



The Life Detective

Financial reporter, Blogger (LSJ short course 2009)

Lorna on the Life Detective: The Life Detective prefers to remain anonymous because she is a specialist financial journalist and this is her secret writing life. She is proof that it's possible to have a dual life, and that one type of writing does not preclude another.

Too many people assume there is a magic formula to getting published in their dream writing area: 'Can you just...' is how they frame their questions. The short answer is no. There is no 'just'. You can't go from lawyer to *Guardian* feature writer, or financial analyst to Liz Jones columnist in one 'just'. There is a process in between, and the Life Detective understood before she even came on the course that you can't 'just' switch from one type of journalism to another.

She was already putting into motion her alter ego when she came on the course. The financial journalism paid for courses and retraining in personal development field. The next step was writing about this new area, and she was entirely open-minded about how to go about this. Instead of thinking in terms of an either/or scenario, she has found a way of having two journalism selves.

The Life Detective on Lorna: I was a financial journalist for 17 years, harbouring this secret desire to write for women's magazines. When I contacted my favourite one and was very politely knocked back I immediately thought it was because I had no journalism qualifications: a thought that led me to discover Lorna and her classes.

Not only did she teach writing for magazines, but the subjects she covered were exactly what I wanted to write about. By the end of the first morning, she had turned my world upside down, knocking the myths out of my mind and allowing me to re-frame my ideas. She gently reminded me that with a 17-year track record I was already a journalist, just one with a specific expertise.

Lorna said my route to publication would be different to other classmates who would have to get experience and some published work before writing for their dream titles. I simply had to get on with writing and not to discount writing a blog in order to become an expert in the new area I wanted to be known for. And from that moment on my free time and energy has been invested in creating the Life Detective.

On a practical level Lorna was brilliant at explaining the business of freelancing. Lorna's forte is not just passing on the depth of her experience as a prolific freelancer and editor, but also allowing her students across all walks of life and experience to find their own authentic voice. In fact, she is very keen for all of us to write from the heart and the depth of our everyday lives, making every one an instant expert with the confidence to write.