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What are you changing?

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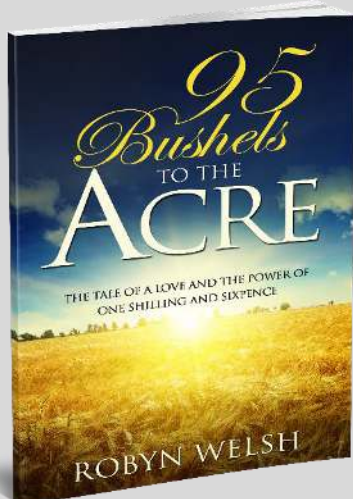
Congratulations Robyn Welsh

NZIBS Graduate – Writing Fiction for Beginners

Robyn is a freelance journalist and short-story writer living in Auckland. She has just published her first book on Amazon, 95 Bushels to the Acre.

Robyn has been a working journalist for some forty years on newspapers and for magazines both in New Zealand and overseas. When she's not writing up other people's dramas, heartbreaks and highlights as a journo, she's busy creating her own, as a newcomer to fiction writing.

What began as one tentative story idea for her course turned into something quite different as she wrote her way up and over this exciting learning curve. Robyn's story has a Kiwi flavour, but its themes are universal. Its inspiration is in the grain fields of Irwell, South Canterbury where her father grew up and where he loved to go bird-nesting. There's a thread of her mother's favourite red cardigan in there for good measure too.



Summary

Young Meredith loves the birds that live on her grandparents' farm in Irwell, South Canterbury. But her grandpa William wants them gone for good; he has a record harvest for the year 1928 in his sights.

And her Nan? She's too busy fretting about a lost heirloom to give more than a passing nod to pesky birds, golden barley fields and the activities of local bird-nesting boys.

This is a tale of love and the power of one shilling and sixpence.

According to Robyn...

Swapping hats has been the easy part; diving into research with creative intent the fun part. Trying to sort out her scribbled story ideas, observations and themes threatened to derail all that until I discovered the New Zealand Institute of Business Studies' 'Writing Fiction for Beginners' course.

This course has been an excellent introduction to creative writing for me, on the back of my continuing career as a freelance journalist. I came into this course assuming nothing, eager to learn everything and to be challenged with an entirely new form of writing. I came with one theme for a story and a wild array of disparate ideas, but with any clue as to how to weave any, or all, of it together. Beyond that, I didn't think I had anything to write about, so there was plenty of empty head space to be filled.

All that changed one assignment at a time. We teased out observations, reflections and experiences that I would never have thought of as the fodder for new stories or the basis of new characters. Learning to write in a style that is the complete opposite of journalistic writing was a big challenge. That has also made it doubly rewarding. It reminds me daily that self-belief needs to be cherished and self-doubt acknowledged and then gently sent packing.

I have become more mindful, more observant and more productive. I try to write creatively every day, even if it is just a couple of paragraphs towards a story or the scribbles of a new idea. I read every day, which I used to think I never had time to do. Right now, it is New Zealand fiction and short stories, but I've been tempted to explore other genres which are piled on my desk.

What is not to praise about this course? The structure of the tutorials has been excellent and I still regularly refer to tutorial content as I work. The staff and tutors have been accessible and supportive. The Student Forum is a superb platform for knowledge, discussion and camaraderie among

students and tutors. The NZIBS newsletters are always welcome in my Inbox for their informative, inspirational content.

Hats off to my tutor Tina Shaw for her encouragement and excellent constructive criticism that has taught me so much. Kathy Swailes, an NZIBS student/graduate was generous with her knowledge as she proofread my copy. Being able to tap into the skills of other students helps us all.

I remember feeling a little sad when I saw the word 'End' written on the final page of Tutorial 5B. I like to think of it as 'Just the Beginning'.

Thank you for all of it. 

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Do you have a plan for your life?

by **Phil Linklater** From Grad's Club News #1077. Reproduced for educational purposes.

Do you have a plan?

No doubt you have read an article or watched a documentary about someone who has become successful despite his or her upbringing.

The Self Help 'industry' is full of 'rags to riches' stories.

You've read them: tales about individuals who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks yet 'began their lives again'— something triggered an uncommon reaction, causing them to abandon a dysfunctional way of life and completely change direction.

Most of the stories are true.

Paradoxically, there are more people growing up on the 'right of the tracks'; who have enjoyed a good education, got a good job and yet are living on 'Struggle Street'.

Why?

I doubt there's a definitive one size fits all answer to that!

What brings me to write about this is a discussion we had here at home. I'd made some comments about the rags-to-riches story of one of New Zealand's highly successful entrepreneurs: Eric Watson.

