

Complement Your Writing
to Find Balance

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SUMMER

03

*A Quarterly Publication
of the American Society of
Journalists and Authors*

ASJA MAGAZINE

FINDING BALANCE



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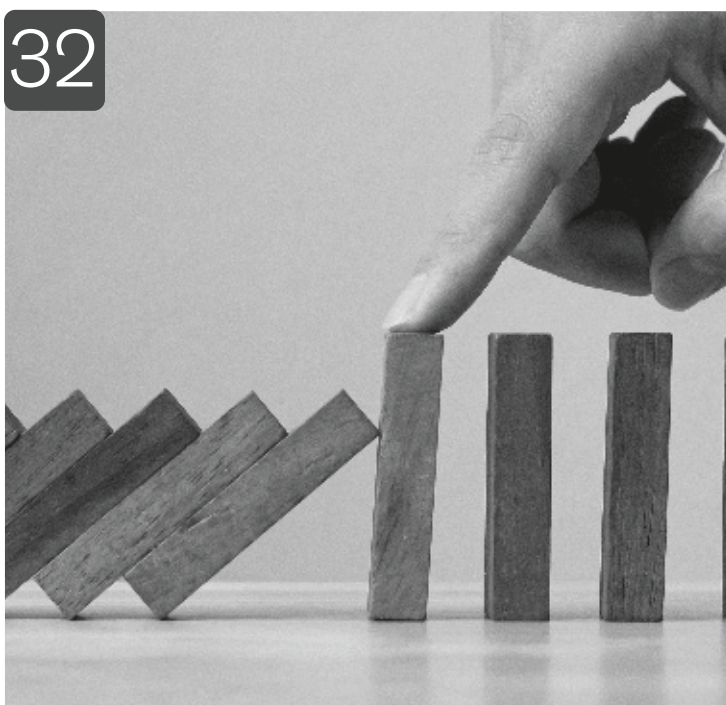
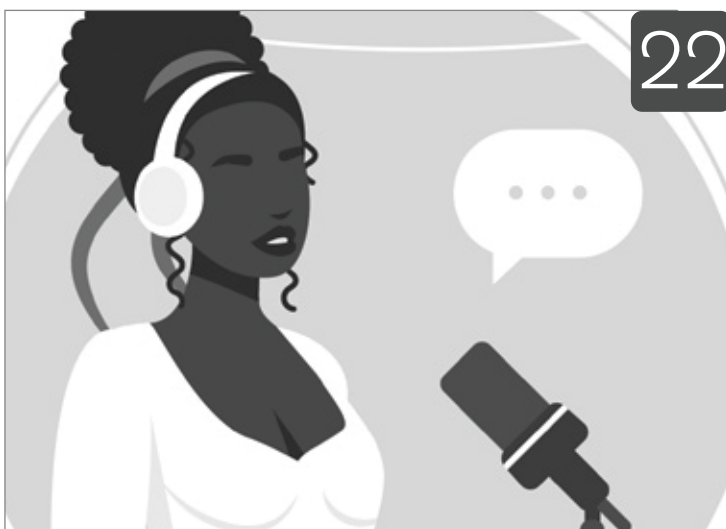
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ASJA MAGAZINE

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Founded in 1948, the American Society of Journalists and Authors is the nation's professional association of independent and entrepreneurial nonfiction writers. ASJA is a primary voice in representing freelancers' interests, serving as spokesperson for their right to control and profit from the uses of their work wherever it appears. ASJA brings leadership in establishing professional and ethical standards, as well as in recognizing and encouraging the pursuit of excellence in nonfiction writing. Since 2010, the ASJA Educational Foundation has been offering programming that covers all aspects of professional, independent writing for both established and aspiring writers. ASJA headquarters is in New York City.

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*Freelance Writer
and ASJA President*



From the President's Desk

ON COMPLEMENTARY AND TESSELLATING WORK

When two angles are complementary, their measures add up to 180° or the measure of a straight line. This is how I remember the different definitions of “complementary” and “complimentary.” I am a terrible speller, so I need these tricks to keep me from looking foolish. Homophones are particularly challenging since pronunciation offers no clue. But when I picture 60° and 120° angles sitting side-by-side, their horizontal legs forming a straight line and their slanted legs nearly meeting, I recall that *completing or enhancing the qualities of something else is complementary*. A 60° angle *completes* a 120° angle to form a Euclidean line.

Freelance work often requires complementary tasks. Like many parents who freelance, I have written stories while waiting in the carpool line or sitting on the sidelines of a soccer match. I have also gamed my energy levels to maximize my productivity, planning workflow to switch from research to interviews to writing to revising all in one day. And I practice a therapist's hour: 50 minutes for an interview or a writing session, with a 10-minute break to regroup before starting again. Because my schedule is rarely dictated to me, I can build my day like each bit of time is a Lego, creating elaborate stacks of minutes and hours, no matter where I am or what is going on around me.

These little bricks of time aren't complementary as much as tessellation, which is another geometric term. Think about Dutch artist M.C. Escher's fish or alligators or geese that cover a surface with no space in between. The secret to tessellation is symmetry, which is the secret to much of mathematics

(and art, for that matter). Another secret is how the shapes are moved to fill the plane. Escher figured out that when he slid, flipped, or rotated specific figures, he could use the results to “tile” a plane or create a pattern of interlocking figures that repeat infinitely. These are called rigid transformations, which means the original shape is not altered—only its location. Later, he experimented with shape-changing to create his *Metamorphosis* series, in which squares become lizards become hexagons become bees, and so forth. And look at this: the squares and lizards are complementary, because the lizard enhances the quality of the square.

