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**Writing Made Them Rich #4: Paulo Coelho**

**By Michael Southon**

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Paulo Coelho was born on August 24th 1947 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

At age 17 he announced his intention to be a writer. It was a decision bitterly opposed by his parents, partly because Brazil at that time was under a military junta that persecuted writers and intellectuals.

Coelho's rebellious behaviour led his parents to have him confined to a mental hospital in Rio de Janeiro where he received shock treatment. He escaped – and was returned – three times.

With the arrival of the 1960's Coelho threw himself energetically into the counterculture of drugs and rock-and-roll.

In his 20's he fulfilled his ambition to be a writer and worked as a playwright, a theatre director, a journalist, and a song-writer for Brazilian pop music stars such as Elis Regina and Raul Seixas.

In 1974, says Coelho "my life collapsed".

That year he was arrested three times, the first time as an innocent bystander at a bank robbery, the second time for speaking out against the establishment at a pop concert. After being released by the police he was arrested a third time by paramilitaries who tortured him for a week.

In the late 1970's his life was back on track again and he became artistic director for CBS in Brazil.

But in 1979 he was suddenly sacked without explanation and he spent the next 2 years knocking on doors trying to get back into the music industry.

In 1981 he decided to try his luck in Europe and there met a member of an obscure Catholic Sect that studies the language of symbols: RAM or Regnus Agnus Mundi. He progressed within the sect and

eventually became a Magus.

In 1986, on instructions from his mentor within RAM, Coelho undertook the pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostella in Spain.

The following year he published *The Pilgrimage*, an account of his experiences on the 'Road of Santiago'.

In 1988 he wrote the book that would make him an international celebrity, *The Alchemist*, a story about following one's destiny and being open to the universe of signs and symbols.

*The Alchemist* became an instant best-seller and has since sold over 11 million copies worldwide.

Coelho's eight novels have sold over 37 million copies in 56 languages and have been published in 140 countries.

In 1998 the French magazine 'Lire' listed Coelho as the second best-selling author worldwide.

Paulo Coelho has won over 15 international awards for his writing including the prized French award, the Insignia of Arts and Letters (1996). Critics have praised his writing for its "symbolic language that does not speak to our brains, but to our hearts".

In 1998 Paulo Coelho was received by the Pope in the Vatican.

He has been appointed to the United Nations as Special Advisor for Spiritual Convergences and International Dialogues.

Coelho's view on happiness: "The most mediocre thing in the world. I'd rather go by the idea of joy."

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Michael Southon has been writing for the Internet for over 3 years. He has shown hundreds of webmasters how to use this simple technique to get massive free publicity and dramatically increase traffic and sales. [Click here to find out more:](#)

## **Be Inspired to Create a More Humanistic Presence on the Internet**

**By Jesse S. Somer**

### **Be Inspired to Create a More Humanistic Presence on the Internet by Jesse S. Somer**

Being a writer, when I was asked to do some research into what makes a good website, of course I straightaway went to check out all of my favorite authors. After sifting through a few standard sites I

remembered to look at one of my all time respected writers—Paulo Coelho. Judging by how many books he has sold he is obviously a lot of people's favorite, and his website is exactly what you'd want to keep the fans happy.

If any of you are familiar with Coelho's work you will know how prolific he has become all over the world. People love the simplicity of his stories about the spiritual quests of all people and the idea that the magical happens in everybody's lives, even the so-called 'ordinary, normal' person. He to me comes across as a perfect example of the power of human connection, his books having affected millions across all national boundaries. As an Internet writer, to me he symbolizes the possibilities lying in the future of the Web. Like a good book, the Internet too can cross all imagined ideas of separation bringing people from all walks of life together in the context of positive thought and action.

Coelho's website's homepage starts off with a simple black screen, and a large photo of the man smiling—a very humanistic approach to this new medium. It then has many different sections as well as links to relevant sites, even his own web log (on-line journal) entitled, "Warrior of the Light Online". I think I could spend innumerable hours reading over his personal thoughts and pieces of information he has integrated from elsewhere. Having this added website of an on-line diary gives the site even more humanistic qualities, as any person can truly connect with Coelho's innermost feelings and thoughts.

The sections on the main site are separated into categories like: Biography, Paulo Coelho Institute, Photo Gallery, Road to Santiago, Agenda, Books, Editions, Free downloads, Meditation, TV on-line (videos), Warrior of Light, To journalists, FAQ, Message for the author, and Recommend this site. We are talking about a very extensive and well thought out site. Any type of individual or business, especially writers, could learn a lot from this example.

Just to touch on a few aspects of the site's categories I'll focus on the one's I had a good look at. The biography was excellent, an extremely in-depth look at Coelho's life from childhood until present day. No holes barred, he's not ashamed to tell of all his low points as well as the usual list of one's achievements. It is very honest, he tells of how his parents institutionalized him several times thinking he was crazy, as well as stories of being tortured as a political prisoner and of his 'dark' experiences with drugs and black magic. This humanistic perspective gives the site a much more personal feel as well as eliciting reactions in readers, much more powerful than a bland website that solely focuses on a writer's books and how to purchase them.

The photo gallery is another dimension I have not witnessed on many other sites. He again gives vision to his whole life with photos included from areas entitled, Childhood, Transition, The crazy years, 2000/2001, 2002, and Today. You see, this website isn't just a shop front or a facade for a business. It gives the individual an opportunity to share his identity with the whole world, a courageous act only taken by people who aren't afraid to put themselves on the line, sharing their spirits with all of

humanity. This is the key to why the website is so powerful, one needs to take risks to achieve success in life.

I could write extensively on the other categories of the site but I think you could just go and check them out yourself. Me telling you what is a good website isn't going to teach you much, you've got to

experience things for yourself to truly gain the knowledge you are looking for. Maybe you'll be so inspired, one day it'll be your website I'm writing about!

Jesse S. SomerM6.Net<http://www.m6.net>Jesse S. Somer is a human who wants to help uncover the underlying unifying power that lies in the future of the Internet.

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