



Worldbuilding:

CREATE YOUR LIFE &
CLAIM YOUR CROWN

Once upon a time, not so long ago...

I had a complete hysterectomy at the age of forty-three. I had suffered from Stage IV endometriosis for fifteen plus years and had already been under the knife three times prior for the disease but, when the time came for the surgery, I jumped on that operating table like honey badger jumps on a cobra.

The procedure went swimmingly and I was immediately tossed into menopause. Oh, the joys... 700 Kelvin hot flashes, hair loss and crying hysterically to 2Pac's Picture Me Rollin'.

I hadn't anticipated the changes that would arise in my life. At all. I just figured I would burn all my feminine hygiene products in a raging bonfire under the full moon in Libra and dance my way through life forever after. Little did I know I would truly struggle to figure out this new me, for hadn't I just gone from Maiden to Crone in an hour and twenty minutes?

Oh, how I floundered. I had no idea what I wanted in my life anymore. I would ask myself, "What would bring me joy in this moment" or "what do I want" and I had no idea how to answer those questions. The world I had built felt like it was crumbling around me. And... trying to settle myself into a quiet spot for long enough to answer those queries was like trying to nail JELL-O to a tree.

Fortunately, a few months later I was on a particularly profound coaching call with my peeps at [Good Vibe Coach Academy](#) wherein I was helped to realize that I hadn't fully grieved the loss of my lovely organs or the change of life that came with that. To boot, not only had I not fully grieved, I'd also been trying with all my might to get back to "normal."

Here's the thing... I was never going to be who I was before that surgery. (Hell, I'm not the same person I was at breakfast this morn.) My essential self was intact, but the person I was – that girl who bled with the cycles of the moon - was gone. And, of course, I had that dogged belief that I was now Crone and I should allow a silver streak to grow through my hair like a buckskin mare. I was wrong. According to the [Goddess known as Jacqui](#), there's a stage between Maiden and Crone that I didn't even know about and she is called Queen and through her I get to share my wisdom and RULE MY WORLD.

"Hallelujah! Holy shit! Where's..." my crown? I decided right then and there that it was time to don my diadem and build the world in which I would rule, so I used a little writing tool called Worldbuilding and the process was pure magic. Welcome to the savage geekery of my essential self.

Menfolk, have I lost you? Hang on to your trousers. Even though this involves estrogen, or its lack thereof, this still applies to you. Read on...

What is Worldbuilding?

A writer of science fiction and fantasy has to know all of the details of their fictional world down to the gnat's arse. Literally. They need to consider what type of currency is used, what the predominant religions are, the topography, the language folks are speaking and who the major and minor characters are, as well as their quirks, flaws, goals, motivations and conflicts. They have to define the physics, the cosmology, the culture, the form/s of government. And... they have to know who "reigns" and who the subjects are. There are a million little things for the author to consider, in fact, the better they know their world, the easier they can navigate their characters within it. They may not give the reader every single detail in the finished novel that isn't crucial to the story but, trust me, any author worth their salt knows their world like the back of their carpal-tunneled hand.

As the author of your own life things aren't much different. If you're aware of my work you know that I believe there is never a moment in time when we're not telling story and that even our thoughts are a microcosm of story. The foundation of your world is built on the stories you tell. Most of you know your world - you know your main players, your geography, your culture - really, you do know most of it. But your world isn't set in stone and you're creating it moment by moment. Hysterectomies, marriage, divorce, little ones, mid-life crises, death, illness - all of these can muck with the fabric of your world and I can't think of a single soul on earth who isn't constantly tweaking, repairing or wholly rebuilding. The beauty is that you can do this at any time - NAY, I would say it's crucial to at least consider the world you've built for yourself. Often.



It's a privilege that we humans get to define and build our worlds, but in the midst of major life changes we often don't even know where to start or what it is we want our world to look like. We exist, going through the motions and our world feels flat, monotone, 2-D. I've found that spending some time with this process can help you to gain clarity, figure out what's key for you, where you need tweaking and, in some cases, where you need rebuilding altogether.