Eric started out as a butcher's apprentice. History tells us he did not stay in that industry very long.

He went on to seize an opportunity and turned that into the beginning of a very successful career as a business owner.

So, continuing our discussion; I asked out loud:

What is the difference between the Eric Watsons of this world and those of us who had plenty of opportunity to be just as successful?

I concluded that fear [conscious or unconscious] plays a big part in our decision making processes.

By that I mean this: when an opportunity presents itself, we dismiss it because we don't have the money, or we are hesitant to risk our family/house/job etc to pursue that opportunity – we might fail!

What do you think? Is fear the correct term for what I am attempting to convey here?

I know that having a steady job with a regular income and a savings plan can indeed set you up for a reasonably comfortable retirement.

Funny how the minority would qualify for this category!



I once coached a young lady who was a qualified lawyer. She had enjoyed a well-paid position in London for over 6 years, before returning home.

When I talked to her, she was seeking a permanent position in her specialty field. But that was the extent of her planning.

It turned out that she had never worried much about having any kind of a plan at all. Life was great, and she had plenty of money [for now], and loved to travel and socialise.

Few people would complain about that lifestyle. Nonetheless, she knew – and admitted – she was just 'floating' and it's a behaviour she wanted to change.

The late Stephen Covey, in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, advises readers to 'begin with the end in mind'.

In other words, put a plan in place and then take action – a series of small steps – to get you there.

It's true that the most successful people in life [not just business], set goals; they have a sense of direction, they know where they want to go and they head in that direction.

I'm sure, even if you never read Lewis Carroll's wonderful fantasy, that you're familiar with these lines:

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where--" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"--so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

—Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

I invite you to create a plan just as the vast majority of businesses do. And then action it! Begin steering in the direction of your dreams. ◻

Why you should teach children to love reading

by **Rachel Cicurel** from GC Club News #1095

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Amy Basinski was a student teacher in Chicago when she witnessed a literacy miracle: Harry Potter helped her learning-disabled students improve their reading more than three grade levels in under two years.

The ten-year-olds had read the first of the Harry Potter books the previous year with the help of the book's audio version.

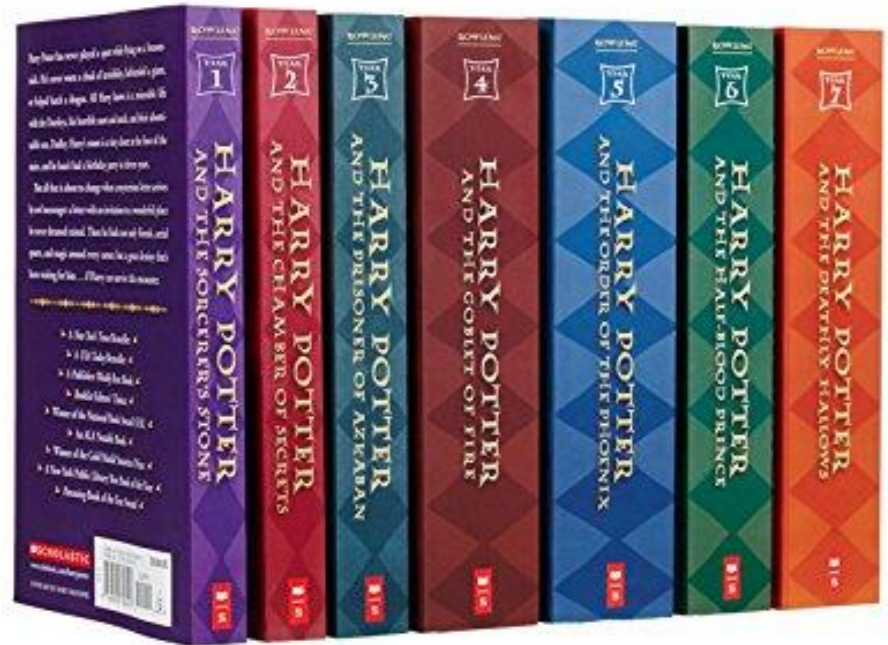
When Amy started working with the students she quickly noticed their interest in Harry Potter. So they started the second one, even though it was outside the school's curriculum and the students' comprehensive capabilities.

"Even though the books were really hard reading, Harry Potter was what all the other kids were reading."

We were taking material and relating it back to them personally."

That's how information becomes relevant to a child; no longer is it abstract information on a page."

The students' devotion to the series paid off. In sixth grade, before they began reading Harry Potter, nearly all tested at least a grade below their expected reading level.



After two years of popular material and listening to books on tape, more than half the class was up to grade level in reading ability.

