

HYDE, Robin (1906–39), who at first published under her actual name as Iris (Guiver) Wilkinson (and later various other pseudonyms), was one of New Zealand's most significant writers in poetry, fiction and journalism. Robin Hyde published ten books between 1929 and 1939 together with numerous articles, poetry and prose. The following is advice she gave to a young poet who asked what could be done to improve writing:

"I myself write blotched attempts at poetry from a starved and strange existence. I have not distilled my abstract, perhaps I never shall. I believe that what applies to poetry applies to every art. I must practise five-finger exercises hours a day until the fingers of my soul ache. Go, search for your pearl, searching may cause pain or weariness – either an emotion. Then there's your pearl, mellow and gleaming... your subtle fingers will know then how it should be set." Robin Hyde

I myself write blotched attempts at poetry from a starved and strange existence

In other words:

- You can't get perfection the first time; all writing needs time to - brew, ferment, develop;
- Read a lot: we need to 'fill' ourselves with words and stories if we are to be creative.

I have not distilled my abstract, perhaps I never shall.

In other words:

- What do I want to say?(message)
- What do I want to say about that?(story)
- Who do I want to say it to?(audience)
- How will I say it?(techniques)

I must practise five-finger exercises hours a day until the fingers of my soul ache.

In other words:

Practise writing exercises such as:

Punctuation

Use punctuation to control the manner in which the reader reads your story eg full-stops, semi-colon, paragraphing, commas, colon, speech marks, a variety of sentence structure..

Vocab

- Choose words which add information;
- Use fewer words;
- Use words which match with the content;
- Use words that sound like the ideas
– eg. Tony bashed the bucket on the ground

c.f. She whispered softly to herself.

Spelling

- People judge you on how you present yourself and they will judge you on how you present your writing.
- You don't want to detract from the story or ideas.

Think about how the following can be used to communicate ideas, feelings, moods to your reader:

- beginnings and endings
- sentence structure
- tense

Setting the Jewel – hints for effective writing by Tania Kelly Roxborough

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Go, search for your pearl, searching may cause pain or weariness – either an emotion.

In other words:

- It's not easy being a writer – you need 'bum glue' – perseverance.
- It costs putting yourself out there;
- It's worth it.

Then there's your pearl, mellow and gleaming...your subtle fingers will know then how it should be set."

In other words:

- The technical skills of writing are as important as the ideas (perhaps more important)

You can take the most beautiful diamond in the world, but, if you set it poorly, you will make it look like crap.

On the other hand, you can take a flawed diamond, a dusty sapphire, a milky opal, and, if you set it well, you can make it look amazing.

It is the same with writing.

You can have the best idea in the world, the most interesting character or story, but if you write it badly, it will be a bad story.

On the other hand, you can take a really simple idea and, if you write it well, you can make it stunning.

The generic structure

