

A Few Writing Tips from Barbara Gates

author of *Already Home: A Topography of Spirit and Place* (Shambhala, 2003)

Developmental Editor
Writing Coach
bgates@gtcinternet.com

- 1) Keep a backpocket notebook with you at all times.**
(Scribble notations when you first wake up, when you walk, when an image occurs to you, when you have a strong sense impression.)

- 2) Take some time of silence each day. It could be five minutes or an hour.**
(Open your senses. Listen, smell, taste, feel. Watch your own thinking process. Notice your feelings. Where do you experience them in the body? What images come up? What images keep returning on different days?)

- 3) When working on a writing project, claim a space of your own.**
(Go out of town to write. Go to a café, a park, any secret hideaway.)

- 4) Keep regular writing journals. Writing is a generative process.**
(Copy in notes from the backpocket notebook and elaborate on those.. Don't edit. Don't cross out. Allow yourself to be vulnerable. Let yourself meander. Read over what you wrote earlier. Find your own hidden treasures. Spin off from those.)

- 5) Complement your writing with reading from great writers, with research on the internet and with hands-on-research in the world, opening your senses to life.)**

- 6) Keep rewriting.**
(Look at what you write with fresh eyes. Notice the surprises, the ring of truth.)

- 7) Keep a sense of humor. Don't give up. Consider that you might be already home.**