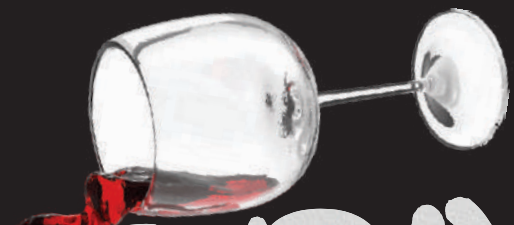
From the author of
Before I Do, *What Am I To You*,
The Crazy First Year, and *The Last Tita Standing*



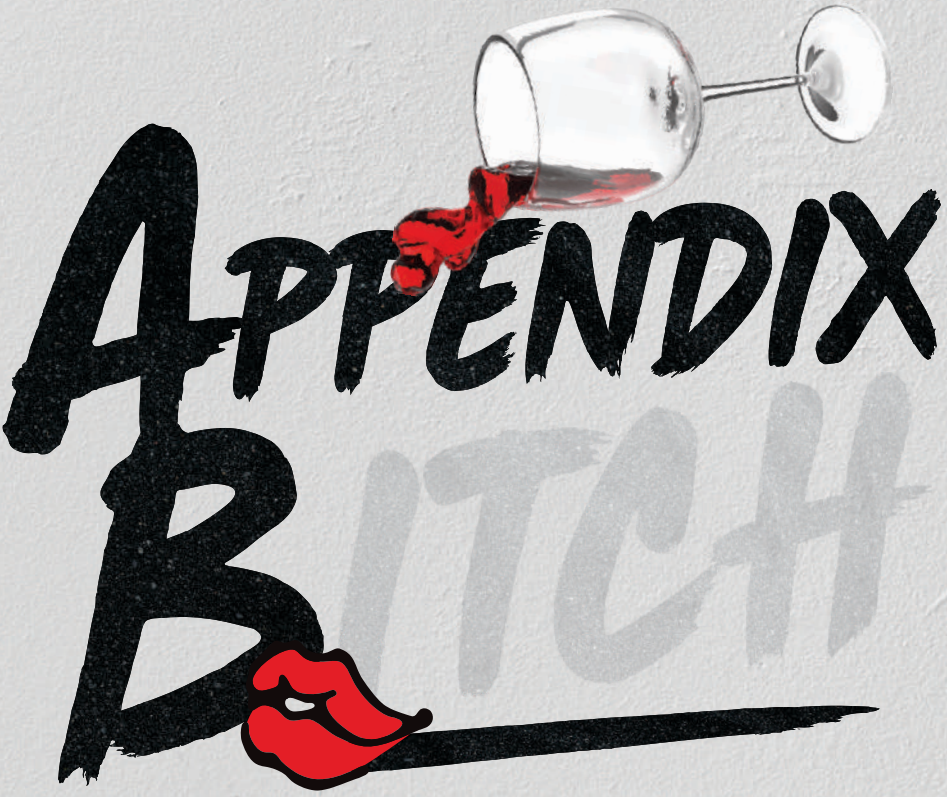
APPENDIX BITCH

8 THINGS YOU **REALLY NEED** TO WRITE, SELF-PUBLISH AND SELL YOUR BOOK *(Fuck passion!)*

KATH C. EUSTAQUIO-DERLA

With a Foreword by Paula Abiog

From the author of
Before I Do, *What Am I To You*,
The Crazy First Year, and *The Last Tita Standing*



8 THINGS YOU **REALLY NEED** TO WRITE & SELF-PUBLISH YOUR BOOK *(Fuck passion!)*

KATH C. EUSTAQUIO-DERLA

With a Foreword by Paula Bianca Abiog

PaperKat

Fuck Passion

Passion is overrated!
You don't need passion to write,
self-publish, and sell your book.
YOU NEED GRIT, MOTHERFUCKER.

Are you an aspiring writer who wants to self-publish a book after wasting years wishing for it? Do you have an existing manuscript that requires editing? Do you want to know what it really takes to self-publish your book? If you answered **YES**, this book is for you.

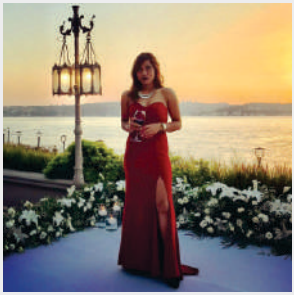
Hi, I'm Kath, a book writing mentor and self-publishing consultant. In 2014, my parents (owners of a design-and-print company) printed my first book. I know that I had an "easy start" because I'm the COO (child of owner, #truestory). That's why I created **PAPERKAT BOOKS** to help people kick start their self-publishing journey.

In the past 6 years, I have helped **80+ first-time authors** write their first stories, self-publish their first manuscripts, and sell their first books. Here, I shared the 8 things you really, really, really need to become a book author. And yes, you don't need passion.

This is my first non-fiction book. You'll find #truthbombs and #inyourface realizations here. This book isn't for dreamers. **It's for action takers.** Why? Because writing the book is the easiest part. Selling it is a different ball game.

WWW.PAPERKATBOOKS.COM

Reviews



"From unabashedly funny, 'can't make this up even if you try' stories to soul-crushing experiences and jaw-dropping moments, Kath's latest piece takes readers on a roller coaster journey that shows pressure creates diamonds."

- Ada De Pedro, Istanbul

"Kath's unapologetic writing is back with a vengeance with this smart, catty, and witty origin story about where the claws came from. All hail, Queen B!" **- Cor Carlos, Philippines**

"If you're into self-help books that actually help, then you're in for a wicked treat! This no-nonsense book will get your ass moving and show how you can turn all the lemons in your life into a freaking fruit cocktail. - **Justine Galvez,** *the girl who just got herself out of creative block limbo and back to the drawing board*

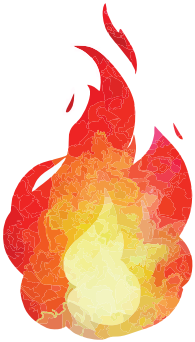
Thank you Note

Hello, I hope you enjoy this full version of *Appendix B!*

If you like my books, a short review would really make my day! Please email your review to **kceustaquio@gmail.com**

Cheers,

Kath



Let me be the first to punch the face
of book writing mentors who say you need
passion to write, self-publish, and sell your book.

Fucking bullshit

You need a plan, motherfuckers.
And grit. A truckload of it.

Disclaimer

First of all, this book isn't for the faint-hearted, lazy, and sensitive. It's not for dreamers either. It's not for people who are looking for writing inspiration.

This book is for action-takers—the ones who are so fed up with all the book writing and self-publishing mumbo jumbo that doesn't show any results. This book is for people who want to know what it really takes to get your work out there because writing the book is the easiest part. Seriously. Don't believe me? Talk to any of my mentees.

This book isn't for people looking to get rich fast. Nope, that's not what I teach. I don't inspire people either—though many of my workshop participants and mentees tell me I inspire them. Perhaps that's the effect of my no-nonsense strategy because what I teach is the business behind book writing and self-publishing. So, maybe, I do inspire people to take action. Well, that's good then.

The stories, insights, lessons, and failures I shared here are my own (except when mentioned otherwise). In **My Origin Story,** I talk about my childhood, education, and career roller coaster. I decided to include this here so you can know me better and understand why I do/teach things the way I do. I hope that by reading **My Origin Story,** you'll have a better understanding of how I'm built and how I build my

publishing business. I hope that my stories—successes and failures—would debunk one of first impressions people usually have of me: that I bite. Well, I do, but I won't bite you, haha.

You can totally skip reading **My Origin Story** and head straight for the 8 things you really need to write and self-publish your book. But the first part of this book lays down the perfect foundation for the rest: my background explains why I chose these 8 things.

My goal for this book is not to inspire people to write books at a time when self-publishing is popular. **My goal is to open your eyes and remind you that all dreams should have a deadline.** Here's the truth: Nobody cares that you posted on Facebook that you're writing a book. Sure, there are many likes and comments. But unless you make that happen, nobody cares. Why wait for anyone to tell you your book idea is worth pursuing? **Take charge. Do it yourself. Shock everyone.** Believe me, I've done it several times. Sometimes, I even scandalize a few relatives.

And speaking of scandalous, perhaps you've noticed all the expletives by now. I've decided not to censor because I write the way I talk. The adult language doesn't aim to offend anyone. Boo you. Don't be oversensitive. As an author, you need to have thick skin. So training starts now.

There you go. So, if you think you're an action-taker, read on.

Additionally

Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals, companies, and organizations. Opinions expressed here are solely my own and do not express the views or opinions of my students, mentors, and colleagues. *Batu-bato sa langit, ang tamaan, wag magpahalatang* guilty.

Dedication

This book is for my husband **JET** who trolls me like clockwork. And screams internally because of all my **WIP** - work in progress. In other words, the manuscripts that I write in my head.

February 2020, Bruges, Belgium
I wrote this book while my husband was on a business trip in Belgium, exactly one month before the **Enhanced Community Quarantine** was imposed in Metro Manila, Philippines.

Appendix B

Philippine Copyright © 2020
Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher or author. The exception would be in the case of brief quotations embodied in articles or reviews and pages where permission is specifically granted by the publisher or author.

Published by HS Grafik Print
Pasig City, Philippines 1611

Telfax: +63 2 77483551
Mobile Number: +63 905 2160836
Email: kceustaquio@gmail.com
Website: www.paperkatbooks.com

Cover Art, Illustrations, Inside Layout: Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla
Proofreading and Foreword by Paula Abiog

Published in the Philippines

Table of Contents

Foreword: This Bitch by Paula Abiog 13

Introduction: My Origin Story 16

An Artist With A Journalism Major 17

Welcome To The Corporate Jungle 19

Lost In Law School 20

Creative Writing Course And The Full-Frontal Dede Experience 24

Ondoy Experience + AWOL Here, AWOL There, AWOL Everywhere 28

The Prodigal COO - Child Of Owner + Raket Girl 33

The Beauty Queen Shenanigans 38

Delivering High Performance, Always 47

When A Career-Obsessed, Mad Woman Chooses Love 54

The Expat Life 62

Table of Contents

The Makings Of A Publisher 69

Chapter 1: Plan 82

Chapter 2: Editors 95

Chapter 3: Guts 110

Chapter 4: Printer & Publisher 116

Chapter 5: Marketing & Creative Strategies 129

Chapter 6: Personal Branding 140

Chapter 7: Grit 151

Chapter 8: Mentors 167

Final Word: It's Time To Be Bold 183

Thank You 187

About The Author 190

FOREWORD BY PAULA ABIOG

"Stub, please."

My first clear memory with Kath was of her mocking the way I dealt with event gatecrashers while on registration table duty. We were then working in the PR/Marketing field, and we were manning the media registration table at one of our invitation-only events. Kath was the new girl in the team, and this was one of the first few events we've worked at together.

Apparently, my deadpan expression and flat tone then was a source of hilarity, not just with Kath, but with everyone else on the team (it continues to be an inside joke in our core group until now). The names and faces of the gatecrashers, as well as the particular details of the event escape me now, but at that time, after the laughter died down, I remembered thinking, "*Tangina nito ah.*"

That was how I became friends with this bitch.

Fast-forward to almost 10 years later, this bitch and I are still friends, with years of adventure and misadventure between us that only strengthened our bond. We've both moved on from manning registration tables, and jumped into this crazy, fulfilling world of self-publishing—with her as the writer and publisher, and me as one of her editors.

Today, I am writing this foreword to Kath's no-nonsense self-publishing guide that will tell you to get your head out of your ass and start writing that book.

