



Pen on Fire: A Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett

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In her fifteen years of teaching, Barbara DeMarco-Barrett has found that the biggest stumbling block for aspiring writers (especially women) is not fear of the blank page but frustration with the lack of time. What woman doesn't have too much to do and too little time? Finding an hour free of work, children, or obligations can seem impossible.

But anyone can find fifteen minutes, whether you're sitting in traffic, waiting at a child's soccer practice, or watching the coffee drip. DeMarco-Barrett has created a practical, inspirational guide for fitting serious writing into those stolen moments. She offers writing exercises and techniques for generating ideas, as well as pragmatic advice from the well-known authors who appear on her radio show. With fifteen minutes a day, she can help you to ignite your pen and become the writer you have always wanted to be.

Pen on Fire: A Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within Details

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Amanda says

Short chapters, inspiring advice...will easily become a pillar in all my writing endeavors!

Cyn says

What a *great* book - highly motivational, crisply written, just so well done overall. It's written specifically for women, but I highly recommend this to anyone who's either interested in writing or already a writer themselves. Wonderful read.

Meg Wheeler says

I was so pumped to read this book. Upon first glance, this was going to be THE book. I loved the title - "Pen on Fire" - I picture a Rocky-type scene where I'm bouncing around on both feet, hands in the air, ready to write magical works that launch me into being a bestselling author.

The actuality of this book, however, was somewhat disappointing. The writing itself never clicked for me - perhaps it was a preference but I just didn't enjoy the author's style of storytelling. I also felt like the advice she gave was overly personal and somewhat obvious. Not to say that obvious is always bad - often times, it helps to have the obvious put right in front of you as a reminder that the simplest answers are often the best. But I went into reading this book expecting to be motivated, engaged, excited and launched full steam into writing, and instead I found myself skimming sentences and skipping pages. Given that the book is meant to help busy women find time to write, a part of me wishes I had spent my time writing instead of reading this book! That said, I'm always hesitant to slam a book simply because I don't like it or because it doesn't have the effect on me that I desired. This book may work well for others looking for a guide to building a life of writing amidst "real" work, family, chores and life.

Djrmel says

Every writer occasionally needs someone to give them the reality check that the only way to get something written is to actually do some writing. DeMarco-Barrett's book is that along with a bunch of helpful ideas on where to find the time to write, how you might want to organize that time as well as your thoughts, and how not to feel quite so guilty about taking the time. I think the "busy woman's portion of the title might be a bit out dated, though, because I know lots of men who are just as involved in the mundane aspects of business and family and don't think they have the time to answer the call of their muse.

The book works off of one premise: that everyone has 15 minutes here and there through out their day that could be used for writing. It expounds on how to add those 15 minute gaps into bigger chunks of time by cutting the internet cord, turning off the television (although I don't think she's aware that television can be a window as well as a wall), and changing your surroundings. There are writing exercises at the end of each

chapter that make use of the skill set she's introduced, and again, there's a repetitive thread, this time it's freewriting.

So, why the high stars if the book is shallow on new ideas and exercises? Because the one idea that she hammers home again and again, the only person stopping you from writing is yourself, is one of the truest truisms ever stated about self-expression.

Chandrashekar BC says

Wonderful book. There are tons of books on how to write, but this rare book guides you how to find time to write in your busy life. For the famous question "How to write?" the answers can fill an ocean. There can't be a single book, which can effectively guide you on all aspects of writing. All though this book covers all aspects of writing (ex: creative thinking, Crafting, plot, scene, dialogs, POV, marketing etc..) the main objective is to help you to find time to write. To help you to stop procrastinating your writing and start immediately. All those 15 minutes tips which are given at the end of each chapter are really worth exercising. (At least we must attempt few). The tips and tricks suggested by author is practical and possible. The book is easy to read and easy to grasp. Go read it !! and start writing. Yes you are a writer !

Melissa says

Loved this book! It has so much practical advice for writers, regardless if you are a woman or not. This book has been essential for me in starting my writing journey.

