

# Journalist love their jobs. They love people, places and things. Yet I know they love it when you ... H.A.R.O™

Below you'll find some interview questions & answers to ask *Rebekah Lea Phelps*

1. What literary pilgrimages have you gone on?
  - “On purpose” None. However, while traveling to Israel in 2016 I wrote a short Psalm that has not been shared (yet) at Ein Gedi (this is where David hid in caves from Saul). I was quite honored.
2. What is the first book that made you cry?
  - Hard to say (I don't cry easily). These are my “old” favorites:
    1. The Divine Romance, Gene Edwards
    2. Rees Howells Intercessor, Norman Grubb
    3. Seekers of His Face, Cynthia Duggan
3. What is the most unethical practice in the publishing industry?
  - I wish most of the *vanity publishers* were held to a standard and code of ethics
  - *Indy Authors* need to get under good mentors and make sure they are learning and working “their book” like a solid business and with ethics. Not doing things out of “lack of knowledge” let's say. It's the hardest job I've ever undertaken.
4. Does writing energize or exhaust you?
  - Like people, both at times. I get a load of energy then realize I'm exhausted. When I'm “on” with the creative pen in motion I want to keep going but I need to remember to STOP and go to the bathroom, eat and sleep. It's like ART ... you're in the right side of your brain and loose track of time.
5. What are common traps for aspiring writers?
  - Not feeling like they have anything to say, it's not important enough. It's been said. What I'd say to that last statement is: Yeah, but not by YOU.
6. Does a big ego help or hurt writers?
  - Hum ... I don't know. I do know I can only speak for myself. I'd say; Most of us were taught to not brag about ourselves and don't toot your own horn (especially when you're brought up in the south), but I've learned it's a sick cat that won't wag its own tail.
7. What is your writing Kryptonite?
  - Oh boy...I'm still learning the English language. Editing for sure. I'm an awful editor. Improper use of a verb or adjective. Now what's an acronym?
  - My first attempt to “write a book” was in my late 20's. Probably for reasons of the above I wanted to do a children's Christian dictionary. It had a Letter, scripture to match, animal to match, color to match. About half way through my X picked it up, threw it in the trash and said; “Nobody wants to hear from you” – so I've had to push through those “old tapes” also.
8. Have you ever gotten *reader's* block?
  - Absolutely! Don't ask me to name a book.
9. Did you ever consider writing under a pseudonym?
  - No, because of book signings, interviews, etc.

10. Do you try more to be original or to deliver to readers what they want?
  - I'm just being me. I'm writing from my heart and what the Lord has shared with me. What my experiences have brought to the table and hopefully to the hearts and minds of others that I can help.
11. Do you think someone could be a writer if they don't feel emotions strongly?
  - Sure, I think people can do whatever they want to do. Plenty of genre's out there and technical writers. We have emotions, but we don't live by them nor does everyone write from them.
12. What other authors are you friends with, and how do they help you become a better writer?
  - JoAnn Wagner, Margie Warrell, Chance Scoggins, Judith Briles, Amy Collins and many others.
  - I wouldn't say they've helped me become a better writer, but certainly a better person/author and business person in "this industry." Mentors and friends are invaluable.
13. Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build a body of work with connections between each book?
  - I think the Psalm of my Heart will probably stand on its own. However, it is my goal and desire to build a body of work around *I'm an Eagle not a Field Chick*. Next is a children's version, then toddler and an infant block book. So, it's my desire this book become a family book. Currently, I don't see a series for the kids but who knows...I love surprises!
14. If you could tell your younger writing self anything, what would it be?
  - Get the book out of the trash and keep on keeping on. He was a cop and often worked nights, so I could have written then and pretended I lived in a communist country "hiding the book" in the attic. LOL.
15. How did publishing your first book change your process of writing?
  - I learned sooooo much. Often, we learn lessons from bruises and cuts. I learned from working with good editors and frankly bad ones.
16. What was the best money you ever spent as a writer?
  - MENTORS – I went on a Publishing of Sea cruise that Judith Briles and a team of wonderful people put on every year. I said to my husband after the first day; If I leave now...it's been worth it. I've gotten my monies worth. My head was full after 9 days. I came home and put all the info information into an excel sheet.
17. What authors did you dislike at first but grew into?
  - I'm horrible at names but I don't recall one author I could say that about (with what I read).
18. What did you do with your first advance?
  - N/A --- to come 😊
19. What was an early experience where you learned that language had power?
  - Between the ages of 7 and 9. I use to make up plays, dances and skits (and charge for people to come see them – they had to bring their own chair). I realized I had people's attention. It was fun to me.