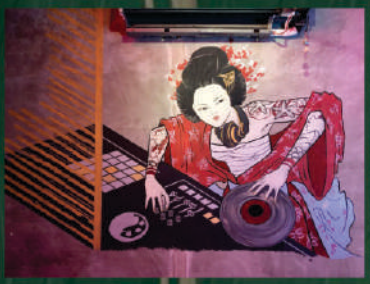
This book is a goldmine of useful, practical information to get you started on your self-publishing journey. It's packed with wisdom derived from Kath's actual experiences and struggles, wrapped up in her trademark snark, humor, and well-placed swear words. It shatters the thought that passion and inspiration are the keys to penning that dream novel. It also debunks the myth that only strong, proficient writers can write books.

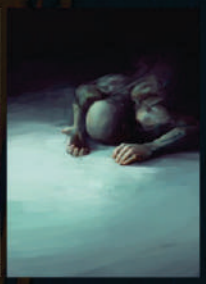
As Kath always says, anyone can write and self-publish a book. But success does not wait for the idle. Waiting for writing inspiration is like putting your life on hold for the K-drama *oppa* of your dreams. So just like this bitch, get up and get to work. Turn the page, start reading this book, and take your first steps to turn your writing ambition into reality.

2020
Manila, Philippines

WTEF.

Architects, Designers, Artists

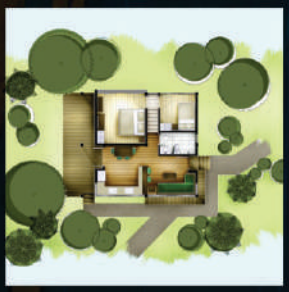




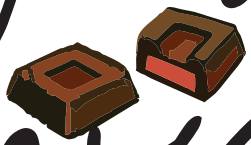
DIGITAL ART / GRAPHIC DESIGN / PORTRAITS
CONSULTATION / PLANNING / BRANDING

What the ef. offers mural paintings, graphic design services, logo design and branding for offices, restaurants, cafes, start-up businesses, groups and organizations. The team also does portraits, bas reliefs and acrylic paintings on canvas - anything art related that they can put their hands onto.

09275065516
thearchitects.studios@gmail.com



My Origin Story



The year was 2001. I was in third year high school (11th year, junior high in today's K to 12 system). My favorite subject was English. Naturally, my worst subject was Math. Fuck Math. My high school English teacher Mrs. CM said my vocabulary was advanced for my age because I was using words like "anesthesiologist" in recitations.

What Mrs. CM didn't know was that my mother worked as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) for a society of doctors in the Philippines. And our family business, **HS Grafik Print**, provides design and print services for their local and international conventions. Even before I was born, my fetus version had been exposed to the word "anesthesiologist" because of my mother's profession.

Mrs. CM was also my grade school English teacher and she had us read classics such as *Little Women* and *Wuthering Heights*. I've always enjoyed our book report projects wherein we were asked to write a summary, explain the moral of the story, and pick out five words from the book and provide their meaning.

I remember using **Adobe Pagemaker** to design all the pages of my book reports. Imagine doing this at a time when the rest of my classmates were using the old-school equivalent of today's Microsoft Word. I remember binding the printed pages onto the folder with a sharp fastener that often gave me papercuts. But what I enjoyed most was doodling on the folder cover and creating my own book cover. Little did I know, I would be doing this for life and for a living.

AN ARTIST WITH A *Journalism Major*

In high school, I graduated as class valedictorian—something that I only openly share now. It's not that I was ashamed of it, but looking back, this honor proved to be both a blessing and a curse.

It was a blessing because it got me a full scholarship during my first year in college. I just needed to maintain a certain grade point average (GPA). I went to the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and took up Journalism as my major. College was a real culture shock to me. You see, for someone with a very sheltered background—who came from a small, private, Christian school—being amongst students who were really brilliant felt like a punch in the face.

Everyone was just fucking smart that I had to work double,

triple time to keep up with my classmates and reach the required GPA so I won't lose my full scholarship. But I lost it because of the fucking math subjects!!

I thought I would have to change schools. In fact, some of my classmates transferred but for different reasons. But my parents decided to let me stay at my chosen university. I had an option for a partial scholarship as a working student. However, since I lived in Cainta, Rizal then and my school was in Manila, my parents decided to just work double, triple time to send me and my younger siblings to school. That's when the valedictorian honor became a curse. Because it became a constant reminder that I was a decorated big fish from a small pond thrown into the vast sea filled with various sea creatures that are brighter, shinier, and bigger than I ever was. I was so disappointed in myself for a very long time.

Writing my origin story now made me understand why I keep on consistently improving myself so I can swim in a bigger pond. Today, I better understand some of the career decisions I've made.

College made me miss my first love: design. You see, my first choice was Architecture. As kids, our parents routinely took me and my siblings to Tagaytay City for art lessons. We would prop our sketchpads on our laps and our artist Dad would teach us how to draw. Unfortunately, my poor Math skills killed my Architecture dreams. As an alternative, I tried the "back-end route" and took the on-the-spot drawing exams at the University of the Philippines (UP). I failed miserably! All the home designing I do now are in The Sims 4.

My other choice was Mass Communications but my parents persuaded me to take up Journalism instead because it is more focused on writing. They figured, since I already know design (and my Dad can

teach me anyway), I should work on the writing part. A hybrid writer-slash-designer at an advertising agency would be rare and profitable. And they were right, but it took me a decade to really milk it.

I didn't hate Journalism in college. But I didn't love it either. I didn't enjoy it. Most of the time, I felt bored and couldn't wait to go back to my world that is outside of Manila. So, when I graduated, I went back to my first love: design.

WELCOME TO THE *Corporate Jungle*

My first job was as a graphic designer for Yellow Pages print ads in the US. It was my first experience doing offshore or remote work. I was designing 24 print ads for companies in the US who want to place advertisements in the Yellow Pages. The office was based in Makati and here, I mastered two things: **Adobe Photoshop** and **how to work super fast.** These are important elements that make up my foundation.

After a year of doing purely design, I began to miss writing. I got a job as a copywriter for a Japanese beauty brand. As the sole copywriter, I created product names and wrote descriptions for several

of their beauty products. Apart from writing product labels, I wrote copy for the company's catalogues and magazines, which were translated to different languages and distributed around Southeast Asia. I was with them when they were just starting out in the Philippines. And today, they are very successful.

My first copywriting stint paved the way for me to write for some of the biggest consumer brands in the country (the universe, rather). I worked as a senior copywriter in one of the pioneer digital advertising agencies in the Philippines. This was during the time when digital advertising in the country was just starting to explode in popularity. I wrote advertising copy for websites, banner ads, and Facebook posts.

But then, I got bored again.

When I was a college sophomore, the *I-want-to-go-to-law-school* bug hit me. Looking back, there are four types of "bugs" that hit you in college, namely:

I-want-to-go-to-law-school bug.

I-want-to-go-to-grad-school bug.

I-want-to-start-working-immediately bug.

I-want-to-rest-for-a-year-after-graduation bug.

I was 23 years old, fresh out of college and highly idealistic, when I went to Arellano University School Of Law. Our class comprised of people from different age groups and from all walks of life. I was one of the youngest and probably one of the most, err, colorful? Not really LGBT colorful but I was, wait, how should I put this? Shiny? If you've seen the movie *Legally Blonde*, then you can imagine what it must be like.

Of course, I wasn't blonde. I didn't wear pink. Well, I did wear a pink t-shirt once but that was it. I didn't bring a chihuahua or moved into the campus but I was...shiny. Okay, it wasn't because my classmates were dull, but they weren't, err, interesting. *Walang gwapo!* Nobody stood out except for this bright-eyed, idealistic, young woman in her pink t-shirt, jeans, and sandals who looked lost half the time (that was me). Everyone else looked either they're ready to sue me or defend me. After spending four years in UST, you'd think I'd be used to the sights, sounds, and scents of Manila. But no…the moment I realized I was indeed back in this part of Metro Manila, I wanted to run back to Makati.

This part of my life was blurry. But I remember going to class for about a month or two. Then I went AWOL (absent without leave). I remember explaining to my parents (making my case) why I wanted to quit. They understood (thank God). I remember that my then boyfriend, the *matangkad-maputi-chinito-na-may-kotse* type, drove me to Arellano University School Of Law so I can finalize my departure. You know, all that paperwork. When I told him that we couldn't refund the PHP17,000.00 we initially paid for my tuition,

he told me that if he did something like that, his family would kill him.

At that time, PHP17,000.00 was a huge deal. Of course, it still is. That's still money that went down the drain without a fight. I felt bad for the money lost, but I also felt relieved. I finally realized that the legal profession isn't for me because I can't use "fuck you" or "*putangina nito*" in affidavits.

Joking aside, PHP17,000.00 and my then boyfriend's comment were the price I had to pay to learn a valuable lesson in life: some things are not meant for me.

I just realized now while writing this that the *matangkad-maputi-chinito-na-may-kotse* type of boyfriend wasn't for me. Because I was destined for the *matangkad-maitim-mukhang-high-caste-Indian-prince-na-may-bahay-at-lupa* type. **LABAN!**

Nevertheless, I promised my parents that I wouldn't waste money like that again.

But after two years, I did it again.

Testimonial

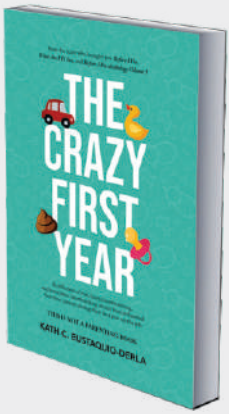
"I attended the **How To Write A Book And Self-Publish It [Preview Class]** and it was already jam-packed with [a lot] of learning about writing, editing, and self-publishing. The talk was practical, the fee was reasonable, and the speakers were good and genuinely interested to help other writers publish their own books. Attendees also got to know other participants as well. Kudos!" – **Erika April Cruz**

Testimonial

"I like to write and do daily journals. But I never really entertained the lingering thought of writing a book because of several factors. One, I cannot think of a topic that will entice a publisher and the readers. Two, even if I have a topic, I don't know how to execute it (but this is where Kath's **3-Part Template** becomes helpful). Three, I think publishing is costly and no one would invest in me. But above all these, I believe writing a book can pave the way to greater things such as being a keynote speaker or a trainer or a literary consultant or, eventually, an editor. (PS: L*ahat ito, nakita ko kay* Kath, *hehe*.)

The **3-Part Template** we used for *The Crazy First Year* was both very useful and effective. Even if you have a ton of ideas but you don't know how to structure it in such a way that the readers would understand what you want to convey, it would be difficult to put everything into writing. The template helped me eliminate the non-essential topics and just focus on the important ones.

I was delighted to be a part of *The Crazy First Year* because I never thought my experiences would be immortalized in a book. But I was even more delighted when I found out that my daughter brought the book to her school and showed it to everyone (bus mates, classmates, and teachers). She was so proud of the fact that it was about her and her pictures were printed in there, too. That made me happy. She had it in her bag for weeks!"



– **Patricia Dulay Petines, Philippines,**
co-author, *The Crazy First Year*

Creative Writing Course

AND THE FULL-FRONTAL DEDE EXPERIENCE

I was a senior copywriter working in one of the pioneer digital advertising agencies in the Philippines when I had this brilliant idea of exploring post-graduate studies. I figured an MA in Creative Writing could/would/should double—if not triple—my current salary. *Tangina*, let's do this, I told my still-wide-eyed, idealistic, twenty-something self.

Looking back and taking into consideration what I know about the corporate world now, a post-graduate course won't catapult your career to greater heights. Sometimes, even with a highly impressive CV and work experience, "some" companies couldn't/wouldn't pay you top peso. Unless, of course, you go abroad, earn dollars, and spend it here in the Philippines or you target only the crème de la crème of multinational companies. As you can see, I'm not very patriotic. I'm practical.

