

# Eight Questions with Linda J. Williams



In business since 2001, Ms. Linda J. Williams facilitates etiquette workshops for children and young adults, business etiquette workshops and church etiquette seminars. Ms. Williams has published three titles about church etiquette, as well as numerous articles, using her love of writing to coach and advise new writers on their path to publishing. Sitting down with Ms. Williams, I had the privilege of getting to know what got her started on her path in etiquette consulting, to how she branched out into the world of writing.

## How did you become an etiquette consultant?

"My son went to a dinner and later came home telling me about these high school students, how they were behaving at the table — picking their teeth and all kinds of stuff they shouldn't be doing. He's like— mom, you need to give them a class in etiquette. I said I could do that. I did a one-hour basic dining etiquette and I loved it. The students were receptive and I said, you know, I would really like to do this."

## How did you become a writing coach?

"The writing coach piece of it came as a result of my writing my first book. People asked me how did I get started writing a book? They wanted to write a book, but they don't know how. So I just started doing it— and again, it was something that I loved doing, helping to share with people the process of writing a story. So that's kind of how it started."

## How did you turn these into a business?



"That came again as a result of people asking me, and so I started doing workshops. I'm in it to help people. I don't think you should go into business with the idea of 'I want to make a lot of money'. You should go into business with the idea that you have a service that people need, and if its a service that you enjoy doing, someone will pay you for it. But when I looked back on it, both those things were things that I've loved to do all my life."

## How did your mentors help your career?

"It's funny because my mentors were not only people in the industry. My biggest mentors were my two pastors; I believe that they saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. I'm not a confident person by nature, I'm very shy. They were just wise people who were there for me, to encourage me, to support me and give me opportunities to further my business and career. It takes a village."



## What are some of the strengths you use on the job?

"My number one strength is that I'm a connector. I never knew that there was a word for it, but I knew that I always have had a knack for connecting people in all kinds of different ways— and not just connecting people, but connecting myself to people."



## What are the joys?

"I enjoy reading people's stories. I love seeing all the wonderful things they have to share with the world. I do. I put on some classical music. I get a cup of coffee or a cup of tea. I tell my husband I'm reading a manuscript, do not disturb me. I go into my office, I close the door, and I just read. I like teaching my journaling class. I've seen some members grow in their writing skills, and even if they don't write a book, just seeing them grow in their writing skills give me such pleasure. It really does give me joy."

## What are some challenges of your job?

"One of the biggest challenges I have is balancing my writing with helping other people with their writing, because I'm very concerned about making sure that I am there for their needs. I am retired now, so I want to say that I have more time, but I don't. I try to find the time to write for myself. It is a challenge to get people to commit to their writing, because people tend to think that writing is something easy to do. But it takes time. It takes a subject, it takes motivation. If this is really something that you want to do, I'm here to help. But you have to understand, you have to take time."

## What's some wisdom for young writers?

"Don't get discouraged. That's number one, keep going, keep moving forward. Number two: writers read. Read a lot in a lot of different genres. If you really want to be a good writer, you need to read other people's work and practice writing. If you're stuck, put the piece aside maybe for a month or two and try writing something else. Try writing poetry. Try writing something that gets your creative juices flowing in a different direction. **But most of all, write because you believe you have a story inside of you to share with other people.**"