Success stories such as this beg the question:

Is there a more effective way to teach reading?

Experts say there is.

Here are a few suggestions to help you develop a successful and wide-eyed reader:

Begin the process early

Nancy Singer, a kindergarten teacher with 24 years' experience, found it's never too early to help kids grasp the concept of reading.

"Even for kids who are 2 years old, reading aloud can help them understand that the funny marks on paper have meaning,"

Nancy says. "[This] is why we encourage people to read to their kids when they are very young."

She suggests teaching techniques could usefully include making Play-Doh letters, writing in sand, and using pipe cleaners to create words.

With kids of 3 or 4, half the battle is getting them over their initial fear of reading on their own.

When young readers get frustrated, remind them that everyone can read the pictures and take the time to decipher stories page by page.

"Make a commitment to read to them and have them read to you every day, that's the best thing."

Thanks to parents who have made this commitment, it's now common for pre-reading, (the act of pretending to read but gaining interest in stories), to occur in preschool.



Cont'd on Page 5

Why you should teach children to love reading

Cont'd from Page 4

Kindergarten teachers like Nancy aim to have their students doing early reading within a school year.

To meet this goal, Nancy regularly connects reading and writing in the classroom. By giving her students the freedom to use inventive spelling in their stories when they're stumped, she helps them develop their phonics skills, which in turn improves their reading abilities.

Read for meaning

Professor Lenny Sanchez teaches reading methods at Indiana University. He warns that reading is not only about decoding, or deciphering letters into fluid sounds to make words.

"There's a misconception that children learn to read and then read to learn. Reading is always about making meaning."

A good reader also reads fluently. To help children develop that skill, teachers must refrain from jumping in when kids skip a word or miss a sound. Lenny says actions like this will break a child's flow and take the focus off understanding what they're reading and place it on decoding, a skill they will grasp over time.

Lenny says it's important to ask children detailed questions while they read to help develop their comprehension skills.

Reading always involves a purpose, he says, and pinpointing that purpose is often as simple as asking a child "What do you want to find out?"

"Kids who are forced to read in childhood often choose not to read once they are adult."

By setting up the purpose ahead of time, the child is looking for the deeper meaning of the text throughout the entire story.

Choose the best possible text

As children become more comfortable with the reading process, Sanchez says "Be cautious with your text selections."

Ultimately you must balance the desire to push your children toward success without setting up unrealistic expectations.

"We always want to make sure we're challenging our kids and ourselves as readers, but when you're pushed beyond what you can handle it's going to negatively affect what you can do," Sanchez says.



"We want to give children situations that are challenging to them, that have struggles, but that also have a lot of opportunities for success."

Such opportunities are likely to be in books of high interest to the reader – ones that hold attention.

Amy and her Harry Potter-loving readers are a prime example of the difference it makes when children are reading books they really enjoy.

If the school curriculum doesn't offer books on your child's priority list, you have all the more reason to make reading part of home life — for both you and your child.

Set a good example

Inevitably, children are watching (and following) your every move, which makes it even more important to set an example that reading can be an enjoyable part of your daily routine.


Meg Carroll, a professor at Xavier University, believes if you don't make reading part of your own life you will have much more difficulty emphasizing the importance of reading in a child's life.

In her home, Carroll read aloud to her children until they went to high school.

In her classroom, she continues to ask her students what has happened in a story and then helps them look back to find the answers in an effort to constantly model the behaviour of a good reader.

Enjoy the outcome.

Every second you spend reading with your child will make a difference. You'll reinforce good habits and skills that will help them succeed. And they'll create amazing memories along the way.

"Reading is my favourite subject to teach. The best part is seeing them get excited." 

How to photograph people at work?

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Watch people at work –

anywhere – and you'll be amazed by their antics. While working normally they do the most interesting things.

Consider the stockbroker or orchestra conductor with their frantic hand signals to colleagues. Study people preparing or using their tools of trade, eg: sharpening knives with loving precision. Or nurses applying a bandage with architectural precision.

When your shutter freezes their actions they can look quite intriguing – and these pictures will sell. They'll also enliven an otherwise average article.

Consider the reason why action pictures sell so well. Why do tour coaches take visitors to see the Maori carvers at Whakarewarewa, or sheep shearers shearing at the Agridome, or the diamond cutters in Antwerp?

These are all normal people at their normal work. Yet they are also a tourist attraction. Most of us are fascinated by people doing exotic or unusual work.

To capture these activities on film is a challenge. But most photographers accept this task with relish.

Step 1: Develop a plan of action before you shoot.

