

Write Your Book!

A WORKSHOP THAT FITS

Ideally, you will find a writing group where all the participants are writing the same genre of book. For Write Your Book purposes, this would be a nonfiction, information-based book.

You don't want a "yes" workshop where everything you write is praised. You have friends and family for that. On the other hand, you don't want a workshop that makes you feel timid about sharing early drafts. There is no reason for harsh critique.

Look for a workshop that requires active participation. One of the best benefits of joining a group is that it will inspire you to write so that you have something to bring to the workshop.

Understand that in a good workshop you will learn as much from critiquing others' writing, as you do from getting your own writing critiqued.

A good workshop leader sets the tone for everything and this is key to a great workshop experience. A good workshop leader is also teaching as s/he facilitates the workshop. This teaching should occur as a powerful undercurrent, not as blatant lecturing.

The focus should be on the writing, and not on the viewpoint of the writer. You don't want to spend your valuable workshop time debating the idea or opinion that the writer is expressing. The focus should be on how the writer is expressing his/her views and ideas.

While you should be able to bring early drafts to a writing workshop, do your fellow participants the favor of checking for obvious spelling, grammar, and sentence structure issues before sharing your work.

In terms of feedback, ask for what you want. The more direction you can give to those who are responding and critiquing your work, the better. If you don't let them know what you want their focus to be on, the feedback could be way off.

Size: You want enough writers in your workshop to offer some variety to the feedback, but if there are too many writers, you will not have much time to share your writing. Obviously, the "right" size is relative to how long and how often the workshop meets.