



**Michael Sussman** is the author of two picture books: *Otto Grows Down*, illustrated by Scott Magoon, and *Duckworth, the Difficult Child*—recently published by Simon & Schuster, with illustrations by Júlia Sardà of Barcelona.

Michael has also published a YA novel, *Crashing Eden*, and an adult novel, *Incognolio*, a surrealistic psychological thriller and parody of metafiction.

A retired clinical psychologist, he has also published in the field of mental health. *A Curious Calling: Unconscious Motivations for Practicing Psychotherapy* was a main selection for America's largest psychotherapy-related book club. He also edited and contributed to *A Perilous Calling: The Hazards of Psychotherapy Practice*, which was published by Wiley.

**Michael Sussman will be accepting applications for:** writer of fiction.

**1. If you could be in any movie or tv series, what would it be and what character would you play?**

I'd be Gregory Peck in *Roman Holiday*, romancing my favorite actress and person, Audrey Hepburn.

**2. If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be and why?**

Astral projection, enabling me to travel to anywhere in the world, visit other inhabited planets, and explore spiritual realms.

**3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?**

The Shrinking of Treehorn by Florence Parry Heide and Edward Gorey  
Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss  
Imogene's Antlers by David Small  
Du Iz Tak? by Carson Ellis  
Tuesday by David Wiesner

**4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?**

My 2017 novel, a surrealistic psychological thriller, *Incognolio*.

**5. What about mentoring excites you most?**

Sharing what I've learned about writing over the past two decades, and getting caught up in the excitement of creating and refining new stories.

**6. What are your strengths as a mentor?**

My brilliant wit, breathtaking expertise, unsurpassed listening and empathic attunement, and boundless humility.

**7. What is your feedback/critique style like?**

I try to work collaboratively, asking questions and eliciting thoughts and ideas as well as offering my own. I don't shy away from pointing out weaknesses in a manuscript, but always try to do so in a constructive and supportive manner.

**8. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?**

Mentee??? I wanted a *manatee*. Seriously, folks, I'm just looking for someone who is eager to take their writing to a new level.

**9. Who are you not the best mentor for?**

Someone who lacks a sense of humor or is unwilling to bestow adulation upon me.

**10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?**

Critique manuscripts, discuss the creative process and ways of accessing the subconscious mind, explore blocks to writing, work on the editing process, help polish query letters, discuss the ins and outs of working with an agent and the publishing process from start to finish.

**11. What is your style of communication like?**

I tend to rely on words, facial expressions, and interpretive dance. I'm open to using email, Track Changes on Word documents, telephone calls, and Zoom or Skype.

**12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?**

A curious mind and warm spirit.

**13. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?**

I'm partial to Murphy's Oil.

**14. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?**

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

— Maya Angelou

"Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it logical; don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly."

—Anne Rice