Decide what activities you'll concentrate on for this project. If your objective is a photo essay on, say, musical instruments you'll include violin makers, flute repairers, piano tuners etc. So you'll have a list of where they are and when they can fit you in. Or your plan might be the nightshift workers: radio announcers, nurses, rubbish removers etc. You'll need to know the names of the people you're dealing with.

Step 2: Prepare a list of likely shooting sites.

Email or telephone ahead for approvals. When people are expecting you, the red carpet rolls out, even for students!

Step 3: Study your topic.

Learn a bit about the topic you're photographing, so you know a pipette from a pirouette.

This is what makes the project intellectually rewarding and you'll be more likely to produce better pictures.

Step 4: Prepare a shooting list.

Pros think about how to increase their odds of taking a great image. They ensure they take the right gear.

- Are you shooting indoors, in a bright snowfield, or in a moving car or boat?
- If you're photographing fast-moving sports, you'll need to shoot multiple images in rapid succession.
- Multi-image capacity isn't useful only when you need to take many frames per second. It also means you'll be ready for the unexpected shot, without needing to remove the camera from your eye. Most cameras offer this facility.
- Will you need extra light? Easily portable lights are readily available now. You'll have more success indoors if you think about this aspect ahead of time.



Step 5: Build rapport with the people you're photographing.

Invest a few minutes, hours, even days getting to know the people involved so you can move among them almost unnoticed.

Step 6: Take enough pictures.

Film was once the cheapest part of photography. It's even better now – digital pictures are virtually zero cost. Take twice as many frames as you might expect to need.

Step 7: Shoot both horizontal and vertical formats.


If you offer editors a choice, one will be just right for their page layout. **Tip:** Shoot 66% vertical.

Step 8: Thank the people who helped you achieve your plan.

A "thank you" on the day is an absolute minimum. Better still, a follow-up email with an image or two is ideal. You'll be welcomed back and your reputation as a professional will be

enhanced. Besides, it's nice to be able to say "It'll be no trouble. Just ask them over at XYZ."

Step 10: Add interesting captions.

Support text will multiply the worth of your pictures. Editors love 'a package' of pictures and words. When you have sold a photo essay to one editor, look around for a similar publication in another country and sell it again. Sometimes the same pictures but with different text can be recycled for a second sale. 

Nine Choices That Will Change Your Life Forever

by **Chris Widener**

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The direction of our lives is determined by the choices we make every day.

They accumulate and add up to our ultimate destiny.

Here are nine choices you can make - choices that will create for you a life of abundance and prosperity in all areas of life.

1. Choose to grow personally.

This sounds simple but many people only wish to grow professionally. They never choose to grow by taking action, such as actually exercising, opening a savings account etc.

Make a decision today to be a person who is on the never ending journey of personal growth.

2. Choose to always treat others right.

In life we come across all sorts of people, some who treat us badly.

We can choose to treat everyone right, no matter how they treated us. When they lie, we tell the truth. When they cheat, we play by the rules.

We may get the short end of the stick sometimes, but in the long-run life is better.

Most importantly, we will sleep well at night.

3. Choose to break a bad habit.

Tackle the biggest one head on. (If you don't know what it is, ask a trusted friend.)

Spend every effort you can muster to replace that habit with something positive.

Sidestep your other bad habits, as you will get to them later.

Choose one and master it. Exercise the power to choose!

4. Choose to work smarter.

Many people know their life is out of balance.

Step 1: Find out how much time you are wasting at work, which makes you work longer hours, which throws the rest of your life out of balance.

Getting your work done by working diligently in the time you have will free your life up extraordinarily.

Another option is to out-source work to other people. Anything you struggle with can usually be done by someone who can do it quickly. Look here for help: www.fiverr.com

5. Choose to see your work as a way to help others, and not as a way to make money.

If you put your heart into helping others the money will most assuredly come.

Spend time helping others grow and your finances will grow with it. It's Karma.

6. Find ways to become balanced spiritually, emotionally and physically.

Our lives are best when we have these three major areas in balance.

Spend some time becoming emotionally healthy and physically fit. Take time to think.

7. Choose to sow more than you reap.

There are many takers in this world, but our lives will be better when we become givers. The world will become better when more people become givers.

Give away your time, donate money, give your love and energy to causes you believe in.

Get 250 business cards at www.vistaprint.co.nz. Get your photo on: that's \$10 extra. Put something on the back: another \$10. That's still good value.

Promote yourself. Give your cards to five people every day.

8. Choose to get home for the family dinner more often.

The family is the most important group of people you will ever belong to - more important than work colleagues or your sports team.

Make a decision today to grow in your relationship with your spouse, children, parents, siblings, and friends. This one choice you will never regret.

