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Credo: Paulo Coelho, writer, 60

By Adam Jacques
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I believe...

Every time I want to start a book, I must wait for a feather to appear. It goes back to my first book; I was not convinced I should start writing so I said to myself: "If God gives me an omen, I will start writing"; at that very moment, he drove a feather through the open window of a shop.

I spend too much time on the internet, browsing. I need no more than one hour a day to sort out everything I need, but I spend more like three hours. I should go to a monastery and spend three months there to get rid of this addiction.

I could not cope without crackers. I look forward to when I can lie down at night and eat crackers spread with some butter. I love the taste, the texture and the noise, which drives my wife crazy.

It's important to apologise for my mistakes. I regret hurting some people in the past, so I made this long list of every person that I'd upset, and I found and called each and every one. It took me two years.

Through concerts, singers have a constant contact with their audience; a writer does not. So while close to 300 million people have read my books, the only reader I know is myself, so I write only for myself.

One of the worst manifestations of evil is individuals who are always sure they are right; those who say "I know the truth".

Every person has an individual connection with the universe through omens. You may call this intuition – and this is an alphabet you have to learn by yourself. You cannot rely on other people's omens.

Before I start doing anything in my day, I need to walk; it's very important for me, it relieves the tension. Normally, I walk a minimum of half an hour, non-stop. Where I walk is not important, but I prefer it if there aren't too many traffic lights.

Life is so much easier than you think it is. You have to have a goal, but at the same time, don't hurry. Enjoy the journey and always respect your own way.

Paulo Coelho's novel 'Brida' (HarperCollins, £14.99) is out now in hardback



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