



# Handling the Truth: On the Writing of Memoir

*Beth Kephart*

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**Handling the Truth: On the Writing of Memoir** Beth Kephart

**In the tradition of Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird*, a critically acclaimed National Book Award finalist shares inspiration and practical advice for writing a memoir.**

Writing memoir is a deeply personal, and consequential, undertaking. As the acclaimed author of five memoirs spanning significant turning points in her life, Beth Kephart has been both blessed and bruised by the genre. In *Handling the Truth*, she thinks out loud about the form—on how it gets made, on what it means to make it, on the searing language of truth, on the thin line between remembering and imagining, and, finally, on the rights of memoirists. Drawing on proven writing lessons and classic examples, on the work of her students and on her own memories of weather, landscape, color, and love, Kephart probes the wrenching and essential questions that lie at the heart of memoir.

A beautifully written work in its own right, *Handling the Truth* is Kephart's memoir-writing guide for those who read or seek to write the truth.

## Handling the Truth: On the Writing of Memoir Details

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Author : Beth Kephart

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# From Reader Review Handling the Truth: On the Writing of Memoir for online ebook

## Jennifer Louden says

What a magnificent book. I feel like i learned so much about what a memoir can be... so much that was unclear to me, Kephart puts into words. Also a great resource for memoir reading!

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## Serena says

The best teachers are those that give of themselves freely to their students and their craft, and with reference books available on various ways to write, what to write, and when to write, many will glance at yet another writing reference and dismiss it out of hand. What does that mean? That those people are fools — for *Handling the Truth: On the Writing of Memoir* by Beth Kephart, released today, is not a reference, it is a memoir about writing memoir (marking a 6th memoir from her). It is a reference guide written from the perspective of a teacher and writer on how to approach a genre riddled with scandal and debunked by naysayers. Not only does she peel back the layers that can and should be part of memoir creation, but she also peels back her own experiences and perspective to shed light on the hard work memoirists should expect of themselves.

Read the full review: <http://savvyverseandwit.com/2013/08/h...>

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## Joya says

Super helpful for me as I am working on a memoir. It gave me a lot to think about and I have a lot of work to do.

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## Sylvia Swann says

There aren't enough stars for this book. I went in thinking I was reading an instructional book. I soon found myself reading music, sheer poetry.

Beth Kephart is a writers' writer. This book is a gift to us. No matter what you're writing Kephart's wisdom will elevate your work. If you listen hard there's no telling where this book will take you.

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## Kylie says

A must read book for anyone contemplating writing their memoir. If you are stuck, don't know exactly how to start or in need of inspiration, this is the book for you. Full of ideas and thoughts about what memoir is- and isn't-, how to handle as the title states "telling the truth", and beginning the writing process. I thoroughly

enjoyed reading through this book, and have "post-it" noted many pages full of inspiration. The author covers everything from the Prologue to the very end! Highly recommended for anyone looking for an inspiring and interesting book on the art of writing the tricky genre of memoir.

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### **Rizwana says**

This writer knows memoirs. She clearly lives, breathes and teaches them. Her writing is fluid and luxurious and her love of language is evident. I really learned a tremendous amount about the genre while reading *Handling the Truth*. My only hesitation was the undercurrent of perfectionism that seemed to run through this work. While Kephart consistently insists on avoiding the trap of perfectionism, she unwittingly advocates for just that. Perhaps this is because she has mastered (or is close to mastering) the genre. Possibly I feel this way, because I can't handle the truth. She more than compensates for this with her incredible appendix which lists many of the best memoirs out there.

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### **Kristin Boldon says**

Essential reading about the writing of memoir.

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### **Karen Ashmore says**

Finally, a good book about writing a memoir with practical suggestions on describing landscape, weather, color, tastes, smells, love, empathy, form, voices, detail, grief, vulnerability, tone. You won't believe how many unhelpful memoir writing books are out there. This one had down to earth suggestions supported with examples from some of the great memoirs.

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### **Iva says**

Kephart, an excellent writer, knows quite a bit about memoirs. As a faculty member in a creative writing program, she gives examples of her best student writing as well as ample samples from excellent writing. Besides being a thorough guide for writers of memoirs, she appends an annotated list of contemporary memoirs. A practical book by a highly qualified writer.

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### **Cheryl Crotty says**

If you love writing, any kind of writing, you will love this book. I've read many writing books but this is one of the best. I'm not going to write a memoir but after reading this I might like to go back and jog my memory just to keep a diary. Her words were brilliant and all the little stories by other writers were enjoyed. I have passages underlined in this book than any book I own. It is a book that will sit in my office and get read in pieces over and over. Yes, I will also be getting some of her book suggestions. Can you tell that I loved this book.

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### **Suzanne says**

Although this is one of those books that should be read and absorbed slowly, I finished it in a couple of days. For me, Kephart's lush language is irresistible, and I also loved learning about her process, and she came into the writing life.

I'm sure that I will revisit this book often for specific suggested exercises, for the lengthy annotated reading list, and for inspiration. For now, my biggest takeaway is that I should not rush to finish my memoir.

I would recommend this book for anyone who is interested in writing.

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### **Sara Habein says**

Quite enjoyed this, even if my contrary nature bristled a bit when she became prescriptive. ("Do [this]. Let it make you [feel this].") Not really her fault that my reaction to that sort of thing is I DO WHAT I WANT, but otherwise this was good. The appendix also has a lot of great suggestions for further reading.

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### **Bridgett says**

Wow, read this book. Read it if you want to know what to read. Read it if you want to write. Read this book because it is a treasure of devotion to memoir. Read this book because you need Beth Kephart's wisdom, not only to read and write, but to live!

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### **Ginger Bensman says**

If you are contemplating writing a memoir, or love reading them, or just love reading writing beautiful enough to break your heart, this is a book you might want to experience. I was looking for a book on how to write memoir and my kind loving wonderful husband gave me this one two Christmases ago—and oh, it is so much more than I expected! What you can expect is a book written with intimate knowledge of memoir, the sensibility of a poet, and the nuance of a novelist. You will also find some pondering/writing exercises to get you started and an annotated list of some stellar examples of memoir, each with a short synopsis about what makes it, in particular, a standout.

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### **Florinda says**

Handling the Truth is a practical guide to reading and writing memoir. It breaks down the various elements of the form, and offers illustrations and exercises drawn from the classroom. At the same time, it's a memoir of Beth Kephart's own experience with the writing, reading, and teaching of memoir...and the book accomplishes both missions without being overly self-referential or meta. It's a celebration, examination, and

defense of the form. It's honest and direct about where and how it can go wrong, and why that makes it so important to get it right.

MORE: <http://www.3rsblog.com/2013/08/book-t...>

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