9. Start collecting positive quotes.

Read your collection daily. *"The history of free men is never written by chance, but by choices; our daily choices."*

— Dwight Eisenhower

"It is our choices... that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

— J K Rowling

Finally, always deliver more than you promise. 

Job Opportunities

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Delivering first-class content through digital storytelling. Must be comfortable shooting your own photos and video. Apply now.

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[Staff Writer](#), Manukau & East Auckland. Assisting the editor with providing precise content for the magazine, its website, social media pages and newsletters. Full time. Apply now.

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Do you obsess about your health, weight or fitness?

by **Brad Pilon**

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Here is an experiment to try:

Log in to your banking account. Check how much money you have.

Now log out, then back in, and check your balance again. Repeat this a few more times.

I'm willing to bet my money that your money did not change as a result of multiple checks. And the point of this experiment? It's this: Obsessing about things isn't actually action. It rarely, if ever changes the circumstance you are obsessing about.

There are dozens of examples of this in life, but none that hit as close to home for me as health and fitness.

We've become obsessed with obsessing about health and fitness. We argue, research, tweet, blog, think, try and then give up on countless health fitness theories on a daily basis, all in the name of chasing the promise of 'health'.

Maybe we can blame the unrealistic goals people have of attaining 0% body fat with giant muscles, and the thought that our failure to achieve these goals must be a testament to our poor dedication and work ethic.

Or perhaps it's the wrong diet, or wrong workout, or the wrong grip when doing curls - who knows?

Workouts are now more focused on who can punish themselves the hardest, to the point where vomit on the floor is even celebrated.

Food is also transforming. It's no longer about enjoying your meals as much as it is fueling the body.

People are slowly forgetting how to eat, and as a result eating is becoming a means-to-an-end - a way to control your body weight. And that's it. Food is either fuel, or a guilty bad habit.

Now, it is completely true that in my book *Eat Stop Eat* I talk about hormones, free fatty acids and how fasting sets up the ideal 'fat loss metabolism'.

However, it was more than just interesting science and a new style of eating (or not eating) that drove me to write that book - it was a desire to share a mind-set, which is that health can (and should) be about being 'dedicated but balanced', rather than 'obsessed and inflexible'.

I call this the art of 'detach and relax' - and it's one of the most important things I learned through fasting - the ability to focus your effort and attention, combined with the ability to scale them up and down as needed.

Health and fitness should be a part of your life, but it shouldn't BE your life ... at least, it doesn't have to be. You can be incredibly focused during your workout and put forth an amazing amount of effort. But then you can detach and relax. Don't take it home with you, don't obsess about it.

And don't obsess about your food choices either; don't let your food control you. After all, food is yours to be enjoyed. Learn to be patient and to take breaks from eating.

You do NOT have to eat all the time, and you certainly don't need to fast all the time either.

Your food won't disappear or become any less enjoyable because you waited.

And really, a small amount of patience - a slight pause - is all most of us need to realize:

"I don't need this", or "I can wait until dinner" or even "I can wait until tomorrow - I've had enough today".

Detach and Relax.

Eat less, move more, don't be afraid to break a sweat every once in a while, and remember to be balanced. Give full focus and effort when it is appropriate. Be present during your workout session, but after that turn it off.

Some people may hate to hear this (and I know I've said it before, but it bears repeating):

"There is more to life than chasing 0% body fat, blood and puke in the gym and the macro-nutrients on your plate." □

Work until you drop, there's a strong case for it

by **Mirko Bagaric**. Reproduced for educational purposes

Work-until-you-drop is an ethos being adopted by many people. It sounds like cruel and unusual punishment; it might even be good for you.

A study by the Australian Psychological Society shows that about one-fifth of baby boomers plan to never retire. This is an idea the other four-fifths could consider.

The nature of our human condition suggests you should seriously consider working much longer - and in fact never retiring - if you want to maintain your psychic and physical wellbeing.

There are two caveats. You should only continue to work so long as you actually enjoy the activity. You don't need to be wildly passionate about it, but it should give you more pleasure than pain.

Moreover, it's good to be challenged by your work but once it starts defeating you, it's time to take the gold watch.

The reason why work is normally good for you has very little to do with fattening your wallet. Once people are on or above the average income, more money has almost no impact on their wellbeing.

Projects, especially focused pursuits which give satisfaction, are the key to human happiness.

The more challenged a person is, whether by a job, hobby or sport, the happier he or she is likely to be. Happiness is far more likely to be derived from intellectual and physical challenges as opposed to mindless passivity, such as watching television.