Finally, my dream of going to the University of the Philippines as a student (*at hindi lang para magpanggap na* runner *o para kumain ng isaw*) came true. I've always wanted to become a UP student. In many books, movies, and even commercials, this beloved university has been highly romanticized. So you can imagine how *kilig* I was when I finally got my UP student ID. But the process still gave me another culture shock.

You see, back in UST, my parents went with me during enrollment, especially during the last two years in college when they allowed using credit cards. Swipe here, swipe there, followed by a car ride back to our former home in Cainta, Rizal.

But in UP, *tangina, bawal magsama ng magulang, tita, tito, kapatid, yaya, kahit yata aso bawal*. No chaperone. I heard that it's the university's way of training their students to become independent. *Kaya pala napaka*-independent *ng* brother ko who attended UP for his undergraduate and medical studies. So there I was, little bright-eyed Thomasian, paying for her tuition fee, getting her class schedule, securing her class ID, and fixing all her other requirements alone for the first time. It was both liberating and scary.

In UST, we wore a standard uniform. So, one of my biggest issues back then was my UP outfit. Someone actually told me not to wear my suede boots to school *kasi baka raw ma*-kidnap *ako*. True story. This was before the time of H&M and Forever 21—a time when I bought all my suede boots from Linea Italia, a now defunct boutique in SM Megamall.

My then bosses in the digital advertising agency were very supportive. They allowed me to clock out early 2-3 times a week for my classes. *Tangina*, I was finally in UP. In the first week alone, I did the following:

1. *Sumakay sa* UP *Ikot* (the romanticized mode of transportation)

2. *Kumain ng isaw* with my post-grad classmates

3. *Maglakad ng* slow motion around the Sunken Garden while dreaming of bumping into a cute college guy *na hindi jailbait*

4. Manood *ng mga* small plays *sa loob ng* campus

5. *Kumain ng* hot *monay* with creamy peanut butter before going to class.

I did #5 religiously, which probably contributed to my weight gain. I couldn't understand why the hot *monay* with creamy peanut butter in UP tastes amazing. I'm sure it's not Peter Pan or Skippy, but *tangina, ang sarap.*

But if I were to name one UP experience that shocked me to the core, it was probably #4. Some of my post-grad classmates invited me to watch this small play inside the campus. I think it was probably part of a class assignment that's why I went. It was in Tagalog and I enjoyed it. But the final scene was still so fresh in my mind even after more than a decade.

The female lead was doing an angry monologue of some sort. I couldn't really remember what it was about. Towards the end, she pulled up her tight t-shirt and her breasts were exposed to about 100+ people in the audience. I was so shocked that I let out a not-so-silent but clearly shocked and audible scream. Some looked at me, probably thinking, "*Ay* amateur" or "*Ay hindi ito taga*-UP." I was 25 and even though I was quite liberated, *na*-shock *pa rin ako sa* size *ng* nipples *nung babae sa* play. Her tits were average and her nipples were perky. It wasn't sexy at all. Fine, *medyo nandiri ako*, probably because *hipon siya.*

Anyway, back to my short-lived stint as a UP student. During this time, I was still madly in love with someone I met in college. And as fate would have it, one of my UP professors knew the asshole I was referring to (more on him later because this son of a bitch deserves one whole segment). I subtly told him about the story I wrote for *Cosmopolitan Philippines*. Okay, I was fishing for information about him because just like in ABS-CBN's Teleserye *Make It With You*,

he ghosted me! Funnily, I had a boyfriend that time. But a part of me was madly in love with someone else—or the idea I had in my head of that someone else. It was a very confusing time. My love life was a complete mess that it clouded my vision for the career I want for myself. *Totoo pala yun na kapag hindi mo alam kung ano talaga ang gusto mo, lahat ng aspeto ng buhay mo apektado.*

And just like that *Legally Blonde* stint in Arellano University School of Law, I got bored. I felt like I was wasting 3-4 hours of my billable time sitting in class and listening to someone else. I felt like I was wasting so much daylight hours. I thought about quitting but I was hesitant because I told my parents I wouldn't waste money again. *Pero naisip ko rin, mura lang naman sa* UP *eh*. I don't even remember how much we paid, *ganon siya kamura hindi tumatak sa akin.*

For several days, I started making my case—coming up with a brilliant argument that I can present to my parents why I want to quit this post-graduate course…again. Looking back now, I would have made a good lawyer, haha! Just when I was about to face the jury and make my closing statement, the universe made that decision for me: *na*-Ondoy *kami.*

Testimonial

"Passion is not everything. Kath will give you a no-nonsense, honest-to-goodness perspective in terms of writing but in a fun, witty, and constructive way. She will not tell you what you want to hear, instead, she takes the bullshit out of the way and that's when you learn. " **- Bubbles Gose, Philippines, author of *Before I Do Anthology | Bros Before Hoes Vol. 1***

Ondoy experience

+ AWOL Here, AWOL There, AWOL Everywhere

Do you remember the devastating Typhoon Ondoy of 2009? Probably not, because Typhoon Yolanda was stronger, caused more damage, and got more media coverage. But for people who lived in Rizal, Marikina, and even Pasig, it was a very dark time.

I remember that rainy afternoon in UP. The class was dispersed early because of the heavy rainfall. I had no intention of letting it pass and stay in campus. I did everything I could to go home. Good thing I did, otherwise, my younger sister and our five shih tzu dogs would have been trapped in our house alone, submerged in waist-high floodwater.

At that time, we lived in a subdivision in Cainta, Rizal, while our printing office was in one of the commercial areas along Felix Avenue near Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall. When the floodwater started to rise, our parents got stuck inside the printing office while my brother had to spend the night in UP. They couldn't make it home. The floodwater inside our home in Cainta reached our waists. Thank God for floating Uratex foams. We placed the two adult and three baby shih tzu there while my sister and I propped ourselves on top of tables.

We lost communication with our parents and brother. No electricity, no candles, no food. We survived on bite-size pieces of Cadbury chocolate and bottles of distilled water that were actually

meant for the dogs. Our front door was jammed because of the wet newspapers that stuck to the floor. It was a very scary and testing time for our family.

The next day, we heard loud pounding on the door. Our Dad, cousin, and neighbors rescued us and brought us to the printing office that, thankfully, had a second floor. We walked approximately 1.7 kilometers in knee- to waist-high floodwaters to reach our office where our family was reunited. We left our home submerged in floodwater. The first floor of our printing office was also flooded—our machines were submerged, including all the printed materials (books, yearbooks, souvenir programs, and more) that were scheduled for delivery that week. But our family was complete and that was what's important. Everything else can be replaced, but not family.

Thinking about it now, this time was another turning point in my life. I made a lot of decisions here that pushed me towards a different path in life:

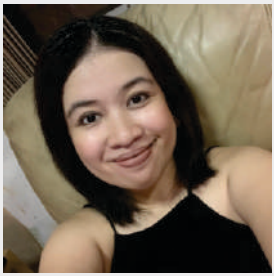
First, I went AWOL on my then-boyfriend. Don't feel bad, the son-of-a-bitch (different son-of-a-bitch, not the one from college) didn't even call or text to ask if I was still alive.

Second, I didn't bother returning to UP. Yes another AWOL. This time, I didn't even bother with a clean exit because I have no intention of ever going back—except to eat *isaw* and hot *monay* with peanut butter.

Third, witnessing the devastating situation of our small printing office, I decided to lend a hand to my parents. So I quit my job in the digital advertising agency.

Fourth, *dahil mayabang ako at gusto ko ng* rebound, *naghanap ako ng panakip-butas*. And that's how I met my husband.

Testimonials



"I met Kath in late 2017. By 2018, we started working on my book, a dream that was launched in 2019. As a mentor, Kath is a very approachable but direct. She tells it like it is! She guides you, but also gives you the freedom to realize your vision. As a person she is very witty, which explains why her books are the way they are. Congratulations on your book, Appendix B, Kath! Keep on inspiring people to tell their stories!"

- Jel Tordesillas, Philippines,
author of *30 Days With Paulo*

"I've always wanted to be an author, write a book, and share my stories. But as I grew older, I realized I didn't know how and where to start. You may have a lot of ideas to write about, but when you are faced with a blank page, you can also blank out. When Ate Kath looked for first-time moms who wanted to tell their crazy, first-time stories, I felt intimidated and shy. But I also thought of it as my chance to tell my story and hoped that someday, my son will get to read it.

Ate Kath, her template, and her team helped me and my husband a lot. The template and the questionnaire helped us organize our thoughts, look back, and write about the moments that mattered. And when I received the final draft and copies of the book, it was like magic! I felt so *kilig* that we are part of an amazing project. It is not much, but who would have thought that I will see my name on a published book. Talk about a dream come true. Thank you, Ate Kath and your team. You are all like fairies who give opportunities to everyone who would want to share their stories. More power and blessings to you."

- Patricia Ann Peñalosa, Philippines, author of *The Crazy First Year*

STAY ON THE ROAD WITHOUT ANY WORRIES

Be protected every time you hit the road. Have yourself and your automobile protected against damage and loss.

GET YOUR HOME INSURED NOW

You home is more than just four walls and a roof. Protect it and its contents against damages caused by fire, lightning or flood.

EVER READY INSURANCE

Go Places and Insure Things

Ever Ready Insurance is an accredited agency of FPG Insurance, Standard Insurance, and Stronghold Insurance.

7 502 4528 | 0920 9466387
Facebook: Ever.Ready.Insurance
elvieancanan13@gmail.com

Steampunk * Fantasy
Paranormal Stories
IT'S JUST A
STEAMPUNK
WORLD AWAY!
MAITARUE.COM
Connect with Maita online.
AMAZON.COM/AUTHOR/MAITARUE
FACEBOOK.COM/AUTHORMAITARUE
INSTAGRAM.COM/BABYMOONMAITA

The Prodigal COO

Child Of Owner + Raket Girl

Post-Ondoy was a time for reflection. Not just about the career I wanted to build but also the type of next boyfriend I wanted to have. Yes, the *pagiging malandi* is innate as fuck.

As much as I want to write about how I met my husband in all its glorious, rom-com-worthy details, that shit deserves another book. So, let me give you the condensed version because I plan to write and self-publish a different book for that story.

It was still 2009 and our family was in the middle of rebuilding our lives and our business after Typhoon Ondoy. At the same time, I was busy finding another boyfriend so I won't think about the old one I just AWOL-ed from (if that's even a term). At that time, I refused to create a Facebook account because I felt it was too noisy. There were so many things happening in the homepage that I felt visually assaulted every time I looked at it. Okay, I was pro-Friendster—yes, that Jurassic social networking site, the most popular sister of MySpace and Multiply (let's confuse the TikTok generation, yes?).

I wasn't resigned yet from the digital advertising agency. I remember, I was at home, looking at the Friendster profiles of my friends, clicking friends of friends of friends until I came across the profile of this guy posing beside a beer tower. He was wearing a black t-shirt that with the words "Masturbation, my anti-drug" in front. His hair was curly and unruly, and he had the most *laglag* panty, I-have-

no-idea-that-I'm-cute drunk smile of all time. This happened during the time when majority of the guys you meet on Friendster have an entire album dedicated to one-day selfies. You know, the kind of selfies you take in one sitting and you fucking upload them all in an album. This guy only had five or six photos in his Friendster profile, all of which were cropped photos, clearly taken from group shots with friends. I went like, oh this one's interesting.

