

HOOPS—We all jump through them.

A series of short story bios.

In this blog I share a little about myself...

page 1 of 4 (#1 HOOPS)

It was November 2021 when I began jotting down the framework for this personal blog. I started with, *I'm Demery Matthews—I wrote a novel and want to publish it. In order to do that, there are just a few thousand hoops I need to clear. Check back with me in a year.*

It's been just over a year and I'm on my way to fulfilling my publishing goal. I owe thanks to my loving family and friends, especially my Aunt Judy who helped with the editing expense. And to be honest, I've worked my butt off! I didn't think I had any butt to work off after the effort involved in completing books 1 & 2 first drafts alongside creating graphics for those books and art for my website ... but I keep finding more butt to work off and thus I continue onward.

My ramblings from a year ago went on to mention **The Wyn Series. Historical Fiction. 860AD. Viking Era. Romance.** I noted that, *there will be sex. Not too much. It's not smut. It's a sophisticated story. It is.* I still stand by these ramblings.

Part 1 of my WHY: After running a residential architecture business for over 25 years, I want to do something different. The first hoop I cleared was coming out of hiding. Very few hermits make bestselling authors. I took a course to integrate concepts around being the right person to get where I'm aimed, setting a path forward, recalibrating as needed, and executing. It's not like I never accomplished goals in my life, I have ... but this *becoming an author* thing was a major shift. So, in addition to the aim-align-execute course, I also found my way to a program for self-publishing. This is all after completing rough drafts for Wyn books 1 & 2 and taking numerous writing classes to find out what I got right and what I got wrong (relative to narrative arc, point-of-view, etc.), and then fine-tuning my writing which it seems I'll be doing for the rest of my life (if all goes well!).

Back in 2021, I decided to call this personal blog 'Hoops'. At that time, I wasn't even sure it would be a blog. *Maybe a YouTube video? A podcast?* Honestly, I was a fish out of water with nothing but possibilities (none of which I knew anything about). There are so many apps out there. So many programs. So much techy lingo. Fear of the unknown is debilitating. But I started. One step and then another. It is how I got as far as I did in architecture, in motherhood, and in life. It is how I'll get far as a writer. I got this. It's a personal blog. **It's about the HOOPS we jump through in life.**

HOOP #1

Today on HOOPS, I tackle the topic of **birth** and the hoops we jump through to get where we are going in life. Those of you who were cut from the womb by a doctor still cleared a hoop. It is just that your head wasn't squashed in the process.

HOOPS—We all jump through them.

A series of short story bios.

page 2 of 4 (#1 HOOPS)

HOOP #1

Birth

(Warning: I'm a bit swearsy today. If you aren't and don't like it ... stop reading.)

I've given birth. 4 TIMES. First, I had to have sex. The number of times I've had sex is not relevant, but I will say it was more than 4 times and more fun than giving birth. Length is relevant. Sperm count—relevant. Ovulation—relevant. What I'm saying, is 'sex' was the hoop. My hoop. Mine and my husband's hoop. We cleared it.

Babies that thrived... That was harder. We lost a few. I won't dwell on the heartache. We felt it. Loss sucks. Not saying more here at this moment would make it seem like I don't understand the intensity of such pain, but I do. It hurts. That pain is real and it takes time to heal emotionally and physically.

The first baby brings the most hoops. Without listing every single hoop, the big ones were: medical coverage, prenatal vitamins, pregnancy clothing, a book titled *What to Expect When You are Expecting*, OBGYN check-ups, a baby shower, lots of gear (like way more than any small human should ever need), diapers (the actual thing they do need), an infant car seat, a plan for time off work, a plan for returning to work, and nerves of steel. That's 12 key hoops to clear.

My own mother's list was slightly different. She mentioned a different book, *Baby and Child Care* by a Dr. Spock. It became one of the bestselling books of the 20th c. There weren't prenatal vitamins back when I was in the womb and my folks didn't have an infant car seat on their list either. They didn't exist. In fact, seatbelts weren't even required back then. Mom was a schoolteacher, and another sign of the times was that she was forced to quit her job once her baby bulge began showing. She did not plan a return to the work force until I was much older.

All this to say, not everyone has the same hoops too clear, but we all have hoops.

Once born, to get the stuff we want in life, there are more hoops. We clear those too. I wanted to become an architect. I graduated from high school and completed a five-year bachelor's degree, gaining my BA in Architecture. I think that is what it was called. I don't even remember. Anyway, I got it. *Check*. (I could also call this blog 'CHECK-BOXES' but that is boring as f*ck. Or is it funny to come out from a mother's box instead of her hoop? I might want to rethink this entire thing.)