How it Works:

First of all, have fun with this process. Buy a yummy journal or grab an old cherished notebook, fix yourself a cup of Chai and sprinkle it with a dash of cayenne, pick up your favorite writing implement and allow yourself to journal on these different areas of your world. Consider the areas where you're fully in love with your world and the things you'd love to adjust. Take a careful look at the areas where there's not much going on and ask yourself, "is that okay with me?" Fully immerse yourself in contemplating your world.

To get an even bigger jolt for your proverbial "jot" you can do this process for your past, present and future worlds. (Extra credit goes to those who know which fictional world the "jot" comes from. Hint: He's one of the kings of Worldbuilding.) If it would feel empowering to know where you've been, what type of world you were living in in the past, write out what your world looked like in each of these areas in your past. You can use separate notebooks for past, present and future. When you write out your future world, write about how you want your future world to look in each area as if it's already happening. In other words, for you Deliberate Creators, script your future in each area.



Example:

Time (Past): When I was younger there seemed to be a plethora of time. When I was really young, I didn't think much about time aside from bedtime and playtime. Often my perception of time was of waiting for Christmas or my birthday or Easter. Time was marked by big holidays that included candy of some sort. Time was sloooooowww... And it felt like it took forever for those sweet moments to come.

Time (Present): My sense of time has developed in really powerful ways and, frankly, in some pretty disempowering ways. Like Albert Einstein, I believe that time is an illusion. Einstein said that the "psychological origin of the concept of time... is undoubtedly associated with the fact of 'calling to mind,' as well as with the differentiation between sense experiences and the recollection of these." And, to boot, Einstein thought that, "The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once." Further, he said, "...for us physicists believe the separation between past, present and future is only an illusion, although a convincing one." Bear with me here, lest you think I'm nuts. My theory is that because time is an illusion we can alter our past, present and future based on the stories we tell. Mix in deliberate creation too - if our thoughts are mini-stories informing our lives (if thoughts become things, as they say) - then we can simply change our stories. THAT, for me, is what makes time an illusion (or makes time malleable) because we can change the past, present and future just based on the stories we tell about them. We can "call to mind" something different. So... even with all of that informing my life, I still suffer from the delusion that there's never enough time. I just celebrated the summer solstice yesterday and tomorrow is the winter solstice, for example. Time is flying the older I get. I constantly feel overwhelmed by all there is for me to do and I believe that I won't have time to get it all done.

Time (Future): I have more than enough time in my life. I have large spans of time to spend in reflection and introspection and yet everything I need to do gets done without causing me undue stress. I celebrate each cycle of the new moon and full moon and time is spacious. Regardless of the amount of work I have to do all I have to do is focus on one thing and time expands spaciously in front of me.

Here we go! Scoop up your writing tools and play.

Note: Keep in mind, I'm allowing myself some liberties in the context and definitions of each of these words.

Physics:

What are the physics of your world? Do you believe only in "real-world" physics such as the law of gravity or are you open to some quantum physics principles that may still be up for debate among scientists? Or are you just a flat-out believer of magic in your world? What does magic look like to you and how do you define it for yourself? I've watched Martha Beck bend a thick spoon that couldn't be bent with physical force as if she were slicing through warm butter and I've done it myself. Magic, in my world, is very real. But that's just me. What do you believe about your world? There are no right or wrong answers, just how you want to define the physics of your world.

Cosmology:

What is the cosmology of your world? Do you espouse creation or evolution? Do you believe in one Universe or a Multi-verse? Are we alone here in the Universe or are there other beings or other forms of consciousness out there? Do you believe in global warming? Do you believe that Earth is alive and conscious? Are you a Big Bang-er or was your world created in seven days?

History:

What is the history of your world? What past stories do you cling to? What are the myths or fables you have learned the most from? Is your personal history empowering or knock-you-to-your-knees agonizing? Do you believe if we don't learn from our past history that we're doomed to repeat it? Are you stuck in the past and still wearing banana clips or do you continually long to be the captain of your high school football team just one more time?