Amy Kahle says

I can relate to so much of this book it's ridiculous. I am always amazed at how women who are so much busier than I am can find time to write. If they can do it, I can certainly do it too! I read through this book the first time and didn't do the exercises that are at the end of each chapter, but I am now re-reading it and doing each of the exercises as I go. This book is so motivating!

Tanja says

I don't know what I expected with this book but I only made it to page 27 before I got to the point where I just can't go on. There are some writing "exercises" that sound interesting but I'm not one of those people who always have a pen and a scrap of paper with them at all times. And with my current job at a busy doctor's office I'm so tired after work that it's much easier to sit down with a good novel and read a few pages before I drift off to sleep at the end of the day.

Ciara says

i wasn't crazy about the title of this book, because it seemed kind of narrow & gimmicky. this impression

was strengthened by the cover design, which riffs on "chick lit" & seems geared for a demographic that i prefer not to include myself in. but i gave the book a shot anyway, & i'm glad i did because i really liked it! i have a weakness for books about writing (read about other people's writing processes, tricks, tips, ideas, & exercises always helps me feel creative & inspired), but they can be hit or miss & not all of them are applicable to the kind of writing i do. there are a lot of books about fiction writing out there, which is tough for me because i don't write fiction. i usually try to adapt ideas for the kind of writing i do, but i didn't really have to do that with this book because it struck a nice balance of having practical advice one can apply to just about any form of writing. the writing exercises were clever & useful, covering all stages of the writing process, & the author draws on her many interviews & conversations with working published authors to ask what works for them & how they respond to conventional wisdom about writing. the underlying premise of the book is that, in order to be a writer, you have to write, & that means writing when you can--not just when you feel motivated or inspired. i think this is very good advice.

this book gets the ultimate compliment: even though i initially checked it out of the library, i liked it enough that i bought my own copy.

♥ Ibrahim ♥ says

I love this book. I adore this book! I already feel powered up. I am even surprised that the author chose to say that the book is directed towards women "a busy woman's guide to igniting the writer within". Well, I am a man I am eating up every word of it. I love especially what she had to say in the introduction about working in fifteen-minute segments instead of saying "I will write a page per day" or such the like. We simply need to get started and do a little bit here and and a little bit there. We need to chip-chip-chip away at the job at hand!

Kelly says

The good read "I'm finished" button doesn't really do it for me, because this classic is constantly by my bedside and on my desk, waiting to inspire, instruct and encourage me every time I open it. I first read it as a less-experienced writing loner. Now I am part of a regular writing group and have way more confidence. Still, I find that this volume is as essential as my reading glasses are. It goes from bedside, to car, to purse to beach bag, a consistent companion on the writing journey with me.

Matthew says

When you read through this book and get to the end of every section you will want to write something down about that chapter and the memory that it stirred up....You have to pace yourself through this book and keep a journal with you as writing ideas will pop up....wonderful read...going through it again....

Lisa Montanaro says

Great book all about how to find time to write, how to find content to write about, and how to live the life of a writer, etc. I love how accessible the material was, and comprehensive. Some may say that the book is too

basic, but I loved how the author covered everything. It was organized into different sections which made it very easy to follow. It took me months to read because I did all of the exercises as I went along. It includes so many wonderful writing prompts that I may incorporate into my writing process. I can see myself going back to this book over and over like an old trusted writing friend. If you are a writer, or interested in becoming a writer, I highly recommend it!

LS Schulz says

This was my second time through "Pen on Fire". The first time I just read it to see what I thought of the advice inside. I enjoyed it enough during my first read through to realize that I'd actually like to try my pen at completing the writing exercises within. That is what I did this time. While I doubt it would take a person this long to finish the book if they worked on an exercise a day, it took me this long because, sadly, I did not always complete an exercise daily. I am happy, however, to finally be able to say I have finished working my way through it. Yay!

There was good advice in here. The exercises were interesting and some of them challenging, because they were focused on something I don't generally write about, but I worked my way through them anyhow. If you are looking for something to help get your creativity flowing and perhaps to help you start a writing habit, Pen on Fire may be the book for you.

Sam says

On first read through, found that it is a good read for men also; good insight and great tips for getting started in writing as a hobby or career.