As writers, we tessellate in ways that go beyond fitting together daily work periods like a game of Tetris. Endless curiosity might push us to chase a subject for years and years, offering new and interesting ways to make a living through an obsession. Our work reflects the tessellating and complementary elements of our reporting and research. Still, we also turn down different avenues to express what we learn, and these expressions may transform from the written word into new technologies and media. Perhaps you've moved from magazine writing to developing apps or launching your podcast. Or maybe you've partnered with companies to develop consumer-driven content that reaches beyond website and book readers. With the broad expansion of media, we have new opportunities for expression, for connecting with new audiences. And while we might (and should) bemoan the loss of newspaper readership, the flexibility of freelancing can offer us possibilities that were unimaginable 30 years ago.

Midway through my freelance writing career, when I became disillusioned by the pitching process, I turned my attention to developing mathematics curriculum for companies and schools. This felt like a complementary venture since I was still writing, but I was wrong. I enjoyed writing video scripts that taught basic fraction facts, but these pulled me from reporting and writing. I could do both, but not easily, not comfortably. The pieces didn't fit together precisely, and I eventually left curriculum development because it felt recursive, much like tessellation (but not in a good way). I knew I couldn't survive on pitching alone, but my complementary project wasn't writing math curriculum or even writing about math—at least not in my chosen ways. My audience began to pigeonhole me, to tell me who I was, rather than let me express myself. I felt I had lost control.

I still haven't regained that control. I don't know what complements magazine and newspaper journalism for me. From tessellations and complementary angles, I know that it must be something created of me. Only two angles can be complementary—not an angle and a circle or a triangle and a line. Only three polygons can be tessellated: triangles, parallelograms, and hexagons. And all tessellations come from these three basic forms. I can repeat the pattern of unsatisfying work for only so long before I need to become something else—like Escher's geese that fly out of parallelograms and then transform into fish. I can feel transformed by those transformations, but only as much as I cleave to my original shape.



*From
the Editor*

AND ANOTHER THING...



STEPHANIE
VOZZA

*Freelance Writer
and ASJA Editor*

A decade ago, I was the story editor for *A Random Book About the Power of ANYone* by Talia Leman. At the age of 10, Talia was moved to do something to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The wonderful thing about Talia and the rest of her family is their firm belief in what's possible.

Talia's idea was to trick or treat for money, and it gained the attention of the local Des Moines, Iowa newspaper. When her 6-year-old brother Zander told the reporter he was opposed to the idea—he wanted candy and not coins—the story went viral, eventually catching the eye of a *Today Show* producer.

'What's possible' grew into a nation-wide effort of children, all doing something to help. Their collective efforts raised more than \$10 million for hurricane relief, ranking the giving power of kids up with the top five U.S. corporate Katrina donors, including Wal-Mart and Exxon. And Talia took what she learned and launched RandomKid, an organization that helps kids launch their own philanthropic efforts.

As you can imagine, Talia's was an inspiring story to help write. During the process, her mother, Dana, noticed one peculiar thing about me. I like to use the word "but." I even started sentences with it.

"I have a request," she said. "No 'buts' in the book. They're negative. Replace them all with 'and.' You'll be surprised at how the sentence will still make sense, and it will feel more positive."

"No buts? But, how?" I thought. Surprisingly, "and" turned out to be a suitable substitute.

The sentence doesn't change its meaning, just its tone. For example, we wrote, "I'm a kid who is a clumsy, off-beat dancer and a clumsy,

off-beat speller, but who believes that clumsy is no reason not to dance and write anyway." This sentence made perfect sense when we changed it to, "I'm a kid who is a clumsy, off-beat dancer and a clumsy, off-beat speller, and who believes that clumsy is no reason not to dance and write anyway." Subtle difference, for sure.

The Lemans believed in the power of "and" because it doesn't limit you. That's what this issue is about. While we may cover different beats and use different forms, we're all writers. And we can be much more. (See what I did there?) Some writers are writers and writing coaches. Others are writers and podcasters. There are so many complementary roles we can play that not only generate a new stream of revenue; they provide variety and interest to an average day.

Of course, your "and" doesn't have to be writing-related. You may have a side-hustle, such selling handmade crafts. Or you may have a hobby that you do just because you love it like baking. Or your "and" can be to volunteer. Or you can replace "or" with "and," and do all of the above and more. Anything that fuels you, helps create balance.

The truth is, I haven't given up my penchant for buts. (I cannot lie.) I just make sure I'm using "and" more often, both in my writing and in my life. I hope you will, too.

ASJA EVENTS CALENDAR 2022

Virtual Pitch Slam and Virtual Client Connections

Check the ASJA website
for the latest dates.

CORRECTION

In the article "Artificial Intelligence's Impact on the Future of Writing" in the April 2022 issue, we misidentified the name of the "The Jetsons" cartoon and the production company Hanna-Barbera. We apologize for the errors.



ASJA DEAI COMMITTEE

(DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION)

*ASJA serves all independent nonfiction writers,
embracing the rich spectrum of voices that make up America*

This is the lead-in to a statement unanimously approved by the ASJA board in March 2022. It sets out the vision for the role ASJA can play in advocating for and supporting independent writers from all backgrounds, especially those from underrepresented groups.