To this end, the nature of the project doesn't seem to be that important. Medical researchers and prime ministers don't obtain greater fulfilment or satisfaction than car mechanics, cleaners or zoo keepers.

The key thing is to stay active. Focus energy on something that shapes the world.

The sense of purpose and fulfilment derived from work need not come from a paid activity. It can just as readily come from a hobby, such as gardening, teaching kids to swim or playing guitar.

But outside the structure of a regular work environment, many lack the discipline to constantly participate in such activities.

That's why the near-daily ritual of work pays dividends. A wide-ranging survey of people in 16 industrialised nations showed that people reported lower levels of wellbeing if unemployed.

On average, unemployed were 20% less satisfied with life than white-collar workers and 15% less than manual workers.

Accordingly, there is no reason to hang up the work boots simply because the calendar flips over to your retirement date.

It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone.

—Andy Rooney

The odds are if you leave a job just because society thinks it's about time you moved on, you will come to regret it. The notion of going from 100% to zero work, on the day you reach 65, should be itself retired.

The Citibank Retirement Index for 2007 showed that almost one million retired people had restarted work.

To the extent that the notion of retirement remains part of life's pattern, we should be able to slide into it gradually.

As a guide, people should reduce their working hours ...

- from 40 to 30 p/w at 60 years
- then reduce to about 20 hours p/w at 65 years
- then do 4-10 hours p/w thereafter.

In essence, people should be encouraged to perform the amount of working hours that is commensurate with their physical and mental capacity, and the satisfaction they derive from the work.

Too many of us are overstretched by work in our middle-years, partly because we want to accumulate enough assets for our retirement.

If we abandon the notion of complete retirement, we remove this pressure.

The way to maximise the economic and psychic benefits of work is to spread out our working years, thus achieving a work-life balance during our entire adult life. A strong reason to start working four-day weeks NOW...

However, if after 30 or so years of slog you still haven't found your happy niche in the workplace, the writing is pretty much on the wall. You're unlikely to do so.

Do yourself a favour and enjoy the splendour of not working while you work on your putting. □

Professor Mirko Bagaric is the director of the Evidence-Based Sentencing and Criminal Justice Project at Swinburne University.

He is the author of Many publications, including: **How to Live: Being Happy** and **Dealing with Moral Dilemmas**.

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That means proofreaders and story writers can see what the photographers are getting excited about. And so on.

There are also competitions anyone can enter. Participate in the full student life!

MEDIA caps for NZIBS graduates ❖
Journalist,
❖ Sports Journalist
❖ Photographer
❖ Travel Writer.
If you'd like one, please send \$10 and a letter detailing your name, postal address and former student number. One size fits all.



Punctuations at work!

See how meanings change when a punctuation mark is used wrongly.

Periods:

- (1) I am sorry you can't come with us.
- (2) I am sorry. You can't come with us.

Commas with interrupting phrases:

- (1) The Democrats say the Republicans will lose the election.
- (2) The Democrats, say the Republicans, will lose the election.

Commas with direct address:

- (1) Call me fool if you wish.
- (2) Call me, fool, if you wish.

Commas with compound clauses:

- (1) Do not break your bread or roll in your soup.
- (2) Do not break your bread, or roll in your soup.

Serial commas:

- (1) This book is dedicated to my roommates, Oprah Winfrey, and God.
- (2) This book is dedicated to my roommates, Oprah Winfrey and God.

Colons & commas:

- (1) A woman without her man is nothing.
- (2) A woman: without her, man is nothing.

Quotation marks & commas:

- (1) "The criminal," says the judge, "should be hanged."
- (2) The criminal says, "The judge should be hanged."

Hyphens with compound words:

- (1) I saw a man eating shark.
- (2) I saw a man-eating shark.

Apostrophes with contractions:

- (1) A clever dog knows its master.
- (2) A clever dog knows it's master.

Nikki Miller's story aided an orphanage

I self-published the true story of a lamb I rescued and its life with me. All books were sold and proceeds were donated to an orphanage.

- Nikki Miller, NZIBS student

Find more:

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/lost-lambs-tale-set-aid-indian-orphanage>

Blow your own trumpet!

Students share their proofreading experiences.

I've got my first paying proofreading job already!!! To cut a long story short some of the documents I get in my 'other life' frequently have a number of typos in them, I thought it may be a good idea to offer a solution (at no charge) in exchange for a reference if they were happy with my work. I got a reply to my email the next day and my first 'job' a couple of hours later. No pressure but they needed it within 48 hours.

Fortunately, it was mostly bullet point style instructions / check sheets and I'm very familiar with the content. It was done & dusted (after multiple checks) in time followed by a return email asking if I was interested in more work, even better telling me to put in a wages claim for it.

