do not have to finish the whole story today.

One safe, honest step is still progress.

Recommended Reading

Recovery is a lifelong journey, and no single book has every answer. The books below have helped countless people better understand addiction, healing, trauma, purpose, and the courage to tell the truth. You do not need to read them all. Start with the one that speaks to where you are today.

Recovery

Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book)

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services

The foundational text of the Twelve Step movement.

For millions of people, it has provided a practical path toward sobriety, hope, and lasting recovery.

Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps

Richard Rohr

A thoughtful exploration of recovery through the lens of grace, spirituality, humility, and transformation.

The Language of Letting Go

Melody Beattie

A collection of daily readings that encourage healthy boundaries, emotional healing, and continued personal growth for people in recovery and those who love them.

Understanding Addiction & Trauma

In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction

Dr. Gabor Maté

One of the most compassionate books ever written about addiction. Dr. Maté explores how trauma, loss, and emotional pain often lie beneath addictive behaviors, offering understanding without judgment.

The Body Keeps the Score

Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.

An accessible explanation of how trauma affects the brain and body, along with research-based approaches to healing.

What Happened to You?

Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., and Oprah Winfrey

A powerful reminder that healing begins when we stop asking, "What's wrong with me?" and begin asking, "What happened to me?"

Purpose, Hope & Personal Growth

Man's Search for Meaning

Viktor E. Frankl

A timeless classic demonstrating that even in life's greatest suffering, people can discover hope, purpose, and meaning.

The Gifts of Imperfection

Brené Brown

An encouraging invitation to let go of shame, embrace authenticity, and recognize that imperfection is part of being human.

Writing Your Story

Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life

Anne Lamott

A beloved guide to writing honestly and courageously—one sentence, one memory, and one step at a time.

Writing Down the Bones

Natalie Goldberg

A practical and inspiring book that helps writers stop chasing perfection and begin writing from the heart.

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft

Stephen King

Part memoir and part writing guide, offering practical advice about finding your own voice, developing discipline, and telling the truth on the page.

If You'd Like to Read My Story

Do You ParTy?

Dianna Price

My personal recovery memoir. It tells the story that eventually led me to write *Tell Me Your Story*. If you would like to see how I shared my own journey before learning the lessons in this guide, this is where it began.

A Final Thought

You do not have to read every book on this list. Sometimes one book arrives at exactly the right moment and says exactly what your heart needs to hear.

Read with discernment. Keep what strengthens your recovery. Continue asking honest questions. And remember that no author—not even this one—can tell your story for you.

Your voice matters. Your recovery matters. Your story still matters.

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Tell Me Your Story

A Practical Guide to Telling and Sharing Your Recovery Story

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Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version® (NIV), unless otherwise noted.

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