Religion & Spirituality:

What is the predominant religion in your world? Forget about the zillions of religions out there that other zillions of people practice. This is your world. What is your religion? Or define your religion, if you're Catholic, for example, what does that mean to you? Or... do you consider yourself spiritual but not religious? Is your religion being out in nature? (My Grandpa's was, he often said his church was on the mountaintop.) Do you believe in a higher power? What do you call that higher power? What do you believe happens when we die? What are the basic tenets of your religion, the "commandments", if you will? Or does your religion not believe in commanding anything? Do you have any daily or weekly practices that help you feel connected to what you believe?

Technology:

Is your smartphone an extension of your hand (AKA –you're a self-professed Borg) or do you take technology breaks? Do you own every gadget ever invented or have you not checked your voicemail since those beautiful sixties? Is technology a form of connection or disconnection for you? When you log on to Facebook are you instantly lost in a black hole? How does that feel? Do you find yourself feeling happy, angry, sad, what?

Time:

What role does time play in your world? Is time an illusion, is there never enough time or do you have scads of time to do whatever you please? Do you believe multi-tasking is possible? What holidays do you celebrate? Do you perform ritual around the phases of the moon or does your world revolve around an 8 to 5 with weekends off for good behavior? Does time make you feel anxious or spacious?

Government:

Who rules your world? Are you ruling it or do you still take five calls from your mum each day. Or perhaps it's your partner or your kids. (Hey, I've seen a lot of kids ruling the roost in my time.) And... consider what form of government you live in – is it a democracy, a dictatorship, a puppet state or an aristocracy? How do you feel about the politics where you live? Do you like to be involved or do you avoid it like the plague?

Agriculture:

Are you a farm to table or box to pot kind of person? Do you enjoy growing your own food (or knowing where your food is grown?) Are you a vegetarian, a carnivore, or do you just consume sunlight? Do you eat to comfort yourself or do you eat to sustain your energy? Are you into organic, non-GMO, grass-fed, gluten-free fare or do you continually have a hankering for Hamburger Helper Cheeseburger Macaroni? As with all of these areas, there's no right or wrong answer, just what's true for you in how your world is built or will be built for future.

Geography:

What is the geography of your world? Where do you live or where would you live if you could live anywhere? Do you feel most at home near the ocean or in a cabin in the mountains? Do you prefer a concrete jungle with loads of shopping or the Amazon jungle where you won't glimpse another soul for a fortnight? What is your actual home like? Does it envelope and cocoon you as you walk through the door or do you feel like a fish out of water, flopping around and looking for a safe place to land? Do you abide with clutter or is your space spic and span?

Culture:

For the purpose of this exercise we'll use the term culture to mean the cultivation of the mind or the soul. What is the culture of your world? What does culture mean to you? How do you engage in culture? What books do you read? What art adorns your walls? Do you enjoy the opera or Broadway? Do you enjoy a specific type of dance? What particular culture did you come from and do you still honor that culture? What do you long to create for the betterment of our collective culture?

Currency:

How much currency do you have in your world? Are you rolling in dough, rolling up your dollars to make your wallet look thicker or have you not seen a dollar since the sixties, but you have plenty of plastic? What are your beliefs around money? Do you believe that money is simply energy exchange or do you believe that money is the root of evil and all rich folks are a**holes? Do you believe there is a finite amount of money in the world or an infinite amount – meaning when someone else makes some, does that leave enough for you? Explore your beliefs about money in your world and how much you have and how much you would like to have.



Currency: Extra Worldbuilding Credit

I've often dreamed about making five million dollars a year and lolling on a beach in the French Riviera working on my novels. So I set myself the task of making up a budget which included everything I could possibly think of that I desired. We're talking a main house and a getaway cottage, quarterly vacations, an RV with which to escape and bask in the sun by lakes around the U.S. I racked my brain for days to ensure that I didn't leave a single thing out. Mind you, I have no desire to own a home with 12 bedrooms and 600 bathrooms. It's just not my style. I want to leave as small a footprint as is possible. I also have no desire for a different car than the one I currently drive. I love my little VW Beetle. It suits me. So... while I was dreaming big, I was also taking into consideration my essential self and true desires. I included things I care about – places in nature, money to donate to causes I believe in, a housekeeper to clean my 2.5 baths. You name it and I included it if it meant something to me. Remember how I said above that I dreamed of making five million dollars a year? Well after completing my budget and adding up my yearly expenses for my "dream life" I was utterly floored to discover that my "wishes" only came to \$432,000 per year. And... actually, after things were paid off (like my mini RV or my car) it would be even less. What in the world would I do with \$5 Mil a year? Seriously. I'm already donating a bunch, I have everything I want... What an eye opener that budget was for me. Not to mention that it felt much more doable in my mind.