We've been taking small steps towards this goal over the years. Now, we want to take larger strides.

A group of ASJA members and leaders have developed the following statement, which the board subsequently approved:

ASJA serves all independent nonfiction writers, embracing the rich spectrum of voices that make up America.

ASJA is committed to being a diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive organization that reflects the demographics of our country, our world, and our profession. ASJA works to create a welcoming community for writers of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, and cultural and religious beliefs, at all membership levels and in all leadership roles.

At ASJA, our goal is to ensure that diverse members feel included, supported, and valued, especially writers from underrepresented groups. We continually strive for diverse representation in our events, activities, and communications, from conferences and publications to webinars. We encourage members to seek out diverse sources and stories that reflect our world.

True diversity comes when we all commit to this goal.

The next step is to integrate this statement into the programming and culture of our organization. If this is work that you feel passionate about, we'd love for you to join us.

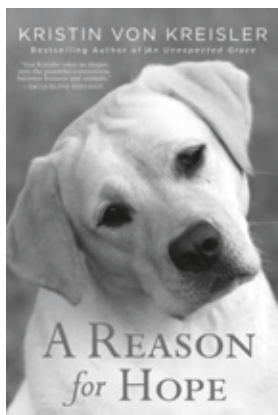
To find the latest on the committee and DEAI efforts at ASJA, please go to asja.org/diversity.

**Make your
voices heard!**



MEMBER NEWS

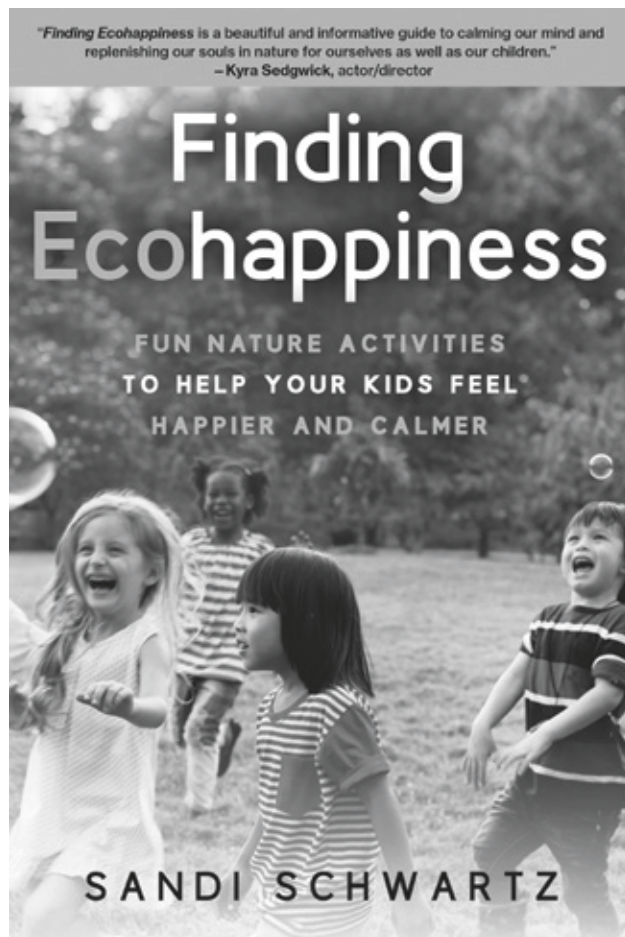
>>>> Book News



Kristin von Kreisler's fourth novel, *A Reason for Hope* (Kensington, 2021), recently reached #1 on Amazon's bestseller list in six different categories, including animal and women fiction. For one afternoon it ranked #68 in all Amazon books. *Booklist* stated, "The theme is so powerful that the book will resonate with readers."



Jamie Gold's third book, *Wellness by Design: A Room-by-Room Guide to Optimizing Your Home for Health, Fitness, and Happiness* (Simon & Schuster/Tiller Press, 2020), won a Silver Robert Bruss Book Award from the National Association of Real Estate Editors, which was presented during its annual conference.



Sandi Schwartz's book *Finding Ecohappiness: Fun Nature Activities to Help Your Kids Feel Happier and Calmer* (Quill Driver Books, 2022) was released in May 2022. *Library Journal* states: "Caregivers of all kinds are sure to find a nature-related activity they can enjoy with children, and Schwartz's scientific data is both fascinating and enlightening. Those who want to start making regular time for nature and the outdoors in their household will find this an easy guide." The book was featured by Amazon as a Hot New Release.