I certainly wasn't expecting that this early in my career, moral of the story . . . 'You don't get if you don't ask'

- Robyn Schrafft

In 2015 I was asked to help with a little book from our local history group. I had handwritten pages and put all that into the computer, added pictures, formatted it and made it nice and readable.

Because I read in one of the NZIBS tutorials to always ask for a reference, I just did that and here is what I received last week:

"It is our pleasure to provide a reference for the fabulous computer skills and professionalism of Ms. Marion Metz who carried out the complete typing, scanning of many photographs, lay out and proof reading of our 67 page book 'Shipwrecks Bluff Area 1845 - 1920' The book was such a success it went to a re-print within a month and we received excellent feedback from readers for the books presentation, layout and ease of reading. ... "

I was blown away by this positive feedback, and for sure found heaps of proofreading potential in this ...

- Marion Metz

How to write a blog others will read?

by **Anthony Smits**, extracted from GC News #1004. Reproduced for educational purposes.

The buzz-term is *popular* blog

Popular blogs get most of the traffic, comments and most of the income. Yours could too.

Construct your blog correctly from the very first post.

To attract visitors, you need well written posts that offer fresh angles. It doesn't matter if the subjects you choose are 'old hat' as long as you bring a new aspect. No-one tires of reading new ideas about losing weight, for example.

You can tweet all you like about something you posted. But if people have already seen it, the publicity won't make them come and read it again.

Don't copy. Plagiarism is not only against copyright law, but just plain dumb. Be original. You may not be able to develop new theories, but you can certainly bring your own angle to an old story.

Search engines today make it simple to find new slants on anything. You can quickly bring up a large chunk of mankind's experiences on any topic. Past generations have not been able to do this without weeks of research through books which were already dated.

Take a cross-section of your research and summarise it, while adding your opinion and some of your own story. No one sees the world quite like you. Therefore, when you report the same things as others already have, (but from a different viewpoint), part of it *will* be original – and hopefully of interest to a new audience.

For easier success, choose a subject that burns in you.

Are you busting to *write*? Why not keep a journal? Journaling is a good way to get out all those thoughts. But currently-held wisdom about blogs is that it's not necessary – or a good use of your time – to post articles too often. Some bloggers only post a couple of times a month, giving themselves plenty of time to promote each article.

Yes, there are some blogs where posting happens several times a day, it's almost a conversation. But if you start that game, be prepared to continue it – you have to post a lot before you get a regular following large enough that people will keep up with you. And then your audience will expect you to be there, constantly posting.

Less frequent and higher quality posting is the style that usually works best for most.

Don't forget to spellcheck. Make sure your grammar is appropriate and consistent. In general, ensure your 'blog-house' has a "well-swept floor and fresh flowers" – make your blog's appearance sharp and contemporary.

First impressions may be the only impressions your visitors ever get – because they can click away in an instant.


Aim to have a beautiful, professional appearance.

Write for humans. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), is a subject you will see a lot, if you delve into any 'best practice' articles. But posts written for 'good SEO', may be overly focused on keywords – to attract search engine trawling.

But the search engine algorithms are tweaked regularly, so it's foolish to attempt to trick them. There are many opinions for and against optimizing articles with keywords, of course. But generally, posts written to attract and inspire humans will attract the search engines too.

Write for humans – and SEO will look after itself.

What could you blog about this year? Your hopes; your family; your fitness journey; the creative process you follow when writing? If you're learning something new, you can write about that.

Many people like to vicariously live through the experiences of others. Reading a blog is one way they can do this. Your task: attract them! 

Job Opportunities

[Website Editor](#), New Zealand Herald Limited, Auckland. Writing and editing new articles for a news website in Chinese, reviewing and proofreading copy of publication. Full time. Apply now.

[Business Development Writer](#), Fletcher Building. Generating magazine articles or project profiles for web pages, copy editing technical documents or writing a complex executive summary as part of a large team on a major bid. Full time. Apply now.

[Advertising Coordinator](#), Harvey Norman, Manukau City. Coordinate media campaigns, media bookings, proof-reading, cost checking & liaising with media supplier. Full time. Apply now.

If you see a vacancy that appeals, with an APPLY BY date which has passed . . . Apply anyway.

Contact the company and ask *"Did this position get filled? I've just discovered it and I think I'd be ideal."*

If you ARE the ideal candidate, they will be pleased you did.

[Journalist](#), Australian Associated Press, Christchurch. An independent journalist to be based out of Christchurch, who will be responsible for creating news stories. Full time. Apply now.

