

Q: How did you begin writing? Did you intend to become an author, or do you have a specific reason or reasons for writing this book?

A: I was incredibly blessed to be at the grounds to witness nearly all epic moments in Sri Lankan cricket, in 11 countries. Those include winning the Asia Cup, Champions Trophy, a World Cup, that's 50-overs, a World T20 title and four other World Cup finals. In between matches, there were some unforgettable experiences. So, I thought it is nothing but fair to share those with other fans.

Then there are other reasons. For a long time, I have hardly seen anything that highlights the step-motherly way the fans are treated, though they are the ones who spend money and sustain the game. Then, there were many happenings most present-day fans aren't aware of. But recounting episodes as they actually happened and conveying that accurately, was quite a challenge.

Q: What authors do you like to read? What book or books have had a strong influence on you or your writing?

A: I always enjoy reading autobiographies/biographies of famous cricketing personalities. I really like the way Michael Atherton has written his autobiography, *Opening Up*. In a way, it was sort of a model for my memoir *Winds Behind The Willows*.

Q: Could you describe the mundane details of writing: How many hours a day do you devote to writing? Do you write a draft on paper or at a keyboard?

A: At the beginning, I knew next to nothing of the publishing process. Didn't even know the difference between publishing and printing. The basics of copyright laws, how to differentiate between editorial and commercial use of images, language style guidelines, identifying the libellous material. The list goes on and on. So, there was plenty of research, and I spent a lot of time on learning those.

I worked on a laptop and tried to write about 500 to 1,000 words a day. Would've re-written each chapter more than 10 times before the final editing. There would have been at least five rounds of editing during the final stage. I kept notes on recollections, ideas, real-life dialogues and quotes, and links to web articles that might come in handy in the book. While writing, I regularly went through those lists and pulled out bits and pieces that fitted in.

Q: Did you write every single day?

A: Mostly, yes; because I had my own deadlines. But there were days that I couldn't get into the groove.

Q: Any writing rituals?

A: Absolutely, no. I'm anti-superstitious.

Q: Aren't writers supposed to be solitary?

A: Writing can be a solitary experience, and I enjoy my privacy.

Q: Tell us some more about your book.

A: *Winds Behind The Willows* is my first book. It contains 16 chapters. Mostly related to the experiences of watching major cricket tournaments around the world.

Q: How hard was the journey?

A: Believe me, it was tough. You need to have a strong will and belief in yourself. I have spent 3 years but about 10,000 hours in those 3 years to produce the book.

Q: What are you working on now? Are you going to keep writing?

A: The plan, for now, is to focus on this book and see where it leads.

Q: Any last thoughts?

A: Treat your writing like a hobby, and a hobby it will be; treat it like your life's work, your ambition, your dream and your mission, and maybe you'll get somewhere with it. And lastly, I hope all cricket fans will check out *Winds Behind The Willows* because it was written with them in mind.