So, I sent him a "smile" on Friendster. He sent one back. When I joined Facebook, I "poked" him. He poked back. Eleven years later, here we are, husband and wife, with one toddler. The poking worked, haha. Okay, that's all I'm going to write about my husband, at least for this book. Let's go back to **My Origin Story.**

In 2010, I made the decision to work in the family business. I took over the production of our yearbooks. My background as a Yellow Pages graphic artist helped a lot. From designing 24 print ads for US-based clients, I was designing the inside pages of yearbooks for approximately 20 schools in Marikina City, Pasig City, and Quezon City. This was before the K to 12 Program was implemented in the Philippines. Each school has an average of 500 graduating senior high school students (spread among 12-15 sections). We were servicing around 20 schools. Do the math, because—I can't even.

I work fast, super fast. And placing all these graduation photos in the layout using a combination of design software such as **Adobe Photoshop, CorelDRAW** and **CorelPHOTOPAINT** was a walk in the park. From doing design, I was promoted to conceptualization and presentation for our other clients, including medical societies. Today, I still do design from time to time, but I found that my biggest strength is client acquisition. I'm the "Closer" (think Harvey Specter from

Suits) for the family business. I enjoy presenting our company portfolio, crafting proposals, negotiating, and finally, closing the deal. I also enjoy dressing up and closing deals in swanky offices and even coffee shops. And of course, I enjoy the commission.

But it's true: Working in the family business where your parents are your bosses has its advantages and disadvantages. I have a lot of stories and lessons that I can share, and I will, in another standalone book. Even if the COO (child of owner) training started way before I could speak, I was 25 when I started to get really involved in the business. There were many arguments because I wanted to change how some things are done. Again, when your parents are your bosses, oftentimes, you will always be seen as a child. I'd like to joke that the biggest contribution I made during that time was successfully urging my parents to invest in a commercial digital printer for our presentations, which ended up being a new service that we now provide.

To supplement my income and sustain my lifestyle, I retained some writing gigs and started accepting more freelance work. I was still writing for **Cosmopolitan Philippines** and **Action & Fitness Magazine** (now defunct) that time. It was the first time I immersed myself 100% in freelance work—it was liberating and exhausting at the same time. With no guaranteed salary every 15th and 30th of the month, I must hustle like a madwoman to at least earn a basic salary for all my expenses. Amazingly, I was still able to travel locally and internationally during this time. But it was only a matter of time when I heeded the call of the corporate world again, much to my parents' dismay (though they never showed it).

I wrote this book in 2020 and, of course, there had been many

improvements in my relationship with my parents—as a daughter and as the COO—since I got married. It comes with age. I understand them better now. I've always appreciated all the sacrifices they made, especially the decision to build a small business so they could spend more time with us as we grew up. And when I became a mother in 2017, I finally understood them both, especially my mother.

And in 2014, I started self-publishing and embraced my COO position fully. My parents also came to understand my burning desire to change how some things are done. They understand now where I'm coming from and where I want to go.

So, this 2020, I'd like to document with this book that the biggest (so far!) contribution I've made to the family business is this: we are not just a printing company anymore. We added publishing services to **HS Grafik Print** and for me, there's no paved road ahead. I have to create the path where I want to go with the help of my husband, who is also my managing partner in the publishing arm of our family business. And that would be the legacy we are leaving with our son Johnny someday, who started his COO training when he was 11 months old when he joined my first workshop in book writing.

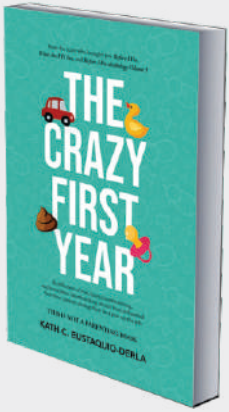
Left: My husband Jet and our then 11-month-old son, Johnny.
Right: My first workshop about book writing and self-publishing in Makati City.

Testimonial

"In my teenage years, I have always wondered if I could ever have the chance to write a book of my own. The inspiration I had back then was Nicholas Sparks, who writes some good love stories. Well, it was more like a daydream rather than a possible reality since I was yet to have a romantic story of my own. When I started a relationship back then, it made me focus on the courtship, constant communication, and shared experiences rather than having any urge to write about it.

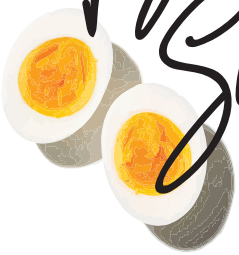
It is the mere reason of creating something beautiful, the ability to inspire and entertain those who read what you write about, that gives that drive to start writing something. It is the same feeling when you write and post something in social media and people begin to react positively to what you posted. I think it drives people to create something out of their thoughts based on experience—from a mere play of words into an actual book.

In the book *The Crazy First Year,* Kath's **3-Part Template** proved to be absolutely useful in composing the content I intended to write about. It even brought more out of me than how I would usually write (in an unprofessional way). I did not know the value of being published in a printed book until I received the printed copies and got to see my writing there.



It was a surreal and wonderful experience indeed. It felt like a chance of a lifetime to be given the opportunity to have our first time parenting experience printed in a book. I know that this will be something to be proud of in the years to come, especially when my child learns to read and understand the story I wrote about." – **Joshua Cu, Philippines, author of *The Crazy First Year***

The Beauty Queen Shenanigans



I was offered the position of Managing Editor for a Filipino-American magazine. I had a blast traveling and featuring the hidden gems of several places here the Philippines, including my beloved Bellarocca Island Resort & Spa. It's a Santorini-inspired luxury resort on an elephant-shaped island located right smack in the so-called "Heart of the Philippines"—Marinduque. I love it so much that you see references to that island in my novels, particularly in *What Am I To You.*

I worked as a managing editor for less than a year. It was a nice, eye-opening experience when it comes to publishing a magazine but I didn't like the management. For a very small company, you'd be shocked how nepotism, gossip, crab mentality, and downright sabotage all melts into something rotten you can almost taste it in the air you breathe.

I was looking for a quick escape, so I accepted a Digital Marketing Specialist job offer from a retail/beauty pageant company even if it wasn't really my forte. At first, it was just supposed to be an

escape route, but I ended up staying there for two years. Not because I love the job or I have high respect for the company (because I clearly don't) but because I love **SOME** (*paano ko ba mas ma-e*-emphasize *itong word na to*?) of the people I met—some of whom ended up becoming my core friends.

This retail/beauty pageant company was way ahead of its time...when they started. But you know the dangers of clinging onto past victories? You end up being complacent, even arrogant, that you mock your competitors for copying you and doing a better job at it. Then you wrap yourself in former cloaks of success that you don't notice your competitors innovating and keeping up with the times. You didn't care because you think you're the "center" of the entertainment universe. Sadly, when you finally force-open your eyes, you are still stuck in 1975 and the "universe" has moved on.

Of course, when I came to work for this company, I was the bright-eyed, idealistic, highly creative employee once more. Everything was "new" to me even if the office smelled of mold, nepotism, complacency, and dead-end careers.

I remember my first day clearly: my desk was right next to an altar—complete with a decent-size cross statue with a Christ figurine and some altar candles. I didn't have the gall to ask why there's an altar in the marketing department. I didn't complain or even question my desk arrangement because I didn't want to be rude. One time, the cross statue even fell on me. True story! Thinking about it now, I think that the office was trying to exorcise me early on, haha.

On my first day at work, there was a blackout. The small office was deserted except for some employees who were on *petiks* mode. This young female artist befriended me and invited me to lunch at the

nearby mall. We spent two hours having lunch, nobody cared that we were gone. This female artist became one of my core friends.

I was handling the digital marketing activities of several brands—a group of malls, a beauty pageant organization, and an events venue. For my baptism of fire, I joined our senior public relations (PR) officer to cover the photoshoot of beauty pageant candidates in their bikinis. The hotel function room was filled with 50 backstabbing ladies ready to claw each other for crowns and titles. And when I say backstabbing, it's true. Later on, we had to "kill" a lot of personal stories before they go public. In fact, I even saw this candidate reading *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu for all the people to see. I mean, if it were me, I'd read that in private and execute in stealth mode. Never show your enemy your playbook, *diba*? Amateur. She didn't win.

Anyway, there were photographers, makeup artists, and numerous boxes filled to the brim with detachable silicone breasts!! No, the silicone pads weren't individually packed for hygienic purposes. I made the mistake of touching one of the silicone breasts pads. It felt sticky. **PUTANGINA.**

I wasn't sure if our senior PR officer handed me a sanitizer or some wet wipes but she told me—in her no-nonsense tone—to never touch anything, including the pile of bikinis and the gowns with year-old foundation marks in the *kili-kili* areas. This senior PR officer became one of my core friends and one of PaperKat Books' senior editors.

My supervisor was the male head of the Creatives Team who was very supportive of my digital marketing campaigns. He liked my creative ideas, including the one where I had fashion bloggers dress up and photograph someone else and not themselves. I had the fashion

bloggers pull out clothes from partner retail brands, style the reigning beauty queens, and experience an editorial photoshoot.

It was the first of its kind (at least for that company) and we did it three times before I left. The concept was even recreated when I left, haha. For Valentine's Day, I had the brilliant idea of inviting an upcoming male group to give flowers to the audience. I mean, fuck the serenades. If it's Valentine's Day and I'm single, I want to see beefcakes in the flesh at a mall, not old men serenading the masses with baby boomer hits. Obviously, my Cosmopolitan Philippines background is quite strong.

At first, my job was fun. I got to watch concerts, work with beauty queens, produce mall shows and holiday events, and rub elbows with cartoon characters every December. I even got to watch sold-out basketball championship games even if the only thing I cared about was how cute this former Ateneo baller was. I knew nothing about basketball, and I didn't care to learn because my sole responsibility was to accompany the sports photographer and upload the photos on Facebook. I stayed nearly two years in the company. At first, it was exciting to come up with new concepts for events and make it happen.

But I realized that the concepts die along with my enthusiasm to make things better and push the envelope further. In reality, the marketing team isn't really marketing anything. Instead, we were refurbishing old concepts, trying to pass them off as new—even the damn Christmas tree looks the same every single year despite the "new" design. And they don't care because the target market doesn't care. And because nobody cares, fuck the metrics. In fact, during my last year with the company, a part of the mall caught fire and a refurbished decade-old Santa Claus burst into flames.

And let me be clear here, I had nothing to do with these incidents. I was eating frozen yogurt at this expensive fro-yo place, treating myself after a long day at work, when I saw people scurrying about. The fire at the basement of this mall was confirmed and, since I was still there, I had to post something on social media.

During my second year with the company, a new marketing officer joined the team. On her first day, she brought to work a small suitcase so she can shuttle paperwork and her heavy laptop between the marketing office and the mall she was assigned to. It was quite clever, but I was one of the people who joked that her bag was probably filled with *longganisa* and cold cuts and *pwede ba akong bumili*, *mars*?

It was a kindhearted joke that we laugh about even to this day whenever we mull over that time in our lives. But thinking about it now, the curse of dead-end careers in that company turned me from bitchy to downright nasty. Nevertheless, this new marketing officer became one of my core friends and she's now the marketing head of an IT company. And just to be clear, I never use the term of endearment "*mars*" unless I'm being sarcastic.

Here's another example of how the curse of dead-end careers can manifest on a person: When this junior PR officer joined the marketing team, a bitchy duo kept on dropping backstabbing comments about her hair, complexion, and fashion style. I couldn't blame them because this junior PR officer was the poster child for YOLO (You Only Live Once) at that time. She's probably the first "uber *conyo*" woman I befriended. She's rich, eloquent, and well-traveled. And she has the best work ethics you could ever find in a millennial.

