



WITH YOUR MEDIA/STORYTELLING BACKGROUND, WAS IT A NATURAL PROGRESSION FOR YOU TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WRITING CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

When I first started writing children's stories eight years ago, I was looking for a new medium to tell stories and be creative. At the time, I was moving away from larger, more intense productions in TV and film and towards a simpler form I could do myself using my vision, voice and talent.

I gravitated towards children's stories because they felt like the ultimate medium to me combining beautiful imagery, thoughtful messaging and a direct connection to the audience. It's the greatest privilege in the world to be able to bring smiles to children's faces through something you've created.

The transition was fairly seamless, yet there was still a learning curve. Although I am versed in media and storytelling from years of working in it, I still needed to learn the specifics of the children's book industry, like format, audience and visuals. I also needed to figure out what my unique style was as a new children's book author and illustrator.

DID HAVING YOUR CHILDREN SPUR THIS IDEA?

Nothing You Can't Do was inspired by a traumatic event my husband and I experienced with our son, Chet, when he was just a baby. Going through it, made me realize there must be others experiencing these same feelings. I wanted to use my artistry to share the universal themes behind it (empowerment and inclusion) and inspire others.

The process of creating this book, and the hope of connecting with others, was a cathartic, healing experience for me. It was also a way to turn a negative into a positive and a way to create positive messaging for children everywhere, especially Chet.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES BETWEEN THE TYPE OF WRITING YOU HAVE DONE, AND WRITING CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

I have written for all mediums and they are all beautiful in their own way. Some pieces, like articles and publications, can be more factual, driven by the mind and have a one-way audience connection. While others, like writing for TV/film and children's books, can be more fictional, driven by the heart, have an interactive audience experience and use visuals.

My favourite type of writing combines imagery, a great story and a direct connection to the audience, like you see in children's books and TV/film. It's one that engages both hearts and minds. There's no better feeling than seeing your audience react in real time, like during an author visit for Storytime, to something you've created.

HOW HAVE CHILDREN'S BOOKS CHANGED SINCE YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL? WHAT ARE TODAY'S YOUNGSTERS LOOKING FOR IN A BOOK?

Children's stories today focus on characters that are more dynamic and diverse, as well as themes that speak to current issues. Many of my fellow indie authors, as well as major publishers, want to share unique voices through storytelling.

With my background, I tend to gravitate towards female characters and themes of empowerment and inclusion. I think themes like these have grown in popularity since I was a little girl and we are all better because of it.

Today, children are looking for books that speak to the world around them. Just because they are little, doesn't mean they don't want to discover big ideas. The art of children's books is taking these big ideas and finding a way to share them so they're fun and relatable for children. After all, if it isn't fun, they won't want to do it.



THE BACK STORY FOR NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO IS VERY MOVING. ARE YOUR OTHER BOOKS BASED ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, OR JUST TOPICS YOU FEEL ARE OF INTEREST TO YOUNG READERS BASED ON YOUR RESEARCH?

All of my books come from a place of personal experience and inspiration. I typically draw from ideas I come across in my day to day. I have a notebook filled with ideas, and I'm always working on something. Usually the winning idea is the one that sings to me the loudest.

Once I decide on an idea, I find the universal theme in it. I then build the characters and write the story. For me to move forward with something, it has to feel like it will be meaningful to me as well as to others. It's really important to me to feel a connection with my audience through my books.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE ILLUSTRATED ONE BOOK, WILL YOU CONTINUE TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR OWN BOOKS?

Creating Nothing You Can't Do has shown me just how important writing and illustrating is to my overall vision, artistic process and creativity. I love seeing my vision come to life with words and colours. I also love having the ability to refine my work in real time exactly how I want it.

For me, there really is no better feeling. Writing and illustrating this book has been the best creative experience I've had professionally.