**GOT NEWS
TO SHARE
WITH ASJA?**

Submit your items at
<https://asja.org/Member-Networking/submit-member-news>



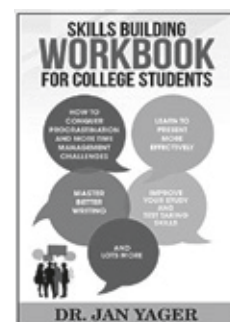
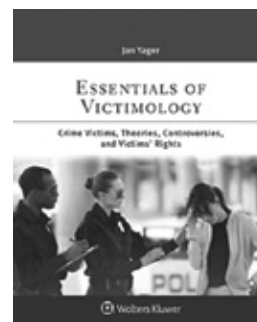
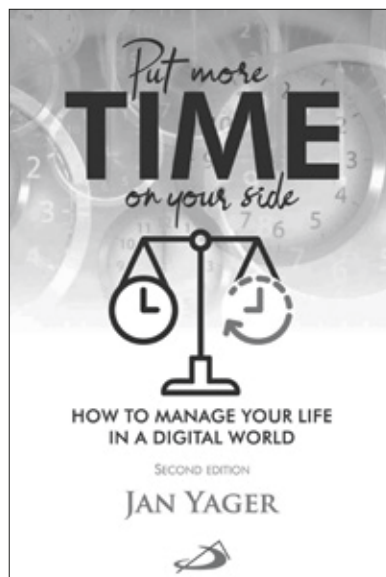
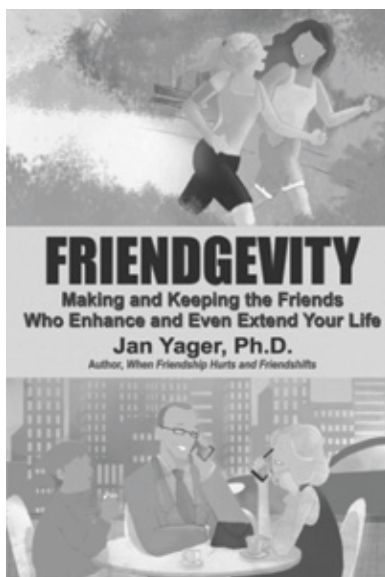
The First Counterspy: Larry Haas, Bell Aircraft, and the FBI's Attempt to Capture a Soviet Mole (Globe Pequot/Lyons Press, 2022), cowritten by **Walter W. Pickut**, was released in May 2022. *The First Counterspy* is the pulse-quickening and traumatic story of spy, counterspy, and an American family unwittingly caught in its web.



Nancy Peske's coauthored book, *The Determined Patient: How to Be a Powerful Self-Advocate and Take Charge of Your Health*, (Kamoh Publishing, 2021) written with Robert S. Danziger, MD, and Mary E. Gellens, MD, was published in December 2021.



ASJA Past President **Sherry Beck Paprocki** released a memoir of her nearly four decades of gig work. *Freelance Fancy: Your Guide to Capturing Spiritual Health, Wealth and Happiness from Gig Work* (RS Rock Media Inc., 2022) has ranking among the top books in the self-employment niche on Amazon since its release on Jan. 3, 2022.



Jan Yager published four books in 2021, including a Hindi translation of *Put More Time on Your Side* (Sound Wisdom, 2017), second edition. It became the 35th language in which her work has been translated. The other books she released were *Friendgevy: Making and Keeping the Friends that Enhance and Even Extend Your Life* (Hannacroix Creek Books, 2021), *Essentials of Victimology* (Wolters Kluwer, 2021), and *Skills Building Workbook for College Students* (Hannacroix Creek Books, 2021).



»»»» Activities, Awards and Accolades



Cheryl Maguire met *Discover Magazine* features editor Timothy Meinch through ASJA Client Connections. He didn't accept her first pitch, but referred her to the digital magazine, where she has now published two stories, one about a goose couple and another about a two-headed turtle.



L.M. Archer's latest article for *Wine Business Monthly* entitled "Ukrainian Wineries Trade Wine for Weapons," shares the frontline voices and images of Ukraine's wine and spirit community defending their nation from Russia's invasion.



Rachel Kramer Bussel wrote an op-ed for *The Independent* in February 2022 about how divorce affects kids in light of the public statements by Kim Kardashian West and Kanye West.



Susan Johnston Taylor wrote about how public schools use podcasts in the February 2022 issue of *American School Board Journal*. She originally connected with that editor via Client Connections at the ASJA regional conference in Washington, DC.



Jennifer Billock led a highly attended discussion about baking history in Chicago for the Culinary Historians of Chicago, based on her latest book *Historic Chicago Bakeries* (The History Press, 2021).



Sandra Ebejer has two new pieces in Shondaland: an interview with Emmy Award-winning writer Georgia Pritchett about her memoir, *My Mess is a Bit of a Life*, and an interview with actor/writer/director Bob Odenkirk about his memoir, *Comedy Comedy Comedy Drama*.



Margie Goldsmith ended 2021 by winning the Society of American Travel Writers' Lowell Thomas Bronze Travel Journalist of the Year Award. She also was awarded second place in the Ozzie & Eddie Awards, which recognizes digital publications.



ASJA Past President **Milt Toby** swept the "Magazine Article" category at the recent 2021 EQUUS Film & Arts Fest. The winning article, "The Path Behind and Ahead," appeared in the July 2021 issue of *Blood-Horse* magazine. The runner-up, "Viva Cañonero," was published in the May 2021 issue of *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred*.



Veda Boyd Jones published the first chapter of her Stonecoast MFA thesis, "Change Orders," as a short story, "December 1, 1969," in *Proud to Be*, an anthology published by Southwest Missouri State University Press. In addition, one of her short stories, previously published in *Woman's World*, was chosen for the magazine's holiday anthology.



»»»» Activities, Awards and Accolades



Karon Warren signed her first book contract with Reedy Press to write *100 Things to Do in the North Georgia Mountains Before You Die*, a guide with recommendations for planning a day trip, weekend getaway, or extended vacation in the North Georgia Mountains. Expected publication date is September 2022.