She also has the most generous and thoughtful heart—the

kind of friend who would *puslit* a one-liter bottle of Jack Daniel's in her luggage for you and your husband because liquor is so expensive in Malaysia. But some office assholes don't see that because they can't get past the fact that you have a life outside of the office. The YOLO girl also became one of my core friends.

I was getting sick and tired of the dead-end job. In fact, my supervisor left the company before I did. On his last day, he invited me to have lunch outside the office and the marketing team talked about it for days. I didn't see anything wrong with it, the lunch, I mean. Over lunch, we talked about career aspirations. I realized I wasn't learning anything new or progressing my career. My clothes, hair, and skin were starting to smell like the office. Forget the mold. I was starting to smell like dead-end careers.

So, I left before my fire died out. After I left, my core friends followed. At one point, three of us ended up working in the same company that some people thought I was stealing their employees. In a way, I was, because I didn't want my core friends' careers to die a long, painful death. One of the top officers there was probably waiting for me to tip her of a job opening in the multinational company we all transferred to. I didn't bother because I knew her nose would bleed during the first and second rounds of interviews alone. You see, I'm a very selective person.

Today, that senior PR officer is a senior analyst for one of the world's top technology brands; the female artist is a designer/editor for an IT company with her own successful business on the side; the new marketing officer with the "*longganisa* trolley" is a marketing and communications manager for an IT company; and the junior PR officer is an early childhood educator in Turkey. As for me, I've decided

to build my own publishing company.

Looking back, a part of me couldn't help but be thankful that I wasted two years of my career there. But only because of two things: **First**, I met some of my core friends there. **Second**, it was the perfect example of a career I didn't want to have.

I realized that I wanted to work for a company I can be proud of, with leaders who earned their titles because of hard work and actual brilliance. I wanted to work in a company that promotes lifelong learning, a company that pushes me to come up with new concepts and implement them the best way I can. I wanted to be part of something big.

And I did. I moved on to join one of the world's biggest multinational companies—a company that showed me what **high performance** can actually deliver.

Testimonials

"Desiree here, one of the attendees of your **How to Write A Book & Be A Self-Published Author** on July 13, 2019. I was the one who had the chance to talk to you about the book I've lousily written. I got so motivated after our talk, especially when you told me to send you my manuscript as is. Eh, I was thinking that my writing was so horrible. Haha! Your talk is inspiring. Thank you and please continue to inspire aspiring authors!" - **Ma. Desiree Cruz-Ballesteros, author of *Understanding Chronic Kidney Disease – Direct From A Patient (Survival Through Faith)***

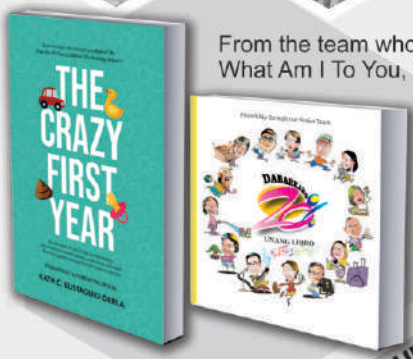
"I've always wanted to write a book. And *The Crazy First Year* book project made that dream possible. I love preserving baby memories but I strongly believe that writing them down in a book is, by far, the best way to preserve memories.

The **3-Part Template** inspired creativity and allowed me to take small actions every day and build my momentum. I wrote bits and pieces, one step at a time, but I did make progress! The book project turned my most important life experiences into a great narrative. I was able to share a lot of heartwarming stories. I felt a deep sense of joy to finally accomplish something I have been hoping for and working toward. I am proud to be part of Kath's brilliant project!"

- Antoinette Escario, Philippines

author of *The Crazy First Year*

Photos by ef. Studios



From the team who brought you Before I Do, What Am I To You, and Before I Do Anthology Volume 1

We believe anyone can write a book, even first-time parents and senior citizens who have no idea about book writing and self-publishing in the first place.

THESE TWO BOOKS ARE PROOF OF THAT!

LAUNCHING

hsgrafikprint
WeDesignWePrint
0917-8559889 7748-3551
hsgrafikprint@gmail.com

Delivering High Performance, Always

My husband is an IT consultant. He has worked for most of the top IT companies in the Philippines. Wait, let me rephrase that. **He only works for the top multinational companies.** Please don't ask me in detail about what he does because—help me, Lord—I can't put it into words.

Here's what I understand: He is part of the implementation and support of a company rich enough to use an expensive computer program. *Ang gulo diba?* In other words, he goes to a fancy shmancy office with free brewed coffee every-fucking-single-day and earns so much just by typing on his computer.

In 2020, his Philippines headquarters (HQ) sent him to Belgium for a month-long training. All expenses paid with per diem that's 2/3 of his monthly salary. The best part? His Belgium office has free soup and fresh fruits daily, including blueberries (which I love). I was fucking born in the wrong country. *Lahat ng gusto ko mahal dito sa Pilipinas!*

Whenever he works from home, I stare at his computer screen and try to understand what the fuck he's doing. If I were to describe it, the program he uses looks like the illegitimate child of Microsoft

Excel and MS-DOS. *Ayoko na, mag-ke-*Candy Crush *nalang ako*. And this mentality is actually the thing that's stopping me from earning the big bucks like my husband. I lacked discipline, drive, engagement, and career goals. Could you blame me? In my previous company, these were all Greek to me.

So, you can just imagine the type of culture shock I had when I moved to the crème de la crème of IT companies in the Philippines. Apart from writing, the new job involved coming up with communications plans on how to disseminate information. I had to make sure that the company's core values and the campaigns' key messages were weaved into the communications. My new job was not just a totally new ball game but a different kind of mind fuck. At first, I felt like my brain was being beaten up. The "inception-style" communications strategy was so intense I became addicted to the "highs" I felt when my suggestions worked.

You know that scene in *How I Met Your Mother* when Barney Stinson first "suited up"? It felt like that. I suited up and never looked back. **My rebirth lasted two months.** I had to unlearn everything I knew about this type of work so I can absorb more information and work faster, smarter. I also needed to learn and understand not just the corporate lingo but also this level of multinational work culture. Here's a classic example:

In my previous company, everyone bowed to the "big boss." Okay, not literally bow because it's not in our culture to bow to show respect (like the Japanese and Koreans). But you'd feel the bowing nonetheless. There was even a time when my supervisor told me not to look directly at the big boss (and not to engage in eye contact) during a meeting. My supervisor brought me along to a meeting with the big

boss. All the heads were there—including the ones who got the position because of good-old nepotism or because no one else was left to promote. They were even shocked to see a young employee sitting with them.

During the meeting, the big boss asked me a question. I answered. I looked at him in the eye. I felt the collective yet inaudible shocked gasps of the people in the room. I was like, "Why shouldn't I talk directly? I'm eloquent. Why shouldn't I look at him directly? *Maganda naman* makeup *ko ah*." If I remember correctly, the big boss graciously praised me for saying something that made sense.

Since then, my supervisor would bring me to the VIP meetings from time to time. During my last meeting with the big boss, I remember politely declining to attend a work event because I would be on leave. There was the inaudible and shocked collective gasp again—they're probably thinking *na ang kapal ng mukha ko* to say no. The big boss asked me why I would be unavailable. I told him straight, "I will be attending a pre-cana." I distinctively remember seeing my supervisor grin before the big boss said with a light laugh, "*Aba, may mga kinakasal na pala sa* marketing *ngayon*." And here's why I think that's funny: many of the employees there either end up in dead-end careers or dead-end love lives. Before we left the meeting, the big boss congratulated me on my upcoming wedding. I didn't invite him.

In the new company, it was totally different. I had to change the way I think, speak, perform, and work with my new colleagues. In fact, one of the many things that had to go was the use of sir, ma'am, madame, boss, miss, *misis*, and mister. And the *po* and *opo*. Coming from a patriarchal, old-school type of workplace where you need to call everybody miss or madame to foster rapport, it took me a while to

get rid of that habit. At first, it felt awkward calling the country manager by his first name. But I got used to it eventually. And I never looked back. To this day, I even tell my mentees to drop the "miss" and just call me Kath. Why? Because *mas* boss *ang dating kapag* one-word name *ang tawagan.*

But I am grateful because my assistant manager, senior manager, managing director (MD), and my colleagues within and outside of the marketing and communications department were all brilliant. During the **difficult learning curve**, they were all very patient and even forgiving, especially my buddy (they have a buddy system) who took me under her magnificent wings. She's awesome! (Hey, Reese!)

I had a lot of mishaps. But unlike in the previous company where people throw you under the bus, my assistant manager taught me accountability. My senior manager taught me how to be more concise and how to be an action-taker. I will never forget what she told me, *"Dapat aksyon agad. Kung hindi, matatabunan ka ng trabaho."* It's one of those things that stuck to me, something I implement even to this day. As for our MD, I felt proud whenever I see her present on stage in all the townhalls and events I helped produce. It showed me what a good leader should be doing and what having a good lead does to your performance at work.

Apart from my colleagues, I also met a lot of interesting people through this multinational company—some of whom I still collaborate with even today. We used to call them "vendors". In multinational company-speak, it just means they are professionals/consultants (not internal employees) who provide services/products to us. I even befriended some of the managing

directors of different work groups within this company. I was also fortunate to work with the late French CEO when he visited the Philippines as well as other global leads in the organization.

Here's a story I won't forget: During my first townhall, I faced a huge dilemma. The Philippine country manager agreed to do the then-viral ice bucket challenge inside a high-end hotel. The floors were carpeted, and the hotel wouldn't agree. But the "vendor", the events company we hired for the event, had the brilliant idea of using an inflatable pool so we can still push through with activity. It was a blast, an icy blast! Pun intended. The event was a success.

How often do you get to work with the CEO and the country manager of a massive multinational company? Even my husband, who spent almost four years in the company, never once met its technology managing director and the country manager. And there I was, chatting up the two leads during events.

Yes, they expect high performance, day in day out. But the returns you get (apart from the money) and the doors that open for you make it all worth it. Yes, you sacrifice a lot of your time, but it was also through this company that I realized how much my time is worth.

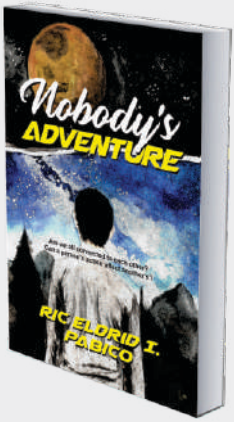
I was experiencing a different kind of high and I felt, for the first time, that I was finally in the right company, right line of work, right pay grade, and right environment. I was finally proud of the company I work in, with the programs I handle, and with the people I work with…only to give up all of it (including the money) for, well, love.

Testimonial

"Kath's mentoring program is not a writing boot camp designed to make you a photocopy of her as a writer. It is designed to make you find yourself and to become a unique and different writer. She will push you to work hard. Accepting her ideas as a mentor will lead you to see the endless possibilities that your self-published work can achieve.

She will not say your work is incorrect. But if she sees that something is wrong, she will look for ways to help you make it better and help you understand the error. She also shares trade secrets and life lessons that I can use as a new self-published writer.

Kath may be tough sometimes but she will always make you feel that you matter—that's why she'll squeeze you until she gets the best out of you. I am grateful for everything I learned from her and no matter how far I can get [because I have the best mentor], I will always look back to this part of my life, where Kath's mentorship program pushed me to become the boldest 'bold star' that I can be."



