

## **Enjoying Writing Longhand.**

All, lately I've been reading articles discussing the benefits of writing longhand. By the way I just dictated the preceding sentence into a microphone that feeds into a program called *DragonDictate*. Hence, I guess I might be missing some of the benefits of writing longhand. Let me think about that.

APT started in November 2024. Since that time I have written approximately 480,000 words. All but 500 of them have been dictated. I wonder if I could have cranked out nearly half a million words longhand. Perhaps. Also, perhaps I could have become the poster child for carpal tunnel syndrome. I think that I might be dedicated to dictating with *DragonDictate*.

### **Enjoying Writing Longhand.**

Despite the fact that I use *DragonDictate*, I do enjoy writing longhand. If I'm writing a short note to someone, I'd rather write it longhand, using a fountain pen. Fountain pens always seem elegant. Ballpoint pens can also be very agreeable, however, many of them don't glide across the paper the way a fountain pen does. In law school, I took all of my notes using a fountain pen, a *Pelican*. [Note: *Pelicans* have a portion of the barrel that is transparent. Because of this I was always able to tell whether or not I needed to refill the pen. A ritual for fountain pen owners.]

If I'm just sketching out some ideas a legal pad does the trick and I use a pencil. The reason that I use a pencil is a little bit bizarre. I like the sound of the pencil moving across the paper. For a long time I couldn't understand why I like the sound until FlowerBear became part of my life.

One day I was listening to the sounds that she made other than barking or growling. I noticed how it sounds when she would sniff something. For those who haven't had the experience of hearing a dog sniff, please take my word for this next point. The sound of a pencil moving across a piece of paper closely resembles the sound of a dog sniffing. Now, I realize that might sound nuts to some people. But I'm sticking by my observation. Because I like dogs, as a matter-of-fact I'm crazy about them, I'm going to stick to my guns on this possibly strange observation.

### **Benefits of Writing by Hand.**

Wasn't the least bit skeptical about the advantages of writing by hand. A Google-Romp led me to an article titled *20 Reasons to Write by Hand, According to Science*. It was published by Top Education Degrees. ([www.topeducationdegrees.org](http://www.topeducationdegrees.org)) Here are the reasons:

1. Those who write by hand are better able to organize their notes.

Study done by Princeton and UCLA reveals that people who take the notes by hand more likely to remember what they've written and people who type their notes because they include everything that they hear. (If you read the article this will become crystal clear.)

2. Writing longhand and leads to increased memory.

People who write things out tend to remember them longer than people who type them out. (I happen to agree with this because I frequently can't remember the column that I wrote last night when I am asked about it the next day. That can also be due to the fact that I am in my 80th year.

3. Writing by hand uses more brainpower.

4. Writing by hand improve spelling and benefits children who are learning to read and write.

5. Writing by hand leads to better composition

I'm not sure that I agree with this.

6. -20 These are all sound reasons. But I don't think it would be that useful for me to continue listing the rules one by one. So, I'd like to summarize what I gleaned from this article.

### **The Essence of the Article.**

When you write something longhand you are more engaged in the process. It is a physical process as well as a mental one. Of course, one might argue that sitting in front of a keyboard is also a physical process, which might dilute purported benefits of longhand writing as such a process.

Interestingly, the piece emphasizes cursive writing. Cursive writing is the only type of writing that stimulates both sides of the brain because of its artistic elements. More interesting is the fact that studies have shown that people who use cursive writing write faster and more neatly than those who don't. I agree with this point 100%. I'm a bit prejudiced because I know that my printing is lousy I keep mixing cases, confusing some people. An example of the way I print would look akin to this: HaPPy BiRtHday. Not too attractive.

In case you would like more than the essence of the article, it is easy to find. You will discover it at: <https://www.topeducationdegrees.org/proven-reasons-to-write-by-hand/>

### **Switching gears.**

There is an expression derived from a novel by Thomas Wolfe, titled *You Can't Go Home Again*. That expression came home to me loud and clear today when I drove down to Madison, Wisconsin for an appointment with a chiropractor (extremely successful) and to visit Julie Cornelius, a woman I have known since I moved to Madison 53 years ago. She had just had a hip replacement and was happy to have a visitor.

We had a very interesting platonic friendship. An enduring friendship. When I was in law school and money was somewhat tight she came up with a great idea. It was to go to dinner every Wednesday night at a restaurant that had entrées that did not exceed five dollars. Considering that was nearly 4 decades ago, it wasn't too hard to find such restaurants. We

did develop a rule of thumb; when we would enter the restaurant. If the place had tablecloths, we knew we would be overbudget and just walked straight out.

Julie, like I, likes dogs very much. She has had some real beauties. Unfortunately, because she is convalescing and really can't take care of the dog at the moment it was not at her place today. However, I am sure that it will be the next time I visit.

The phrase "you can't go home again"• was something that we discussed because the town that we knew is barely visible now. Sure, there are some landmarks that have managed to survive, but the pace is different the styles are different, and the traffic is intense.

Fortunately, neither of us is yearning for what was. Instead, we look around, see what "is"• and are glad that we're here to see it. And we wonder what's next.

Ken