Elisa Shoenberger had her first byline in *Slate* with the article "Go Ahead, Call Your Dog Your 'Fur Baby.'" The connection was thanks to a recent ASJA Teleconnections meeting.



Koralj Dimitriadis has been successful in receiving an Australian government grant to start research and development of her new book of creative nonfiction, *Not Till You're Married*.



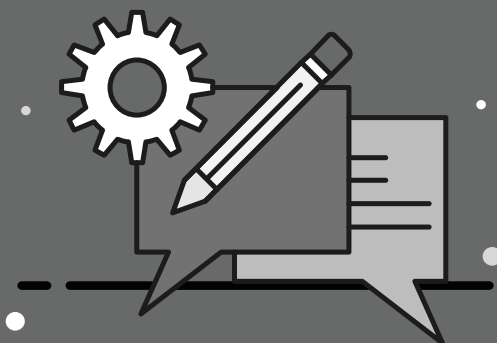
Deborah Lynn Blumberg earned her first *Washington Post* byline for her story on weighing coronavirus risks at the holiday season.



Kelly Boyer Sagert is the sole credited writer for *Trail Magic: The Grandma Gatewood Story*, which has been nominated for a best documentary award at the Erie International Film Festival. The film previously received an Emmy Award nomination, as well as other awards.

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JUNE 2022



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HOW TO OVERCOME BURNOUT IN ALL FACETS OF LIFE

Burnout is on the rise. A recent survey from Indeed found that 52% of respondents are feeling burned out from work. Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress. It can result from situations that involve overly demanding expectations, such as having more work than a person can handle at a job, in school, or even in a relationship, as well as poor self-care. Burnout can affect quality of life and well-being in various negative ways.

Haley Perlus, a sports and performance psychology expert, offers these tips for overcoming burnout.



Dr. Haley Perlus knows what it takes to overcome barriers and achieve peak performance. As an elite alpine ski racer, she competed and trained with the best in the world, pushing herself to the limits time and time again. Now, with a Ph.D. in sport and exercise psychology, Haley continues to push boundaries and drive peak performance, helping athletes and Fortune 100 executives reach their goals. Learn more by visiting her website at <https://drhaleyperlus.com>.



HALEY PERLUS
*Ph.D. Psychology Performance
Sports and Exercise Psychologist*

On the Job

To overcome or prevent burnout on the job, identify what you can change. For example, learning how to say “no” at work when you are doing multiple tasks simultaneously can lessen stress and frustration. Evaluating your commitments, setting boundaries, and learning when to turn down requests, will help you get the rest you need to give yourself and others your best.

Setting personal and professional boundaries are essential practices to bounce back from burnout. If you feel taken advantage of or disempowered at work or in your relationships, your self-esteem is impacted. Low self-esteem impacts stress levels, health, and personal relationships. Clear communication is key in setting boundaries that will help you feel empowered, give you more control, reduce stress, and put you on the road to better well-being.

As a Parent

When it comes to parenting, recovery from burnout can take two forms. One form of recovery is practicing stillness. These techniques include meditation, deep breathing, sleep (including naps), and simple quiet time. Even just one minute of quality deep breathing can renew emotional energy.

The second form of recovery that can treat and prevent burnout is variety. This is essentially offering yourself an opportunity to recover from one task while engaging in another task that requires a different type of energy. Physical activity provides positive stress for your body while creating pleasurable recovery for your emotions and mind.

For example, stepping away from your computer for 10 minutes and folding laundry while listening to music can provide emotional recovery. If you stay present, your mind will detach from the computer and the music will help create a space for emotional recovery (as long as you don’t focus on your computer work). No matter what type of recovery you choose, stillness or variety, it’s helpful to take things one step at a time and make small changes



Setting personal and professional boundaries are essential practices to bounce back from burnout.

along the way. Small changes can have a ripple effect that eventually lead to big results in your overall health.

As a Caregiver

When a person is taking care of a family member, friend or loved one, most of the sympathy tends to go to the person who is ill or infirmed. Many forget about the emotional and physical toll that being a caregiver can present. More than 40 million adults in North America are taking care of their elderly, chronically ill, or disabled loved ones, according to Pew Research Center. Signs of burnout include depression, fatigue, anxiety, sleeplessness, appetite loss, hopelessness, and other symptoms.

Although being a caregiver is never easy, there are some things you can do to make the situation more manageable. First, ask for

help whenever possible, whether that means paying a professional or calling upon a friend or family member. Second, don't skip your own medical appointments. If you are not well, you are not in a position to care for someone else. Third, check policies for family leave benefits at work. Don't feel like you have to keep a constant vigil by your family member's bedside, especially if you know there are times when they tend to nap or sleep. Use those times for some self-care and pampering. Last, speak to other caregivers to get tips on how to manage or speak with the attending physician or hospital social worker.

As a Student

In order to avoid burnout as a student, set reasonable goals. Write a to-do-list each day of assignments that need to get done and note their due dates. Use daily reminders and calendars to stay motivated and achieve deadlines. Another tip is to set aside time and pencil in an hour or two to do something enjoyable. Time away from your obligations is just as important as time spent fulfilling your obligations. Practice self-care and mindfulness to reduce stress and relax. Celebrate small wins along the way and keep the end goal in mind. And remember, think big picture. One bad grade does not determine your future.

Working Out

You can get burned out from working out if you overtrain and don't allow your body to fully recover. You are more susceptible to injuries that can take you out of your routine and make it harder to "jump back in." And let's not forget that boredom can kick in if you stay with the same routine over a long period of time.