– Ric Eldrid I. Pabico, Philippines
author of *Nobody's Adventure*

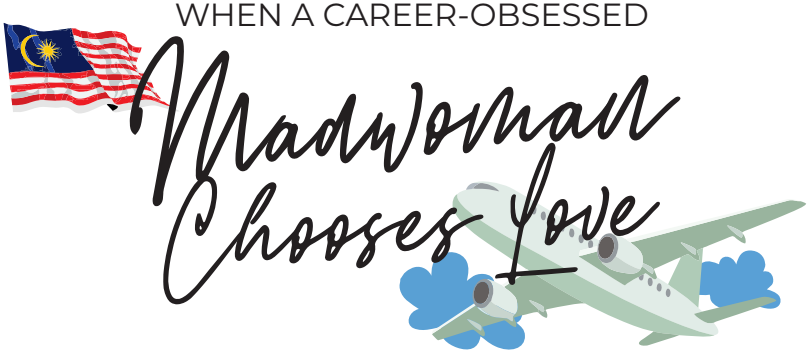
Testimonial

"The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do without thought of fame." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"It really warms my heart that success is on the way with your new book. For sure, this Appendix B will be a bomb of inspiration to the many aspiring authors, like what you have done to my career. Your mentoring is such an amazing encouragement to me. I'm sure your book will do the same for people out there who are dreaming of writing their own book.

The way you handle your mentees is awesome. Your generosity of knowledge is really unprecedented. I am so blessed that I found you. The long wait for the right person who could help me achieve my goal and turn my dreams into reality is worth it. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much, Kath! Please continue to inspire others and help them reach their big dreams!

My heartfelt congratulations! - **Ma. Desiree Cruz-Ballesteros, Philippines, author of *Understanding Chronic Kidney Disease – Direct From A Patient (Survival Through Faith).***



WHEN A CAREER-OBSESSED Madwoman Chooses Love

You know how, sometimes, life takes you to a fork in the road? There are two choices. You can't choose both. And you need to decide fast. That's what happened to me in 2014.

In late 2013, my husband and I were both working in this big multinational company in the Philippines. And I finally understood why he thinks, speaks, acts, and works the way he does. I've always complained that he's, err, stiff (*uy* green-minded!), a bit cold, no-nonsense, and obsessed with processes. Unlike my former boyfriends who were spontaneous, my husband needs to always have a plan, an agenda for the day, and some risk management strategies before he acts on things.

In the beginning, I complained that it wasn't sexy. But when I found myself working in the same company, I finally understood why he is the way he is. Unlike me, who allowed herself to work in a shady company, my husband has very high standards. I have nothing against people who choose to work in small companies—I totally get the allure of being a big fish in a small pond. Believe me, I was a piranha for quite a while. But, sometimes, *kapag minalas-malas ka sa kumpanya na papasukan mo*, you end up being in the company of people who seem

okay with dead-end careers who do nothing all day but talk about other people.

You know that saying that intelligent people talk about ideas, average people talk about events, and small people gossip about other people? Let's just say that I've met a lot of Pandaka pygmaea, which is considered one of the world's smallest fish species. And I say this with every bitchy fiber of my being because I don't understand how we spent 2-3 hours in a weekly meeting just to talk about this person and that person and the love life of that person in the other department. On the other hand, in that multinational company, if things can be discussed via a phone call or a one-sentence quick email, then *wag ka na magpa*-meeting.

That's why today, as I build the publishing business, I limit face-to-face meetings and phone calls. I prefer email conversations because I need the exchange to be tracked. To this day, everything I learned in that multinational company I apply in my business. And I believe that's the purpose of experiencing the corporate life—the right one—when you're young. So you can build something when you finally decide on the path to take in life.

As you may have guessed, I became the female version of my corporate war machine husband. Wait, you might be confused with the timeline because I keep using the term husband. Let me backtrack.

In late 2013, my husband and I were supposed to move to New

Jersey, USA for an overseas post. And the best way to bring me along was to marry me. **NAPILITAN AKO GUYS**. Joke *lang*. Anyway, long story short, I married him twice. First on August 2, 2013 in Taytay, Rizal, via a civil wedding rite. I remember that day vividly, *lahat ng kasabayan namin naka traje de boda. Ako lang yung naka* cream-and-black, super tight, super flirty, *akala-mo-pupunta-sa-bar* bondage dress! I felt underdressed and overdressed for the first time in my *kikay* life. Only our immediate family attended, and we had an intimate family lunch at Dome, a now-closed café in Eastwood City.

The US move didn't push through and my husband moved to another multinational whose base is in Malaysia. On September 14, 2014, he flew to Malaysia alone. Our plan was for me to follow him abroad during the 2nd quarter of 2015. I could have flown to Malaysia with him already, but I was so in love with my career. Let me rephrase, **I was obsessed with my career and addicted to the daily hustle.** I really loved what I was doing, and I was offered a permanent position (I was first working as a contractor). But I had to choose, and I chose to follow my husband abroad because I, personally, don't like long distance relationships. For me, if you have the capacity to be with your partner physically, choose that time and time again. As for your career, you can always pick up where you left off.

But before I resigned, my husband and I decided to have a church wedding for our parents. We are both the eldest and we want our parents to experience a church wedding. So, we planned it together. Our corporate training in the multinational company proved effective. Since he was already in Malaysia, we scheduled online meetings. We had a shared Microsoft Excel sheet complete with Gantt charts for deliverables and I prepared project desks and scripts

for all our wedding suppliers.

One of the stories I love recalling was the time I got my wedding dress. Our designer and good friend, Tito Boy Kastner Santos (BKS for short) has an atelier near Alabang. Our church, hotel, and reception venue were all in Eastwood City, Quezon City. To be on the safe side, we decided to get our gowns ahead of time. We were driving along Skyway when my senior manager called asking me for the talking points I prepared for our country manager. I remember remotely working inside a moving vehicle. Thank God for smartphones and mobile internet.

And so, I started the long process of telling my leads that I would only be finishing my one-year contract. I couldn't accept the permanent position offer because I must fly to Malaysia right after my contract expires. I felt appreciated because they didn't want me to leave, but I would never forget what my assistant manager told me. He said that he knew I would soon fly to Malaysia when I shared that my husband left the company to work abroad. That stuck to me because he never once made me feel that I was no longer relevant *kasi nga, aalis na din naman ako.* I would also never forget what he and my senior manager advised me to do before I leave: talk to the country manager, managing director, and the leads of the departments I worked with—say goodbye and ask them to keep in touch. And I did.

A few days before I left, I asked for a quick one-on-one with the country manager and managing director. They thanked me for everything I contributed. I also sent emails to everyone I worked with inside and outside of the company, and promised to keep in touch. I remember that last one-on-one with my senior manager. We were at Starbucks and for the last time, I ordered a hot caramel macchiato

(I drink black coffee now). We were on the sofa and we had a quick run down memory lane. My senior manager gave me great advice on how to survive and thrive in a multinational company—things that I share to anyone who's willing to listen because these are golden nuggets of wisdom. Moreover, it's coming from someone who, like me, has a family business to fall back on but still chose the corporate world because we love it. That day, I asked her to be my mentor. It was in that company that I learned the real value of having a mentor. She graciously accepted and in the years that followed, we have our catch-ups even if it's just over Facebook. In 2018, during one of our catch-ups in Manila, she gave my son a gift—a panda stuffed toy named Panboo that became my son's lovey (an object that a toddler considers his best friend forever).

You know how, sometimes, small actions lead to big opportunities? Every now and then, thanks to social media, I am able to engage in conversations with some of the people I used to work with. Some hire me for small projects outside of the company, some just want to say hi and catch up. And just recently, six years after I left the multinational, a contact I met there hired our printing company for a small project. After one month, she asked me if I'm interested in a project-based writing/editing gig for the same multinational company. Even if I'm busy building the publishing empire I dream of, I accepted the offer wholeheartedly. You see, all those years I spent in Malaysia, I dreamed of coming back, dissecting campaign decks, and writing high-level, inception-style copy again. That dream came true this 2020. I am happy to share that—in the words of Macklemore in his song *Glorious*, "You know I'm back like I never left!"

Oh, if you're curious about our Wedding Highlights videos, you can visit the **Aceron Studios** website to watch them.

Testimonials

"PaperKat Books or should I say Kath, has been a mentor like no other. Being that mentor, teacher, and influencer for the last four years, she has brought out the best in me. She never fails to encourage and motivate me, no matter what darkness I've been through in my life.

She always brings out the creativity in me. As a mentor, she knows what you can bring to the table and, even if you don't speak it out, she has this gut feel and understanding of what you have in mind. She pushes you to your limits and takes you to the edge of your seat (in a positive way). She makes sure that she can get that bad or b*tch side of you that nobody else can (but definitely in a good way, she'll understand what I mean here). She also gives hope to all aspiring authors and writers out there who want to be heard and want to be seen and known in public. She wants to make sure that we fulfill our dreams in one way or another.

She'll accompany you in your journey, from start to end. Your book is a symbol of who you are, and all your dreams and aspirations. Baby steps lead to bigger steps in life. And when you're totally good enough, she'll let you fly on your own and enjoy the world. Another thing I admire is how she can unlock our potentials, capabilities, and talents as a writer that even you can't imagine yourself."

– Earl Leonard Sebastian, Philippines

"Stop procrastinating and wasting time. Publish your book with Kath. She will serve as the light that will give clarity and practical guidance. Turn those stories into a tangible book real fast."

– Labueno Bautista Casas, Abu Dhabi
Skills Development Coach

breysletph

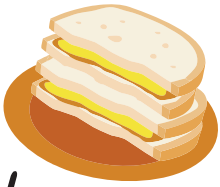
We offer personalized / custom-made bracelets and stringed necklaces according to your specifications, size, and the gemstones and charms that you like.

Contact Us

09952122854 | 09158201803
Cubao, Quezon City

breysletph2014 breysletph

The Expat Life



After packing up my life and career in the Philippines, in June 2015, I found myself with a new title I never thought I'd have and enjoy: expat's wife.

My husband worked as an IT consultant for another (of course!) multinational company. We lived in a 2-bedroom condominium in Petaling Jaya, a city that is 20 minutes away from the capital of Kuala Lumpur by car. **BUT WAIT!** When we say 20-minute drive there, *hindi ito parang* drive from SM Megamall to Powerplant Mall in Rockwell *ha*. If you check Google Maps, our condo in Centrestage, Petaling Jaya is 16.0 km away from the famous Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur (KL). The capital city KL, like many cities in southeast Asia, also has its share of traffic jams. But it's not like the clusterfuck that we call EDSA, C5 Road, and Marcos Highway here in Metro Manila.

What Malaysians refer to as "traffic jam" is fast-moving traffic in the Philippines. In fact, that 20-minute drive from our condo to my husband's office in Kuala Lumpur has what I'd like to call the "SLEX Feels." *Sa luwag ng roads at kawalan ng* traffic, *akala mo nasa* SLEX *ka papuntang* Tagaytay!

Our condominium is also 10 to 15 minutes away from the nearest LRT station on foot, depending on how fast you walk.

And guys, in Malaysia, people walk a lot. Majority of the streets are pedestrian-friendly. Walking is a habit that we developed when were abroad so when we moved back to the Philippines, we had no problems walking from one place to another *kahit medyo malayo*.

And the trains, oh my, Malaysia's railway system is efficient as fuck. It's not as confusing as the trains in Tokyo and Singapore. There are fewer connecting trains but the efficiency and effectiveness of their public transportation system make it possible for even the well-off citizens to depend on it. And because Malaysia has local car manufacturers and gasoline is cheap, *kahit maraming* cars on the roads, *hindi pa din nagiging* EDSA-like clusterfuck *ang* roads *nila*.

So you can imagine how convenient it was for an average salaryman to get to the office and back. The cost of living too is cheap, sometimes even cheaper than here in the Philippines. In the three years that we spent there, my husband and I discovered a lot of places where we could get local items for less.

