

∞ YOUR MEANINGFUL MEMOIR ∞

• #4 REFINEMENT •



“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



Refinement reveals the deeper truth hidden inside the story.

Now you will begin to refine the copy, polishing off the rough edges, and highlighting the key elements that make your memories more than recollections from the past. You’ve surfaced the raw material, you’ve shaped it, now you begin to polish.

But, and it’s a big but, nothing you are writing is immune to significant change, even removal. Beware emotional investment. As William Faulkner apparently said, *“In writing, you must kill all your darlings.”*

Literary historians generally trace this phrase earlier to Arthur Quiller-Couch, who wrote in *On the Art of Writing* (1914): *“Whenever you feel an impulse to perpetrate a piece of exceptionally fine writing, obey it—wholeheartedly—and delete it before sending your manuscript to press. Murder your darlings.”*

This stage requires both courage and humility. Some of your favorite stories may be shortened. Others may disappear entirely. A beautiful paragraph that took hours to write may not serve your larger narrative.



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DIY or we can help but, above all,
write your life!

Something magical is beginning to appear.

Really? That was MY life? Enjoy this rare phenomenon, the discovery of personal significance through writing, and prepare to realize something immense: facts are often more interesting than fiction.

Trust the process. Every cut creates space for something more essential to emerge.

If you have not already done this, it’s time to create a tracking instrument of some kind. A Word table is easy to build and use. You’ll use this for keeping track of your writing progress. We’ve provided an example below. Of course, all your entries will be different, chapter titles, word count, etc. Customize and continue refining until you have a perfect tool.

STATUS – Rough (R), Second draft (2), Polished (P)

DATE	CHAPTER	STORIES	WORDS	STATUS
05.12	Introduction	List stories as bullets.	500	R
05.19	1 - Birth		1,500	R
05.19	2 - Siblings		1,300	2
05.30	3 - School		2,700	2
06.11	4 - Accident		1,900	R
06.15	5 - Moving		2,200	P
06.19	6 - First job		2,800	R
06.25	7 - Oops!		1,600	R

*“We write to taste life twice,
in the moment and in retrospect.”*

— Anaïs Nin