Setting fitness goals that are realistic for your age, level of condition, and work/personal schedule is critical. Many athletes or "weekend warriors" feel guilty if they take a break from training. It's wise to take off two days a week from working out. There is a reason for the term "stress fracture." While weight training is great for improving bone density and high impact workouts are excellent for cardio, your bones get stressed and that, in turn, can lead to fractures. Don't obsess over numbers, reps, inches, etc. Focus more on how you feel after the workout mentally and physically. Switch up your workouts so that you don't reach an exercise plateau. If you need to, get a fitness buddy, change your workout environment, switch your playlist, or treat yourself to some new workout gear.





KATE HANLEY

Freelance Writer

Kate Hanley is the host of the How to Be a Better Person daily podcast, author of *How to Be a Better Person*, personal development coach, and ghostwriter. Visit her at katehanley.com.



How to Become a

WRITING COACH

They say that those who can't do, teach. But for those who can—and do!—write professionally, coaching other writers can be a viable and fulfilling revenue stream. With a blend of experience, training, and a willingness to try something new, you could open up a new avenue for the talents and skills you've honed by writing professionally. And you could have a lasting, beneficial impact on the lives and careers of your fellow writers.





spoke with three writing coaches for this article: Rebecca L. Weber, a journalist, writing coach, and host of the Writing Coach Podcast (rebeccalweber.com/podcast); Ed Gandia, a business-building coach for writers and copywriters (b2blauncher.com); and Lisa Tener, Stevie award-winning book-writing coach and author of *The Joy of Writing Journal: Spark Your Creativity in 8 Minutes a Day* (lisatener.com). These three pros shared their insights and best tips for adding “writing coach” to your portfolio of services.

Getting Started

Sometimes starting a new aspect of your business comes from being responsive to what people are coming to you for. This is how it happened for Gandia.

“I had successfully transitioned from a software salesperson to full-time freelance copywriter, and replacing my six-figure income, in a very short period of time. A lot of people were emailing me for advice on how to make that transition,” he recalls.

Gandia wrote an e-book with his strategies for becoming a well-paid freelancer and sold that as a product that he eventually turned into a course. “Teaching the course led me down the coaching route because I realized that a lot of people didn’t want just the information,” he says. “They wanted to be able to talk to somebody and get advice and mentoring.”

It can also be something you decide to offer simply because it’s time for a shift. Before freelancing, Weber had a career in education, where she specialized in curriculum design and pedagogy. After writing for years, Weber realized she could combine her two careers and began developing in-person classes for writers. “I wrote a few emails letting writers know how I could help them and rented space for classes and retreats,” she recalls.

How ever you initially get the inspiration, there are two basic ways to start: Developing a class or starting to work with clients one-on-one on an hourly basis. Gandia and Weber began with a product. Tener started by working one-on-one with people on an hourly basis. She learned what people needed the most and developed a group coaching program that she has since broken up into a lower-cost, self-study option and a higher-cost offering that includes one-on-one time, writing feedback, and live group calls.

As writers who are used to producing content, it can be more tempting to start with the book or the class. But remember, those will still need to be marketed—the piece so many writers dislike. Since you’ll be marketing anyway, Gandia suggests starting by working with people one-on-one.

“You don’t have to have all your products and packages set up in order to get started,” he says. “You can get more strategic with your offerings over time. But at first, it can’t hurt to just start really, really simple.”



How ever you initially get the inspiration, there are two basic ways to start: Developing a class or starting to work with clients one-on-one on an hourly basis.





The most important piece is just to get started. “You’re going to iterate many times, no matter how much time and energy you put into thinking it through before you start,” Gandia says. His bottom line? “Don’t overthink it.”

Weber distills it succinctly: “It’s similar to any other freelancing: Get clear about what you have to offer, who you want to work with, and why. Seek out clients, uplevel your skills, get coached, evaluate, repeat.”

Finding Your People

It’s natural to want to work with as many people as possible, but it scatters your focus and makes it harder to develop a cohesive marketing message. When Tener first started, she coached people writing nonfiction, articles, short stories, novels, memoirs, and business books. “I really didn’t hit my stride and find my people (or rather, they started finding me) until I focused on coaching for books and nonfiction specifically,” she recalls.

There are three basic categories you need to think through to define your niche, Tener says:



“It’s similar to any other freelancing: Get clear about what you have to offer, who you want to work with, and why. Seek out clients, uplevel your skills, get coached, evaluate, repeat.”

REBECCA L. WEBER

TIPS TO TAKE YOUR WRITING COACHING BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

INVEST IN YOUR SKILLS

While coaching is intuitive—particularly when you are coaching others in a field you know intimately—it is also a skill that can be honed. While you don't need to be certified to start coaching, you'll also want to deepen your knowledge as you go. There are many coaching training programs available. Research them to find the one that will help you deliver the outcomes you want for your clients. If you are interested in book coaching, Tener recommends Jennie Nash's Author Accelerator program (jennienash.com/bookcoachcertification).

DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHARGE WHAT YOU'RE WORTH

"While you want to always feel your clients are getting great value for their money, most writing coaches under-charge, including me when I first started," says Tener, whose starting rate was \$30 an hour. She now charges \$875 for a two-hour book concept consultation that includes a detailed questionnaire and a self-study course to prepare. It's about more than just your bottom line: "As I increased my prices, I found that I attracted higher quality clients, people who were more willing to do the hard work to be successful," Tener says.

