



Why I Write

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THE CREATIVE SPIRIT was an ever-present familiar throughout my childhood. It wound around the legs of my brothers and I, softly but persistently seeking our attention, and getting it. It all stems from my mother. She's an artist and has produced work consistently for exhibitions and private sales and commissions for as long as I can remember. The energy of her work lifted the routine of our home, tilting and pulling us along behind the swell. It wasn't simply the passion and joy with which she attacked canvas, wall or driftwood; it was the world that surrounded the endeavour.

My first waiting job came at the tender age of eleven. Circulating with wine and nibbles, I was inducted into the fraternity of art party staff. Our house was a regular meeting place for watercolourists and sculptors, musicians and architects, photographers and textile designers and dreamers. In the company of this menagerie, evenings became nights became early mornings. Truthfully, I was little more than an amusing distraction; an outsider on the inside of a new world that filled our house and garden with work and lives and noise. I eavesdropped on love affairs and broken hearts. I was told secrets in drunken confidence and given advice by the bucket load, most of it centring around love affairs and broken hearts. But within the swirling melee there were pearls of wisdom that I held tightly in my fist. First among them was the notion that anyone could be an artist. What was required was patience and dedication and eyes that simultaneously turned both inwards and out. That last idea took the longest to nurture, and still occasionally eludes me.



Most – and not all, but most – of those artists I met when I was a boy shared one thing in common. They wanted to create more than they wanted to do anything else. Initially I didn't find that certainty inspiring. If anything, it was off-putting, because it made me more aware than ever of my own lack of conviction; especially compared to my brother who had, from the age of five, decided he was going to be an artist and dedicated every waking moment to realising that desire. It is a rare and precious thing to feel that driven and it took me far longer to find my own *Why*? Once again, it stemmed from my family.

My brother and I began working on our first graphic novel series eighteen years ago, coming together in response to a dissatisfaction with our own respective careers. This would be the first writing I'd undertaken outside of song lyrics in more than a decade, but I quickly discovered there were stories I wanted to tell. Moreover, I had begun to find a voice with which to tell them. The world of British comics, at the time, was sorely lacking when it came to titles that were energetic, engaging or original. We felt a passionate need to redress the balance; to bring grand original graphic adventures to young readers. For fourteen years we did that and more.

Now I find myself largely writing for a different reason. In 2017 we started a free online art and writing tutorial series designed to provide accessible creative guidance and inspiration to anyone with an internet connection. It's since blossomed into a truly global community project. Sharing my approach to writing has become my defining work. I've loved digging deep into the craft and considering how best to present the material in an approachable and engaging manner; a manner which might appeal to a boy carrying a canapé tray amidst a room full of self-assured creatives. Perhaps even convince him that he too could be a writer.