20. What are the most important magazines for writers to subscribe to?
- Yours 😊
21. What's your favorite under-appreciated novel?
- The Bible
22. How do you balance making demands on the reader with taking care of the reader?
- I'm not making demands (for instance with the workbook in the back) They can dig deeper or not, it's up to them. It's important we all make our own standard and realize we aren't ALL in the same place in life. When they are ready they'll do it.
23. As a writer, what would you choose as your mascot/avatar/spirit animal?
- Oh, definitely the Eagle! Second choice a Lion (oddly my high school mascot was a Lion)
24. What do you owe the real people upon whom you base your characters?
- The Biggest THANK YOU the world has ever seen! Without them I wouldn't have learned the lessons I have learned!
25. How many unpublished and half-finished books do you have?
- One about "How to Start and Run a Concierge Business" (which I began in 2005 and was going to franchise my Concierge business)
  - Funny short children's book on emotions. Short, sweet and to the point.
  - A few other "Titles" swirling in my head with a few notes here and over yonder...
26. What does literary success look like to you?
- Making a difference in someone's life.
27. What's the best way to market your books?
- The short answer; "Get out and Just do It" You aren't going to market anything thinking about it or constant learning without implementation. Be YOU and get to know your readers, interact with them.
  - I think it depends on the genre, target market (which should be refined to what kind of toothbrush someone uses (not really but VERY detailed and specific) and perhaps age of target.
28. What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?
- I do most things "backwards" – I taught myself to swim by jumping in a pool, I taught myself to ride a bike by getting on one, every job I ever had I jumped in and "did it." Figured it out, made up policies, procedures and organization that didn't exist before I arrived. Before I wrote the Psalm of my Heart I studied (Biblical studies/my Bible – The Strong's Concordance) for over 10 years. Specifically, about "relationship" with The Lord and identity/authority issues as a believer. Prior to writing I'm an Eagle not a Field Chick (I jumped in "that pool"). The Lord gave it to me. So, I took notes on a sticky pad (usually while in the car) for 2 years. It was while writing it that I researched about Eagles and other animals. Their habits, personalities and character qualities.
29. Do you view writing as a kind of spiritual practice?

- Yes and No. A creative outlet. You loose track of time. I feel “wisdom well” and come forth.
30. What’s the most difficult thing about writing characters from the opposite sex?
- I don’t feel this applies to me...yet.
31. How long were you a part-time writer before you became a full-time one?
- I started writing after I started my concierge business (2004-5) My husband was (is) such an encourager. He loved reading my blogs, everything I wrote for the business -- from contracts, to policies/procedures, employee manual and training information, brochures, website, etc.
32. How many hours a day do you write?
- Not enough. Nough said.
33. What period of your life do you find you write about most often? (child, teenager, young adult)
- I’m an Eagle, not a Field Chick includes that entire range. I’d say “The Psalms” I wrote would be from adult age, child’s heart.
34. What did you edit *out* of this book?”
- Nothing out of the Psalm
  - I have lots of unused “sticky notes for I’m an Eagle not a Field Chick.
35. Have you read anything that made you think differently about fiction?
- I don’t care for fiction. I watch it (some) but have never been a romance reader, mysteries, strong dislike for horror. Life presents enough of that on the news.
36. What are the ethics of writing about historical figures?
- Have no idea. I’d be surprised if I ever write under that genre. Well, I LOVE books like “*131 Christians Everyone Should Know*” so I might use their lives as an example to make a point at some point.
37. How do you select the names of your characters?
- By their character and personalities.
38. If you didn’t write, what would you do for work?
- Don’t think this is contingent on if I write or not. My dreams are much bigger than my wallet. My ultimate dream is to own a piece of land (preferably in Virginia), with a variety of animals and have a “barndominium” (for a caretaker to stay in) and invite counselors from all over to bring their patients (those with PTSD, former missing children or trafficked adults, etc.) to interact with the animals while talking. I have a name for the “project.”
  - I have a vision to bring more interest to Parks (national as well as small local/neighborhood parks) that has to do with pets also.
  - Would LOVE to work with a builder that is developing a neighborhood to accommodate seniors (yes, I have a vision and a name).
  - It would be so much fun to me (since I seem to have a “sixth sense” about liars and trouble makers) to develop a business on “Undercover Employees” I think it would save owners and managers a LOT of years of turnover and heartbreak. If someone could go in and help them figure out WHO and WHAT the problem is. I’m GREAT at doing this.
  - Would LOVE to own “safe homes” (yes, have a vision) – want me to go on?

