

Alice Mattison Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Sometimes, Character, Book, Differences, Littles,
Way, White, Imagination, Editors, Stories, Years, Style, Upset, Long, Two,
Children, Order*

I think people feel for a long time that they ought to know how to write a novel in two drafts.

~Alice Mattison

Whoever would write books? It's suffering as well as greatly satisfying. And certainly there's suffering in the sense that you don't know for a long time how to do it.

~Alice Mattison

We still have so many cultures in which people are imprisoned and whipped and killed for writing what they think.

~Alice Mattison

In many cultures, women are sometimes literally kept from learning to read or from going to school.

~Alice Mattison

There's the belief that we can't be smart enough to write. And certainly censorship of women, too.

~Alice Mattison

You have to write fiction that mirrors the actual world, which has people of all sorts in it.

~Alice Mattison

I heard a white writer say, 'Oh, I'd never put black people in my writing, I'm afraid I would offend someone by doing it wrong.' I can't bear that!

~Alice Mattison

There is a lot of censorship about writing that's exerted from all directions, from families or governments and society, even the fear of being offensive in some way.

~Alice Mattison

Little children are all writers.

~Alice Mattison

I love it when people can help me with my work, so I do show it.

~Alice Mattison

I get to a certain point, and I think in a novel it's about the third draft, when I want other eyes on it.

~Alice Mattison

Censorship is all around us, I don't think it's innate.

~Alice Mattison

Truly things are better in general now, in America, than in the past.

~Alice Mattison

I don't have the courage not to write all the time.

~Alice Mattison

I think you have to remember that writing is hard; my first editor used to say that to me.

~Alice Mattison

The main thing is to explain to yourself that everybody suffers.

~Alice Mattison

There are so many different ways, most of them helpful and legal, to get yourself into a state of mind where writing is possible. It's going to be different for each person.

~Alice Mattison

I don't really like to tell people to get out drugs.

~Alice Mattison

I find that I get very excited about what my students are up to and that I get to be the hurdle they need to jump over.

~Alice Mattison

Teaching is very important to me, and it has become more important as I get older.

~Alice Mattison

I just like doing it, I like writing.

~Alice Mattison

It's a scary thing for fiction writers, when you're always writing from the point of view both as and for someone who is different.

~Alice Mattison

The making of fiction takes literally what is suggested by our imagination.

~Alice Mattison

Being part of a community of writers is huge. I really think that's why people go to MFA programs.

~Alice Mattison

Writers sometimes are paid a great deal of money, but much more frequently they're not paid or are paid only a little bit.

~Alice Mattison

Inevitably we start by thinking that if our work is any good, we'll get money. It's as we would if you started up a business or if you work in another profession.

~Alice Mattison

It's hard to say which of us is luckier, the ones who go through long periods when they can't write or the ones who can write pretty easily.

~Alice Mattison

Maybe we're stuck with who we are.

~Alice Mattison

Certainly children are being encouraged far more than they were seventy-five years ago and are more accepted as they are.

~Alice Mattison

Somehow we have to detach from feeling as though money is a quick and easy standard by which we can gauge how well we're doing.

~Alice Mattison

I'm very secretive. I'll write a whole novel and revise it, which might take me two years or more, and the people I know best don't know what I'm writing about.

~Alice Mattison

I love to read nonfiction and memoir, but I'm mostly interested in the piece of writing more than the person.

~Alice Mattison

There seems to be a tremendous desire among many people now to know authors and how they work, to know what's autobiographical and what isn't.

~Alice Mattison

You can't tell a writer they should just be more confident.

~Alice Mattison

Telling someone to be confident in the abstract is not going to make it easier for the unconfident writer to actually get herself or himself to the point of being able to put in the upsetting stuff.

~Alice Mattison

Sometimes I write well when I'm very upset.

~Alice Mattison

I think a day in your life on which nothing bad happens may be a wonderful day, but it probably isn't going to be the basis of a story.

~Alice Mattison

We have to give our poor, innocent, and undeserving-of-our-badness characters trouble in order to make them characters in a story.

~Alice Mattison

I think that inevitably, the trouble our characters go through is a kind of metaphor for what's happening in ourselves.

~Alice Mattison

When an editor first explained to me the difference between direct and indirect writing, I just thought it was a stylistic choice.

~Alice Mattison

We're always inventing, even if we're making someone who's fairly close to ourselves.

~Alice Mattison

I actually think it's sometimes easier for the control freaks to let loose.

~Alice Mattison

Sometimes it's interesting to see what people who have too much control need to do to write freely.

~Alice Mattison

Anyone with an imagination can write about the day-to-day experiences of someone he or she is not.

~Alice Mattison

I don't think a white person can write accurately and convincingly about what black people experience of oppression.

~Alice Mattison

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