

✓ MELANIE'S WRITING NEWSLETTER - MAY 2008 ✓

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." - Thomas Alva Edison

**THE BIG NEWS:** It's done, it's done, it's done! My [web site](#) is officially launched. I've needed my own site for about 100 years. It's very satisfying to have it come to fruition at last. Edison was right--never give up. Those checkmarks by the newsletter's title above are because I can **finally** check "Get my own web site" off my to-do list. :)

You can now order my book (autographed or not) and my writing workbook from me online by credit card--no more mailing in checks! Go to [melaniebowden.com](#) to see all the site has to offer. Thank you again to [Julie Tillman](#), web site designer extraordinaire, for her great work on the design. Please let me know what you think and if there's something more you would like to see at [melaniebowden.com](#).

**PRESENTATIONS:**

1) New date for my presentation to the Nonfiction Network of the California Writers Club: **Friday, August 1st**. Come have breakfast and meet other writers at **9 a.m.** The topic: "Always, Always, Always Ask For More Money For Your Writing." I will discuss negotiating techniques that have earned me bigger paychecks and other tricks of the trade.

The Nonfiction Network meeting will be held at the IHOP Restaurant at 2216 Sunrise Boulevard, Rancho Cordova, just north of Highway 50.

2) I'm awaiting final approval that I will be teaching a writing class through UC Davis Extension next fall. I will know for sure by June's newsletter. The course, "Getting Published: The Business of Non-Fiction Writing," trains participants in the basics of publishing their non-fiction writing. Each participant will learn to prepare materials such as query letters, cover letters, and proposals that will lead to professional writing assignments. In addition, exercises and discussions will cover other aspects of professional writing such as contracts, taxes, and working with editors and agents.

The class is held on eight Tuesdays, September 16th through November 4th, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m at the Sutter Square Galleria in Sacramento. I would love to see you there!

For more info go here. It's too early to enroll, but you can learn more about the class at the Extension link. It is one of the required courses for the Specialized Studies Program in Non-Fiction Writing offered through Extension.

3) If you belong to a group that hosts speakers, please let me know. Topics for presentations include: magazine writing, infant massage, perfectionism, working with magazine editors, reducing new parent stress, working out with your baby, and more.

## **WRITING AND OTHER STUFF:**

1) Have you heard about the free online career class offered at the Oprah site? The course is called *Take Control of Your Career and Your Life*. It guides you through finding what your strengths and weaknesses are. You can then use that knowledge to design the career you want--one that focuses on your strengths (the tasks that give you energy) and manages around your weaknesses (the tasks that drain you).

Marcus Buckingham, career expert and the designer of the workshop, makes a great point--we shouldn't be working most of the time on improving our weaknesses, but, instead, finding our strengths and capitalizing on them to keep us passionate about our work.

I took the course and loved it. I feel much clearer about what I want in my career, and how I can bring more of the tasks that excite me into my workday.

Have you taken Marcus' course? I'd love to hear what you discovered. Please see my blog post below for more on his workshop.

2) Never miss a new blog post again! You can now subscribe for free to my blog for new moms Spit-Up On My Shoulder.

Click on the Subscribe message at the top of the left-hand column at the blog (sign-up is quick) and you're on your way.

Recent blog posts include: What Dad Can Do For Mom, Gain Energy-Focus On Your Strengths, and Nightly Clean-up.

3) A sluggish economy can do a number on freelance work.

When the economy is bad, magazines tend to lean more on their staff for articles and assign more work in-house. The opposite can happen also--magazines may have to lay off staff and then rely on freelancers more. Either way, there can be a lot of instability in the publishing world.

What's a writer to do when work is sporadic? I've found a way to pad my bank account during lean writing times: substitute in your local school district. They need subs to teach, work with students with disabilities, work in the school library, or help in the office. I get called almost every day to sub, and it's my choice whether I take a job or not. If my writing work is a little slow, it's good to know I can bring in some extra money

subbing.

Plus, talk about a great resource for writing ideas! Schools are very busy places and every day is different. I've found many article ideas from my subbing experiences.

4) I recently attended a seminar titled *Ten Tips for Getting a Writing Job at UC Davis*. Thank you to my friend, Barbara, for telling me about the seminar.

Although the presentation was geared to the Davis campus, most of the information would apply to finding a writing job at any organization. Here are the top picks I took away for writing job hunters:

- Learn design software. If you want to write a newsletter for a company, knowing how to design the layout ups your chances of getting the assignment.
- Propose a writing project that will get information about the organization out to the mainstream population. For example, translating technical information into layman's terms to promote an organization's latest product.
- Save what you get published. (This one baffled me because I never throw away anything I publish. The panel of writers at the seminar, however, said they often have job applicants who don't have copies of their published work.)
- Be flexible, resourceful, creative, and willing to learn.
- Writing jobs aren't necessarily titled "writer." Communications Coordinator/Specialist, Publications Coordinator, Publicity Director, Public Information Representative, and Analyst are all titles of jobs that may involve a lot of writing.

Finally, here's a quote from Lynn Robinson for anyone who is job searching:

"When you don't know what to do, just take the next right step. It doesn't have to be a big leap."

I always feel better when I do something, no matter how small it is, when I'm afraid I'm out of options. Never stop trying!

Until next time,

Melanie Bowden

Author of *Why Didn't Anyone Tell Me? True Stories of New Motherhood* and *Get Your Articles Published!*

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