Imagine this: *yung mga* "superfoods" like flaxseeds, chia seeds, fenugreek, quinoa, and more are so cheap in Malaysia. I don't know why, actually, but many of the Chinese supermarkets there sell it for cheap that I end up buying in bulk, packing them in *balikbayan* boxes, and shipping it to the Philippines for friends who ask me to buy for them. There's also this beauty product brand that sells for PHP1,800+ in the Philippines, but in Malaysia, we get it for only PHP600+ and even PHP400+ if it's on sale. I came to point when I offered my mother a side business: I'd buy the stock in Malaysia and we sell in the Philippines, haha. I guess that's just the *negosyante* in me.

Speaking of *pagiging negosyante*, my entrepreneurial mindset actually started in Malaysia. I was an expat's wife by choice. But no, it's

not pool side all the time.

My mentor and former leads in the multinational company in the Philippines encouraged me to apply in its office in Malaysia. I have Malaysian contacts already but I went through the process and applied but only got to the phone interview. One headhunter advised me to fix my CV so it is compatible with the format they are looking for in "local" candidates. In the Philippines, especially when you're in the creative field, you can be as creative as you want with your resume. But sometimes, companies abroad are not as open-minded or creative as Filipinos are when it comes to CV formats. In Malaysia, certifications and training are the resume heavyweights. And I don't have those. Nevertheless, the application process proved to be an eye-opening and grounding experience for me.

At dahil hindi ako mapakali kapag walang ginagawa at dahil gusto ko I have my own money (*kahit na kaya akong buhayin ng asawa ko*), I felt sad, even angry, for not having a job. I think that phase lasted three months.

But on the 4th month, thanks to professional connections I built since I started freelancing, a friend asked me if I want to work as a freelance news writer for a media company based in New York. I met this Filipino contact on Craigslist years ago when he was looking for a ghostwriter to write product descriptions for a swimwear brand. He hired me way back in 2007 and since then, I've written hundreds of product descriptions, reviews, and travel articles for him. He's a trusted business contact and friend. So, I jumped on the chance in a "New York minute".

That was the first freelance job I accepted when I was in Malaysia and the experience trained me well. I was writing news about

science and medicine, health and wellness, and fashion. I enjoyed it so much even if I had to start working at 7:00AM. It paid well, too. And I met another core friend during my stint in that NY-based media company. She's an editor and we got along so well that when we both left, we work from time to time because she's one of PaperKat Books' senior editors. She's currently a Cambridge English coordinator in Osaka, Japan and my son's godmother.

That first freelance job opened a lot of doors. After a few months, another friend referred me to a Philippine-based company that needed a copywriter for local brands. I accepted and soon, I found myself working as a freelance writer for the following:

1. The New York-based media agency
2. The Philippine-based communications company
3. A car company based in Perth, Australia
4. Singapore-based entertainment company
5. And a big content provider catering to clients in the US, UK, Canada, and Singapore

Without a human resources (HR) department to protect my interests, I learned how to sell my writing and editing services well through effective and persuasive pitches. I had this "don't call me, I'll email you" branding that made clients think that I don't really need what they're offering me because I have a lot knocking on my door.

At first, I didn't have that many clients offering me projects. I just made that up, haha. But that tactic helped me raise my rates that even if clients tell me, "Wow, your rates are so high," they hire me nonetheless because they already stalked my online portfolio and knew that I can deliver high-standard work. The personal branding and the entrepreneurial mindset started while I was on foreign soil.

I loved the remote work so much that even if I had to bring my laptop with me during vacations in Southeast Asia, it was okay because the pay was worth it.

We were also in Malaysia when we started PaperKat Books and the mentoring program. During the many weekend dates with my husband, we talked about my dream of shifting the core services of HS Grafik Print (our family business) from printing to publishing. I was in Malaysia when I came up with the **3-Part Template** for writing a book. The first mentoring program I offered was called **You Are Cordially Invited** in 2017, YAI for short. I invited 17 people to write a fiction story with two characters from my book, *Before I Do,* as cameo characters. That mentoring program was 100% free, by the way. I wrote my second book, *What Am I To You*, in Malaysia. I co-wrote and self-published our first anthology book, *Before I Do Anthology | Bros Before Hoes Vol. 1,* there with 32 writers.

You're probably wondering, how did I start my self-publishing journey and how I became a publisher. Well, then let me share with you how I did it. 💋

Curious about my books? You can read free chapters by visiting **PaperKatBooks.com.**

Testimonials

"Thank you for having these workshops and holding our hand as we go through book planning. I never thought I would attend this kind of workshop and now I can't stop thinking about it."

– **KC Leyco Mempin, Philippines**

"I attended PaperKat's workshop on July 20, 2019 at PenBrothers. I could say that I am very much satisfied with it because I have gathered new insights and tips on writing stories efficiently. It gave the participants timed exercises wherein we practiced how to do characterization/profiling, book cover designing, and writing synopsis.

I felt so pumped up that I am beginning to reach my goal of having my story published, especially when Kath made my book cover. I felt more motivated to work harder. With PaperKat Books, I am confident that I could achieve my dream of being an author. I saw their sincerity to help writers succeed. I would really pursue this goal and I definitely need PaperKat Books in my writing journey. I recommend that if you really want to have a future in this industry, attend seminars/workshops of PaperKat Books and allow them to bring out the best in you."

– **Jarabellz Larosa, Philippines**

Congratulations to Kath Eustaquio-Derla on her new book, Appendix B. You made our career as self-published authors easier. More power and keep writing and inspiring!

Mark Clint Lura is a member of the Registered Financial Planner Institute Philippines. He is very passionate about sharing Financial Literacy to everyone.

- He started investing in Mutual Funds in 2005
- He started investing in the Philippine Stock Market in 2009
- He got his certification as a Registered Financial Planner in 2014
- He became a financial advisor in 2017
- He became a self-published author in 2020

Follow and like his Facebook Page, **Race To Wellness by Mark Clint Lura, RFP.** Here, he gives information and insights about Personal Finance topics such as:

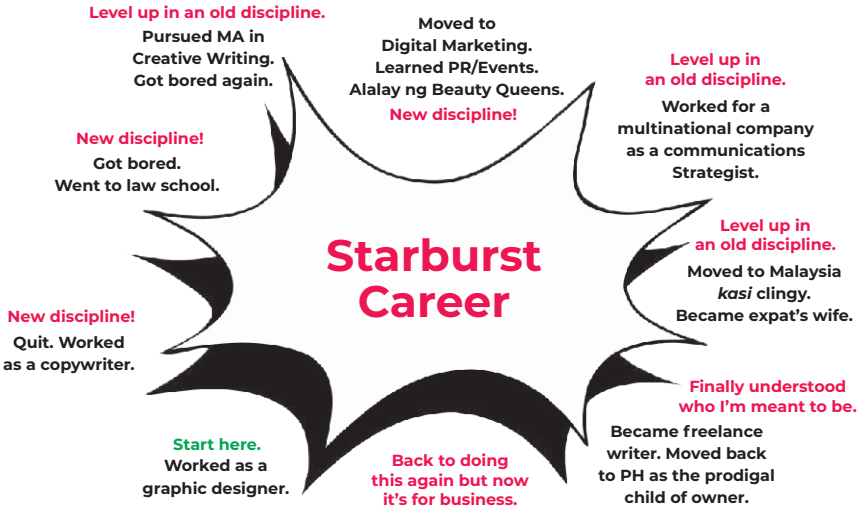
- Cashflow Management (Savings and Budgeting)
- Debt Management
- Insurance Planning
- Investment Planning
- Educational Planning
- Retirement Planning
- Tax and Estate Planning

Send him a private message on Facebook to get your **#FREE** coaching session **NOW**! And watch out for his self-published financial book coming this 2020!

The Makings of a Publisher

In my talks, I like to joke that I have a Starburst Career. Not starstruck, not starmaker. Starburst. Why? Because if a typical career path looks like this:

My career path looks like this:



Since my parents come from a generation who believes in the old-school ways of working in just one or two companies and retiring there as a boss, my generation couldn't be more different. People my age love to try different disciplines, work in different organizations, even shift careers, and eventually find the one company that can provide us the things we want: career, retirement, money, work-life balance, and more. I realized getting promotions is not the only way to increase one's salary. So, many people my age, especially those who work in corporate, jump from one company (even country) to another.

But I'm a different story. I didn't just jump from one company to another. I jumped from one discipline to another. From writing to design to digital marketing to internal communications to events management, I dipped my toes into a lot of things. That's why I like to joke that I have a **starburst career**. It's a witty way of saying that my career looked and felt like a mess all those years ago. I felt like I was getting old and getting nowhere. Instead of simply going one direction, I was all over the place...until I realized what it was preparing me for: to build my publishing empire. Here are the things I learned in every job I had:

When I graduated with a journalism major, I learned the writing basics. As a graphic designer, I learned how to design book covers, posters, and more. As a copywriter, I learned to write ads that sell. When I went to law school, I learned that some things are not for me (and that's important too!). When I studied creative writing, I learned that I am very impatient. As a Fil-Am Magazine editor, I learned editorial management. As a digital marketing specialist, I learned public relations, marketing, and events management. As an *alalay ng mga* beauty queens, I gathered a lot of materials for my books,

haha. As an internal communications specialist, I learned personal branding and processes. When I lived as an expat's wife, I got to travel and that meant more materials for books. As a freelance writer, I built my entrepreneurial mindset and learned how to work with non-Filipino clients. And when I returned as the prodigal child of owner (COO), I learned that I have everything I need to start building my empire.

I realized that I had to go through **ALL THAT** so I can pick and implement the strategies from the corporate world and make it my own. But do you want to know how I started my self-publishing journey? Here's the straight answer: **AN ASSHOLE BROKE MY HEART.**

In 2008, while working as a senior copywriter for a digital marketing company in Ortigas, a former colleague asked me if I wanted to write for Cosmopolitan Philippines. She was a staff writer at that time and their team was looking for a freelance writer who can write blog posts about relationships. They called it **bedroom blog.**

They needed a writer who can provide content for its local (Philippines) version. If you search for it today, you'll find many references to bedroom blog and they appear as list-type or interview articles. During my time, it read more like a web series, like an online *teleserye*, and they called it **Bedroom Blog by Veronica** (my pen name). As fate would have it, I had several blog posts on Tumblr about the asshole who not only broke my heart but also ghosted me. Let's call him "Matt". I met this person in college, but nobody knew that we were friendly. He had this struggling, pained artist vibe that made him quite interesting. In fact, one of my classmates openly declared that she had a crush on him. I once tagged along when she stalked him, haha. I knew a lot of girls who secretly and openly had a crush on him, except for me—at least back in college. The only time I spoke to him directly was during a class project. In my no-nonsense, almost Blair Waldorf-kind-of-way, I told him what was needed and when he should send it. Then college was over.

Two years after college, the conversation picked up where we left off. I don't remember who found who but soon, we found ourselves reliving those few moments and how he found me to be cold, bitchy, and always in a hurry. And I was, because I couldn't wait to get home as soon as I reached the borders of España, Manila. He found it attractive. What started as an innocent catchup led to an intoxicating obsession that shaped my entire writing career. You know that scene in *How I Met Your Mother* where Robin Scherbatsky talked about people stringing people who are stringing other people along? I soon found myself tangled up in a web and it took me years to finally set myself free. It was only later that I learned that someone else was stringing him along.