ASK FOR TESTIMONIALS

For every client you work with, ask them to describe the benefits they received from working with you and ask if you can post their quote with their picture on your website. "The testimonials on my website sell my services," Tener says. "I don't have to try to sell people. They come to me ready to sign up. I love that and you will too!"





“It’s especially rewarding to work with people who maybe didn’t learn the rules of strong writing in school, or who were maybe even told they couldn’t write, and seeing them blossom as a writer.”

ED GANDIA

- What subject you will specialize in, such as article writing, blogging, fiction, how-to books, content marketing.
- What people you want to work with, like journalists, experienced writers, beginning writers, experts in a field who are not necessarily trained in writing (if so, which field?).
- And how do you want to help, such as creating business strategies, writing guidance, mindset help.

Gandia agrees about the power of defining your ideal client. “Even if it’s not perfectly focused right out of the gate, you need to pick an audience you can best serve so you can explain to them what makes you different and what outcomes you can help them achieve,” he says.

Why Coaching Matters— For You and Your Clients

The best part about coaching is that it can be incredibly rewarding. Being one herself, Weber knows that “freelancers can easily get sidetracked by doubt, perfectionism, overwhelm, etc.,” a mindset that can not only hinder a writer’s income but their influence.

“Helping them shift old patterns and reconnect with their creativity, momentum, and confidence means their writing makes a bigger impact for readers,” she says, calling the work “deeply satisfying.”

Tener loves helping people uncover their hidden talents. “It’s especially rewarding to work with people who maybe didn’t learn the rules of strong writing in school, or who were maybe even told they couldn’t write, and seeing them blossom as a writer,” she says.

And coaching is not just rewarding for the coach—it can change your clients’ lives. “Coaching is not just about helping your clients achieve their goals; it’s about the growth they experience and the person they become in the pursuit of those goals,” Gandia says. “That is something that nobody can take away from you.”

5 STEPS TO STARTING & SUSTAINING A PODCAST

Dec. 12, 2017

... perhaps we could co-host a podcast about raising and educating boys ...

Do I know all the details re: setting up, recording & producing a podcast? No, I do not... Would it be a moneymaker? Definitely not at first. Does it have the potential to earn income through sponsorships and ads and stuff in the future? I think so. Would it help us elevate our profile and perhaps lead to other opportunities for us? I believe so.



JENNIFER L.W. FINK

Freelance Writer



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xactly three months after I sent that email to my colleague Janet Allison, we released the first episode of the ON BOYS parenting podcast.

Five years later, we're closing in on one million downloads. ON BOYS is enjoyed by listeners in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Singapore, Israel, and Germany. Janet's parent coaching business is now global; she recently worked with a family in Croatia and recorded her best-ever monthly income. I've published one book (*The First-Time Mom's Guide to Raising Boys*) and am looking forward to releasing my second book about raising boys.

We started our podcast with absolutely zero audio experience, and if we can do it, you can, too. Like me, you have a built-in advantage: You're a writer.

"Writers have a huge advantage over non-writers because we're content people," says ASJA member Melanie Padgett Powers, host of the podcast *Deliberate Freelancer*. "Doing interviews, scripting episodes, and developing story ideas are not new to us."

You can leverage your existing skillset to create a podcast that will almost immediately stand out from the competition. Here's how:

STEP 1 >>>

Identify Your Why

"Starting a podcast is basically starting another business, from a time and energy perspective," says ASJA member Kate Hanley, creator of the *How to Be a Better Person* podcast. "If you're doing it just for fun, the realities might take the fun out of it quickly."

If money is your motivation, stop right now. According to *The New York Times*, Joe Rogan's podcast deal is worth "at least \$200 million," but most podcasters don't make any money from their podcasts. Those who do are either already famous (sound familiar, book authors?) or have been podcasting long enough to build their credibility and audience. You can make money podcasting, but you can probably make more money, more quickly, by sticking with writing.

Good reasons to podcast include a strong desire to build your platform or share information and inspiration with others.

Hanley launched her podcast in September 2019, nearly two years after her book *How to Be a Better Person* came out. "I wanted to stay out there and keep growing my audience, so that when I had another idea for a book, my platform would be vibrant," she says.

Powers' podcast grew out of her love of "talking shop" with other freelancers. "I was having these one-on-one conversations with freelancers, offering business advice and inspiration, and wanted to do it on a larger scale and have an outlet for all of us to learn together," she says.

1



STEP 2 >>> Draft a Plan

2

You need a topic, an angle, and a format. Will your podcast be scripted or unscripted? Will you include guests, or are you envisioning a host-focused podcast? Will your podcast feature recurring segments? How often do you plan to release new episodes, and how long will your average episode last? Do you want to do a serial-style

podcast, where you unspool a story over several episodes, or will each episode be a standalone?

A few things to keep in mind: Audiences are looking for a “compelling message” and are interested in hearing your “unique perspective,” according to a Sound Advice Strategies blog post. A strictly journalistic approach doesn’t work well in podcasting because listeners want to know what you think. They want to know the person behind the mic. You don’t need to over-share, but neither do you need to hide your personality.

