

**Write What You Know  
It Does Apply to You  
By Vanessa Kier**

There's an old adage in writing: "write what you know." Every time I hear it, I cringe. There's nothing in my life remotely interesting. I get up. I go to work. I come home. I write.

Yawn.

I might as well stop writing, because without an exciting, suspense-filled life, I have no right writing romantic thrillers full of devious, evil villains and heroic men and women who struggle to make the world safe.

Right?

I used to think so. Only...

If you look at the bookshelves, you'll see novels about serial killers, vampires, and time-travel. Ask the authors if they're drawing from their own experience, and I'm sure they'll tell you no.

Not many vampires walking around my town, how about yours?

So then, what's with the "write what you know" thing?

It finally hit me that it's my emotional universe that matters when I'm writing. The way I look at the world as shaped by my upbringing, the books, movies and music that bring me joy, and yes, every one of my life experiences no matter how mundane.

We're all human beings. We share core emotions: joy, sadness, grief, fear, relief, love. Most of all, love. That's an emotion powerful enough to drive our entire genre. My emotions are what I draw on when writing.

My plots and characters may be one hundred percent imagination, but the characters' reactions, their struggle to do the right thing, and most importantly, their emotions all come from me. Because I acknowledge both the light and dark sides of myself, I'm able to build characters on both the right and wrong side of the moral line, even if I've never stepped over that line myself.

I might never have gone undercover to bring a drug lord to justice, but that doesn't mean I can't write the scenario and have my readers cheering on my hero.

Imagination and human emotion. As long as you've got these, you've got the key tools necessary for being a writer.

So, write what you know. Your life is more relevant than you think.