If I were to briefly describe that point in my life, it would be this way: I told myself I wouldn't fall in love with Matt, but I did. I fell so hard that I was able find "magic" in the midst of everyday life. For example, when he told me that he hadn't seen the movie *Serendipity*, I lent him my copy (a Blu-ray version that time). It took him months to return it and when he did, he gave back a VCD copy! I should have been livid because the Blu-ray version was given to me by a former boss as a parting gift when I resigned. At that time, it was expensive. But no, I fell in love even more thinking, "Oh, he took the time to find me another copy." *Tangina lang. At tangina niya.*

And just like in the movie when the female lead experiences serendipitous moments, I experienced the same and lived for them. I learned to associate the movie with him, including the song *Waiting In Vain* by Annie Lennox. I listened to the damn song 10-15 times a day, at the office, and during my walk along Ayala Avenue every single day for months and months. At one point, I was already so obsessed and I wanted to purge him out of my system. I joined one of my mother's out-of-town conventions in Dagupan City, hoping that a change of scenery will clear my head and allow me to lighten the emotional baggage.

But just like in the movie, fate played me like a ping-pong ball. After five hours on the road, I found myself in Lenox Hotel in Dagupan City. I mean, what are the chances? Things like that only happen in movies and books, right? Instead of spending the next 4-5 days purging my system and lightening my load, I went back to Manila with a heavier emotional baggage than when I left.

I shared this dilemma with a former male best friend and he told me that I was making it all up—the magic, the serendipitous

connections. He told me that even if I wasn't in love with Matt and even if I never came across the song by Annie Lennox or the movie *Serendipity,* that hotel in Dagupan City would still be there. I understood what he was trying to say but when you're in love with the idea of something or someone, no logical explanation can fuck with your mind. (Later on, that former male best friend ended up confessing his feelings to me.)

So, despite all my reservations, I told Matt that I was falling in love with him. And I never heard from him again. **The asshole ghosted me.**

In the years that followed, I went through a series of emotions—anger, denial, acceptance. It took me a long time, years in fact, to realize that I was in love not with the person or what he had become. Instead, **I was in love with a memory.** Looking back—and I'm not just saying this now because I am happily married and in love with someone else—I realized that I was in love with the "idea of that person I met in college." The image of him that was stuck in my head was the one from college, the promising editor in chief. Of course, a lot has happened since then. And this I can say proudly: there is nothing sexy about a directionless man.

Still, I am grateful for that experience because Matt became my "muse" for a very long time. For years, the idea I had of Matt fueled my writing and influenced my story-telling techniques. You'll see a lot of references to him in my books, particularly *What Am I To You.* But let's backtrack a bit.

I wrote all these stories, in all their glorious details, in my Tumblr blog. And my friend who worked in Cosmopolitan Philippines knew about it. She asked me to email her a few entries.

Her editor reviewed them and soon, I found myself as the new "talent" for **Cosmo.ph** (Cosmopolitan Philippines' website). For nearly four years, I wrote about my love life under the pen name Veronica (a tribute to my favorite bitches, Veronica Mars and Veronica Lodge). I weaved in real events, real people, real conversations, and real emotions in an intriguing piece of fiction writing that lasted seven seasons as a web-novel of some sort. Readers were wondering who "Veronica" was. Readers stalked me online (a few discovered me and some became my real-life friends). Some nasty people even dedicated an entire hate blog all for me, haha! And all these happened before I discovered the TV series *Gossip Girl*.

From Blog To Book

When my stint with Cosmo.ph ended, I was able to collate 7-seasons worth of blog posts that could be turned into 5-7 standalone books. I was ecstatic with the idea of turning those blog posts into actual, printed books, similar to those "chiclit" (chic literature) books that were quite popular in 2010. Some of my favorites were *Drama Queen* by Abi Aquino, *Wander Girl* by Tweet Sering, *That Kind Of Guy* by Mina Esguerra, and *No Boyfriend Since Birth* by Claire Betita. I love how the authors were able to weave in Tagalog words and Filipino traditions without making the story *jologs*. **These female authors were my heroes**. Summit Media published these short novels for a time. Since I was already a "talent" for Cosmo.ph, I figured, it's a shoo-in.

I submitted my manuscript to the then editor of Summit Books. Like any good editor, she gave her constructive comments and

it got me so excited. Since my bedroom blog posts featured actual places in different cities in Metro Manila, some of which are now closed, the editor asked me to remove the names of actual places and make up some names instead. She also asked me to convert all past tenses into present tense and not mention actual dates so my book won't be stuck in time. I thought, that's nice, but I politely declined. I had three reasons:

1. First, I was lazy, haha.
2. Second, I believe there's magic when you mention actual places where the story took place, just like in the movie *Serendipity* where they featured Serendipity III, the iconic restaurant in New York City.
3. Third, I want to mention the names of the actual places, even if they are already closed. I want the readers to visit these places and take photos with my book.

I didn't pursue it anymore, especially since my talent contract with Cosmo.ph states that everything I produced belongs to them, legally. I got busy with work and I didn't revisit the thought anymore. But the dream of having a published book never left me.

My First Anthology Project

My work experience with bedroom blog and Cosmo.ph allowed me to meet, connect, and collaborate with two of my chic lit idols—**Mina Esguerra** and **Tweet Sering**. I introduced myself as the writer for Cosmo.ph's bedroom blog and that was the only

introduction I really needed. Our mutual love for writing and short stories paved the way for us to connect and even work together. They both became my unofficial consultants—I confide and ask them for guidance from time to time. Amazingly, I found out that Mina is the cousin of one of my core friends—the new marketing officer I told you about, the one with the *longganisa* bag, haha. It was fate!

In 2012, Mina asked me if I want to join an ebook anthology titled *Say That Things Change.* The idea was to write a short novel that talks about a character's independence and self-discovery. During this time, I was mulling over a storyline I wrote in my head and Mina's offer came at the perfect time with the perfect incentive. Mina told me that the challenge was to submit the full manuscript in two weeks. I took the challenge and I was able to deliver. Boom, just like that, I became a self-published author of an ebook along with 6 other female writers. My first novel was titled *Before I Do.*

I was on Cloud 9! Finally, my dream of seeing my work published in book format came true, even if it's in digital form. I thought, now that my novel is out, it's only a matter of time for the big boys (big traditional publishing companies in the Philippines) to discover me. **I dreamed about it. I waited and waited and...nothing.** No one emailed me with a publishing contract for a standalone, printed book. It was during this time when I realized how impatient I really was. I don't like sitting in a corner and waiting for people to do things for me. I'd rather get up, do it myself, and shock everyone. I was getting depressed again, wondering why publishing companies won't approach me. I asked, "Is my work that bad? Am I not good enough?"

Then, my parents and I had a conversation changed my life:

MY ORIGIN STORY

"*Bakit ka ba nag-aantay sa mga* publishing companies? *May* printing press *tayo diba? Bakit hindi mo na lang i*-print *yung libro mo*?" my parents asked.

IT WAS A MAJOR LIGHT BULB MOMENT.

Looking back, *ang tanga ko kasi hindi ko naisip yun*.

"*Libre ninyo*?" I asked, with a shy but ear-to-ear smile and beautiful eyes. "*Sige*," my parents answered.

Fuck waiting! I designed my own book cover, inside pages, bookmarks, and other printed collaterals and self-published my first printed book, *Before I Do.* Before I flew to Malaysia, I went to the National Library of the Philippines and applied for my own copyright. Later on, I worked with a distributor to get an ISBN and bring the book to National Bookstore and Fully Booked.

In the years that followed, I wrote more books, produced anthologies, taught people how to write and self-publish their work, and eventually added publishing services to our family's printing business. Movie companies approached me to explore movie rights and partnerships. I've done several workshops, seminars, talks, book launches, and so much more. **And all these started because I hate waiting.**

I know, I know. I had it easy. Some of you are probably thinking, "*Nagawa mo lang yan kasi may* printing press *kayo*." Yeah, I know. *Bakit, hindi ko naman dine*-deny. I know that I had it easy.

That's why my goal for PaperKat Books is to give people that same easy start. Instead of wasting your time dreaming, procrastinating, and researching how to write, self-publish, and sell your book, the mentoring program I created is tailor-fit for aspiring writers who want to make things happen in less than a year.

You see, you can research all you want. Google is your ally. But if you want fast results like I do, you can hire a mentor to whip you into shape. With several book titles under my name, I continue to innovate and create new products that will help me achieve the following:

Mission

To prove that anyone can write, self-publish, and sell books.

Vision

To elevate the self-publishing industry in the Philippines—one book at a time.

That's why I produced **Appendix B**, which is my first non-fiction title and ebook. Here I will talk about the 8 things you really need to write, self-publish, and sell your book—and passion isn't one of them. I will also talk about the **3-Part Template** in detail and the lessons I learned since I started PaperKat Books in 2014 while I was living in Malaysia.

But don't use this book for writing inspiration. I say this a lot—don't hire me if you're looking for inspiration. Come to me if you're ready to act, because I'm not the type of mentor who will massage your balls and kiss your ass and tell you to set aside time each

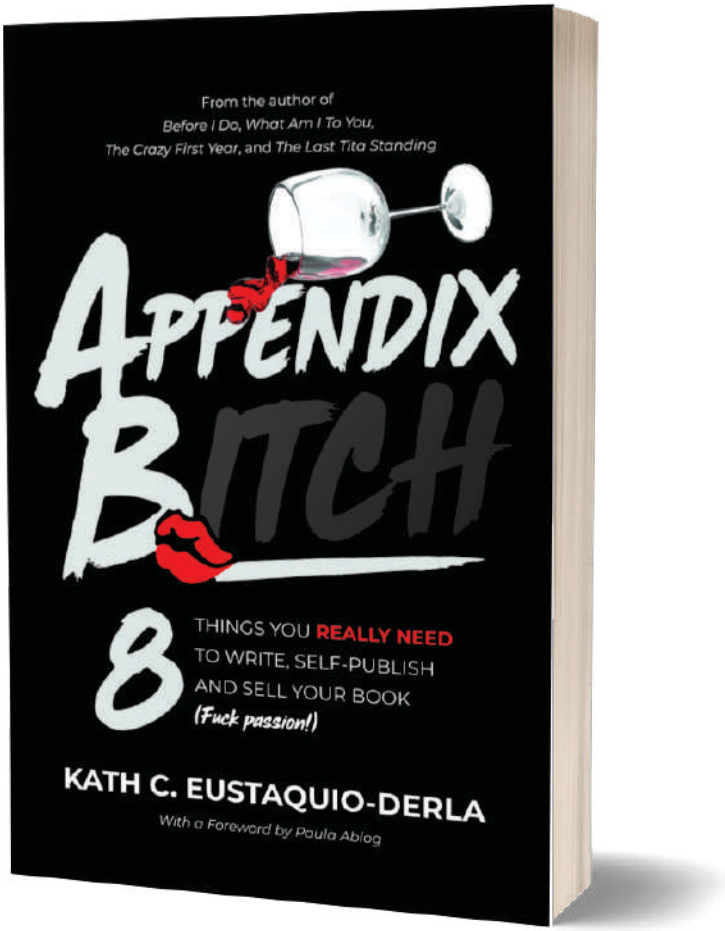
day to sit down in front of your computer and write. Fuck that. Never works. At least for people like me.

Two-weeks' worth of obsession accomplishes more than a year's worth of dedicated work. You don't need to force yourself to write every day. Chances are, you'll end up surfing the internet or watching Netflix. What works for me is obsession. I immerse myself in the storyline and the writing just comes naturally. Whiskey works for me, too. Of course, you don't need to drink if you don't want to.

What I'm saying here is don't look at me for writing inspiration. But if you find this book inspirational, then that's nice. What I plan to accomplish with this book is for you to realize that you already have what it takes to make it. You just don't know it yet.

So, are you ready to discover what it really takes? 💋

If you read **My Origin Story**, thank you! Now, you have a better understanding why I do things the way I do.



END OF TEASER

P A P E R K A T B O O K S . C O M