



If you are going to write, avoid isolating yourself in the belief that peace will serve your creative process. Some people become isolated as they attempt to avoid distractions. I met one writer who never published his work. He isolated himself and produced large amounts of material. But he was always alone. I don't know if his writing was good or bad. I never saw it. He believed that he had to be perfect. In his eyes, everything he produced was flawed. In the end, he burned it all.

A certain amount of solitude is necessary. Spend a month in a cabin in the woods. You might be surprised by the amount of work you turn out.

Don't forget that we live in a very imperfect world. To isolate ourselves from all others leaves us empty. Whether we like it or not, we're social creatures and need other people. After all, when you write a book, you're writing about the characters that tell your story, the lives they lead, their relationships, faults, strengths, and weaknesses.

Build connections and look for unique experiences in all areas of life. Attend writer's workshops, join author groups, and learn from others. Always keep your eyes and ears open.

Listen to people talk and try to understand them. Open yourself to different experiences by going to museums, art galleries, coffee shops, and social events like farmer's markets and wine tastings. Try to understand the passion you'll find at a political rally. Talk less and listen more. Listen to a friend and imagine that person as a character in one of your books. Would they make a villain or a hero?

Volunteer to work with people outside your usual circle: the homeless, the dying, the intellectually or emotionally troubled. I love to talk with elderly people. Their stories are so rich. You can't get those words and emotions they so willingly share out of newspaper clippings. Enjoy every word or imagine yourself in their shoes. It's called life. Engaging with diverse groups will enrich your writing and make you more empathetic.