You know what hoop I didn't jump through? The one that is required in this country for me to call myself an architect. So I am not one. Not officially. Instead, I consider myself to be a rebel. I like that about myself. And it's a way better title anyway.

HOOPS—We all jump through them.

A series of short story bios.

page 3 of 4 (#1 HOOPS)

For twenty-five years I have been running a business designing residences, pool houses, guest houses, accessory dwelling units, additions to existing houses, remodels, and the like. I have that architectural degree from WSU., where I worked my butt off (it keeps growing back) and graduated (with honors, I like to add). I can, and do, prepare sets of Construction Documents. I get them approved so that my projects have all the official stamps and necessary signoffs from all the required agencies in all the various jurisdictions. I even live with my family in one of my own designs. It is a two-story modern craftsman. I live in it with my husband (the man I clear hoops with) and our 4 sons (the ones who cleared my hoop), and this is all working out swimmingly. BUT, I call myself a designer, not an architect.

I never finished taking all the architectural licensing exams. They cost a small fortune, by the way, and took a sh!t-ton of studying. I also got really busy having babies and had that mushy brain thing going on at the time. Once I determined I didn't need the license to do the residential work I loved, (assuming I hired a licensed structural engineer), I decided to bail on those f*cking exams, save the money, the liability, the hassle, and just forgo the title.

I'm a rebel. Not an architect. And I couldn't give two sh!ts about that. I might give one sh!t, but not two. I've been doing this thing I wanted to do since I was about eight years old, and I watched the Brady Bunch on TV with the curly-headed Mike Brady who was an architect. I thought it sounded like a cool thing to become.

I obsessively studied the floor plans that used to be published in the back of the Sunset Magazine and I got some graph paper. I figured out how to scale my work using each square to represent a square foot and then I started drawing dream homes. I was probably about ten or twelve when I began working in floor-plan-view. Before that, as an eight-year old child, I liked to draw in section-view. I think that was probably due to the fact I had a dollhouse and the vertical cut through the house just made sense to me. Anyway, I wanted to design homes when I grew up, so I cleared the necessary hoops to do so.

Now, half a century into my life, I'm ready for a major change. I am in the process of making that change. I cleared a bunch of hoops during those first fifty years and got where I wanted to be. Swam around. Came up for air. Dove deep. Floated a bit. Did some summersaults. I discovered more hoops, so I swam through them, and now I'm looking at the next fifty years. I've decided to swim in a different pool for the second half of my life expectancy. It's called the *full-time-writer* pool. The good news is, having written the first two books with the third on hold while I edit and launch what I've got, there is more sh!t to do (and more sh!t after that) than I could ever have dreamed. It is feeling like another half-century may just barely be long enough.

HOOPS—We all jump through them.

A series of short story bios.

page 4 of 4 (#1 HOOPS)

I switched to talking about sh!t. I was swimming in a pool a minute ago and now I'm talking sh!t. No. That is not happening. No sh!tty pools and no sh!tty hoops.

I can work hard. And I *want* to jump into this pool, through the hoops. The hoop I'm currently swan diving through is this one where I must *put myself out there*. It's daunting! I feel extremely vulnerable. I'm diving anyway.

From what I hear, it is up to me to develop a readership, no matter if I self-publish or try the traditional route. I'm learning. There have been many hoops and learning about these hoops was one of the hoops I had to clear. But, I got this. It is only a sh!tty hoop if I keep thinking of it as something I don't want to do. Why wouldn't I want to do it? I can answer that. It's not comfortable. Not yet. But then neither was birth. Sometimes we just have to push.

When I came out of my mom's hoop, I came out butt first with my feet up at my ears and I tore my poor mother. Nine pounds. It was 1971. I'm sorry mom. At least *I* don't remember this pain. Not consciously anyway.

My sons—all 4 of them, were kinder to me than I was to my mom. They were properly aimed and kept their arms and feet inside the compartment until the time came to eject. I don't plan to tell 4 birth stories. That would be boring as f*ck for everyone except me. (That is a strange phrase. *Boring as f*ck*. I don't think f*ck means what I thought it meant.)

Part 2 of my WHY: The better question to ask is NOT *why I don't want to do this*, but rather: **Why do I want to do it?** I can answer that too and it is more than just wanting a change in my life. It turns out I have stories to share. If, in order to share them I need to be vulnerable, then here I go.

HOOPS—we all jump through them.

This was the first installment of “HOOPS—We all jump through them.” Thank you for taking the time to read.