- A few “witty invention” ideas.
    1. For pregnant women
    2. Want the *Stones of Remembrance* (I’m an Eagle not a Field Chick) to by stepping stones for gardens and sell them in garden shops.
39. Do you read your book reviews? How do you deal with bad or good ones?
- Absolutely, as well as thank the person.
  - Haven’t received any bad reviews yet, but I’d thank them also. When people buy my book at book signings I always say; please take the time to go online and give me an “honest review” – that means bad, good or indifferent. THEIR thoughts. Honestly, I think it’s good to have someone review books/products that aren’t raving. Not everyone is going to like something. It seems more legitimate to have a mix. Bad reviews can also help you refine your work (or business). I used to say it was my clients that helped me formed my policies and procedures. A “bad” experience should make you look up and evaluate yourself, your company, a review ... It should help make you better or see from their perspective.
40. Do you hide any secrets in your books that only a few people will find?
- I was going to say no, BUT ... yes, I think people that have known me a LONG time (that have ears to hear or eyes to see) will see the parallels.
41. What was your hardest scene to write?
- The first chapter ... how do I begin this “chicks” life. Also keeping “the parable” short vs. story telling and elaborating (which some people think I should have done). It’s not a novel or even a “story book” it’s a parable. Look how short Jesus’s parables are yet packed full of deep, meaningful insight and wisdom or warnings.
42. Do you Google yourself?
- No but I just did. I came up at the top of the list out of about 219,000 results
43. What one thing would you give up to become a better writer?
- A Need for Approval – Comments or Feedback. Ugh, all that? Um, I’m not sure. My identity isn’t in someone else’s hands. It’s in Christ and Christ alone.
  - I must give up my laziness in continuing to write. Specifically blogging.
  - Social media (throughout the day vs. posting & checking a.m. &/or p.m.)
44. What are your favorite literary journals?
- Okay, don’t throw stones at me. I’m sure this is a surprise answer. I don’t read them.
45. What is your favorite childhood book?
- Kind of ironic but *The Little Red Hen*. I read that book to a group of adults in church years ago as a lesson on being a servant. A giver vs. a taker. Also LOVED Dr. Seuss– I wanted to write, and draw like him. I love his biography and have a “weird” connection with it.
46. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?
- Centering, Focus and putting it down to do practical things like EAT, sleep and go to the bathroom.
47. Does your family support your career as a writer?
- My husband George is the biggest blessing of my life here on earth. Absolutely. With his heart, confession, time, money and encouragement which is priceless.

48. If you had to do something differently as a child or teenager to become a better writer as an adult, what would you do?

- Continue journaling. I used a “diary” My mother got ahold of it and distorted some of my writings. I never journaled again as a youth or young adult.
- Write down “wisdom” or insight that came out of my mouth or to mind.
- Write down my dreams
- Upon noticing various “things” I gained lessons from them. Again, write them down. IE: Spider web.

49. How long on average does it take you to write a book?

- Psalm of My Heart (I originally called it Psalm 151) took me a few hours in between tear breaks.
- I’m an Eagle not a Field Chick was 2 years of taking notes and 9 months of writing.

50. Do you believe in writer’s block? (DO NOT ask whether they’ve had writer’s block).

- Sure, absolutely. Whether (or how) one struggles or not would vary by person. I’d walk away or go for a drive. Love picking up something to sketch or paint. Changing “create spaces” (no pun intended) is helpful to me.

Credits for these question ideas go to [John Matthew Fox](#) who wrote a blog topic on 50 Good Questions to Ask an Author