Characters:

Who are the main characters in your world? Are they family members? A spouse or partner? Your kids? Friends? What are your relationships with these characters like? Are they straight out of a fairy tale or would they give Stephen King a run for his money? Are you still looking for your main characters? Does your world have soul mates and, if so, have you found yours? Describe your main characters – what are their quirks and flaws, what do you love about them? What are their trademark moves?

Who are the supporting characters in your world? What kind of relationship do you have with these supporting characters? Do you make time for your supporting characters or did you see them the last time you saw a dollar bill in the sixties? How much time and energy do you invest in the characters of your world?

Language:

For the purpose of this exercise we're going to include self-talk in our thoughts around language. So... questions here aren't just how many languages do you speak and what to you use predominantly, but also how do you engage in language with yourself. Is your inner critic mean as hell or sweet as pie? Are you constantly belittling yourself, causing you to feel like you're not good enough, pretty enough, thin enough – any of those enough-isms that make you feel like crap? Personally, my own Inner Critic is one mean SOB. I work hard to speak kindly and compassionately to myself and to others.

There are loads and loads of details and nitty-gritty you can get to in your World-building, depending on how deep you want to go: economics, architecture, fashion, entertainment, healthcare, education, legal system, gender definition, child rearing, climate, etc... Play with this. Have fun with it. Consider the areas you want to build up and where you might want to rent a wrecking ball. See what comes up for you and revisit this exercise every so often to ponder the world you're building.

With love & grand visions of your world,
Melanie Bates

You can find me drinking Black Pearl Oolong and hanging out here:



I'd so love to hear from you!
Share your thoughts, wax poetic,
spill the beans, tell me a story, inquire
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About Melanie:



I'm a Book Shaman, a Life Coach and, above all, a Writer (with a dash of nomad and nondescript heathen tossed in for good measure.) I began my writing career at the age of seven when I penned my first brilliant short story about witches with carbuncles. As a teenager my writing leaned toward the morose when I attempted to write my vast memoir at the age of fourteen. Finally, at seventeen, with my towering experience in regards to the matters of love, I wrote a few pages of a romance novel. I'm currently working on a young adult fantasy trilogy and am enrolled in an MFA in Creative Writing/Writing Popular Fiction.

My 10,000 hours (of Malcolm Gladwell fame) in "applying ass to chair", obtaining a Bachelor's in English/Creative Writing and devouring thousands of books, spawned my Book Shaman practice where I have helped New York Times bestselling authors to "transmute fuzzy thoughts into language people can understand." As a content editor I have used my experience to bring structure and form to some really amazing books that line the shelves of your local bookstores. I bring accountability, partnership and process to my writers, which allows them to face the blank page and actually pen their brilliant work.

I also get a super-charged kick each day out of coaching visionaries and solopreneurs who are ready to set out on their hero's journeys, but can't quite find their way. Together we map brilliant paths toward their futures, set and hold bold intentions and slay the dragons that are blocking them from their life purpose. Once they arrive at their destinations we begin building the foundations of their empires.

I've moved over thirty times, hence the nomadic nature, but for now I reside in the Wild, Wild West with the loves of my life: my boyfriend and three pups - So-Kr8z, Sancho & Chloé. To some this urge to move might seem exciting, however, there have been times I've ended up in the deepest bowels of our great Mother Earth. For example, I spent a year living in Rawlins, Wyoming where I was blown back and forth across the road and where I ran home from school every day on the lookout for dark vans that kidnapped children. I once peed my pants while frantically searching for my latchkey.