[News reporter](#), Waitomo News 2002 Ltd, Waikato. A self-starter able to build relationships with newsmakers and produce quick, tight and compelling news stories. Full time. Closes 28 July.

[Business Journalist – energy sector](#), Freeman Media, Wellington. Interview leading executives and influencers in the energy sector to maintain a flow of exclusive stories and features for the website. Full time.

[Social Media Editor](#), EVISA immigration, Auckland. Write and produce videos for social media; develop new and existing EVISA publications. Full time.

Finding Blackberry

author **Amanda Edwards**
a short story by an NZIBS graduate

"Mum... Mum! Blackberry's not here; she's got out. I knew that would happen."

Emily collapsed in a sobbing pile, right in the middle of the kitchen floor.

"I'm never going to see her again."

Mum looked down at her, one eyebrow raised and a small frown crinkling her forehead.

"Oh dear, and we've only had her one night!"

"Too bad, no more pig," said Emily's older brother. Emily shrieked a little louder.

Mum cuffed her brother's ear.

"Shush you!" she said sternly. "Don't wind your sister up! Emily, stop crying. I'm sure she'll come back eventually. When she wants food."

"But she's only been here one night," Emily wailed. "She won't know where to come back."

"Then we'll just have to go find her. Come on, up you get, love. We'll go call her right now!"

Mum pulled her fluffy blue dressing gown tighter around her middle and stepped into some gumboots, two sizes too big, that stood just outside the back door.

She told Emily to fetch a container of pig pellets and clomped out into the nearest paddock.

"Here pig, pig, pig." Her voice sliced through the crisp, frosty air and Emily followed behind, sniffing loudly and rattling her container of food, without much hope.

"Here pig, pig, pig ... Oh dear, there's no sign of her."

"How did she get out anyway?" Mum said crossly.

"She must have forced her way under the fence. You should have just put gates together, like Dad said."

"Well Dad wasn't there to help us, was he?" said Mum. "I just did the best I could."

"Hopefully he'll have time tonight to find a couple more gates for us. Then she'll never get out."

"That's if we ever find her," sobbed Emily, a few tears trickling down her cheeks. One tear plopped on to her gumboot, and left a wet trail as it slid to the ground.

"Of course we will," Mum said briskly. "Come on, we'll have to go in now and get ready for school. You're going to be late," She marched back toward the house, stumbling a little in her floppy gumboots.

"I'm not going to school," cried Emily. "Not 'til we find Blackberry."

"I have to go to work too,



remember?" Mum sighed. "Pig or no pig."

Suddenly the door burst open. Dad and her three brothers came tumbling out.

"Any luck?" Dad called out. "No? Oh well, the pig squad are here. You guys go out in the Kioti and look over the farm. I just have to go fetch the tractor."

"But we've got to get to school," Mum protested.

Dad tossed her the keys.

"Go on, you've got time. You might have to get out of blue fluffy though!"

Mum looked down at herself and laughed. She disappeared inside, her dressing gown belt trailing behind.

Once she was ready, everyone crowded into the Kioti, a vehicle that looked a bit like a golf cart.

But it was a good deal sturdier, with a tray on the back for carting fence posts and wire and other farm stuff.

The Kioti rattled into life and clattered down the gravel driveway, everyone clinging on tightly. Mum looked quite pleased with herself as she gripped the steering wheel.

"Open the gate, boys," she yelled, as she put on the brake a little too hard.

Out fell Ray, and he fumbled with the latch, then swung the gate wide open. Out surged the Kioti, picked up Ray, and roared off into the paddock. Oh, how to find a little black kunekune pig in the vast barley field that lay before them?

"Over there Mum," called Keith excitedly, pointing to a black blob, way in the distance. The Kioti

charged across the field, cutting a path through the barley grass. It bumped over small rocks, forded a trickling water race, and almost got stuck in a muddy bog hole. And the black blob? - was just a charred tree stump, left to rot, long ago.

"We might as well go back Mum," said Emily sadly.

"We're never going to find Blackberry here." Mum glanced across at her and nodded.

"Hmm ... I think you're right Emily."

She spun the Kioti around and headed back for home. Perhaps they'd get to school on time after all. But then, after swinging into the driveway, the first thing they all saw was a little kunekune piglet, covered in green slime.

"Oh Blackberry, you troublesome swine," laughed Mum. "We've found you! Blackberry gave a satisfied grunt, and swished her little curly tail, as if very pleased to see them."

"Grunt, grunt, grunt," the piglet snorted, snuffling her wrinkly snout in the grass, hoping to find a few pig pellets scattered here and there. As far as she was concerned, she had never been lost at all!

Happy as a pig in mud! 