Don’t obsess over format, frequency, or podcast length. Contrary to what you may read or hear elsewhere, the only “ideal” frequency, format, or length is the one that works for you and your audience. Our ON BOYS episodes typically run about 40 minutes because we know that our listeners (busy parents!) don’t have time for hour-long episodes. Hanley’s episodes are usually about 10 minutes because they’re meant to be a quick hit of daily inspiration.

STEP 3 >>> Line up the Logistics

3

The technological and logistical requirements of podcasting are off-putting to many writers (myself included!)

“The technology intimidated me in the beginning, which prevented me from starting,” Powers admits. Hanley says she too “used to worry about having the right setup and equipment.”

We each solved the problem by tapping outside expertise. I asked Janet Allison to be my podcast partner because she’s more tech-savvy than I am; she taught herself audio editing and edits all our episodes. Powers hired Pro Podcast Solutions to help launch her show and pays them to edit each of her episodes. Hanley initially recorded her podcast with equipment at a podcasting studio located at a co-working space near her home; she also outsources her audio editing.

You can start podcasting with your computer and the built-in microphone or earbuds. If you want, you can upgrade to a standalone mic that plugs into your computer’s USB port. I have a Blue Yeti microphone that retails for about \$100. Hanley now records in bed using a basic headphone clipped to her headboard.

You’ll need audio recording software. My podcast co-host and I use Zoom because we’re located in different parts of the country. Hanley uses Audacity, which is free. GarageBand, Zencaster, Audition, and Skype are other options.

And you’ll need a podcast hosting service. Podcast hosts

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A strictly journalistic approach doesn’t work well in podcasting because listeners want to know what you think. They want to know the person behind the mic.

are to podcasts what Blogger and Blogspot were to blogs: the online place where you upload your content. Popular podcast host services include Blubrry, Anchor, Buzzsprout, and Libsyn. We currently pay Blubrry \$40/month to host and distribute ON BOYS because we sometimes upload a lot of content in a month. Powers uses Libsyn and pays \$20/month.

STEP 4 >>> Create!

4

This is the fun part. Reach out to guests and record episodes. Hanley advises would-be podcasters to “make a long-range plan for your episodes and get several in the can before you launch.”

You’ll also need to create (or outsource the creation of) ancillary materials, including your podcast cover art and any music you wish to use. You cannot use copyrighted music unless you purchase the rights. You will probably want to create show notes—basically, a blog post style summation—for each episode, as well.

STEP 5 >>> Continue

5

Approximately 75% of podcasts succumb to “podfade” as their creators simply stop creating content. According to an analysis by Pacific Content, a podcast service company, only about half of all podcasts eventually release more than 14 episodes.

Consistency, content, and clarity are crucial to podcast success, Power says. Keep at it if even you don’t see immediate results. Your audience will grow in time.

“I’m realizing that the biggest benefits come from continuing to podcast,” Hanley says. “People pay more attention the longer you’ve been doing it.”



Breaking into EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

Many writers dream of publishing a book. Unfortunately, traditional publishing can be slow with numerous bumps along the road, and self-publishing is often labor-intensive and costly. But those aren't the only options. Several ASJA members have discovered another route to publishing: work-for-hire (WFH) projects with educational publishers, particularly for the K-12 market.

When an editor offers an assignment in this market, it usually has precise parameters on word count, reading level, approach, and more. Often, writers receive an outline or prepare an outline or synopsis based on the project specs. An editor typically reviews the outline or synopsis before the writer drafts the whole book (or books, in the case of a series, which isn't uncommon).

Sometimes these projects pay a royalty. Often, they pay a flat fee. The writer isn't expected to do much—if any—marketing. That's because the published books are primarily marketed and sold directly to schools instead of bookstores or individual consumers, and the publisher already has those relationships with schools. Not all educational publishers put the author's name on the cover, but I've been fortunate to work with ones that do.

I talked to ASJA members to get the scoop on this lesser-known writing niche.



SUSAN JOHNSTON TAYLOR

Freelance Writer

Susan Johnston Taylor (www.staylorwrites.com) has written over a dozen children's books for educational publishers (several forthcoming). Her trade debut, *Colorful Creatures: Poems About Animals in Surprising Shades*, comes out in 2023. She also writes for websites and magazines, including *BusinessInsider.com*, *Entrepreneur*, *Fast Company*, and *Highlights for Children*.



Books about Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) are in high demand, so if you've worked in a STEM field and have a knack for explaining these concepts in a kid-friendly way, that could be just what an editor needs.

What are WFH educational books about?

Projects can be fiction or nonfiction on a range of subjects from skateboarding to science to celebrity biographies: basically, anything that ties into school curriculum or gets students excited about reading. So far, I've written 14 WFH books (some of which are still awaiting publication but pay on acceptance) for two different educational publishers, all paying at least \$1 per word. They're written for young readers, so they're much shorter than novels and have many photos or illustrations. All but one of my books is historical fiction, which I love. One of the historical fiction titles was assigned as a graphic novel. I wrote the script, and then an illustrator brought the story to life.

If you'd have told younger Susan (who wrote American Girl fan fiction for fun) she'd get paid to make up stories set during the Civil War or the Industrial Revolution, she'd have squealed with excitement! These projects involve researching historical events, such as watching video interviews with eyewitnesses, reading documents from primary sources, even snapping photos outside Ford's Theatre when I happened to be in D.C. Then creating a fictional kid or teen to observe the event and narrate the story. I include sources as footnotes or comments depending on the editor's preference.

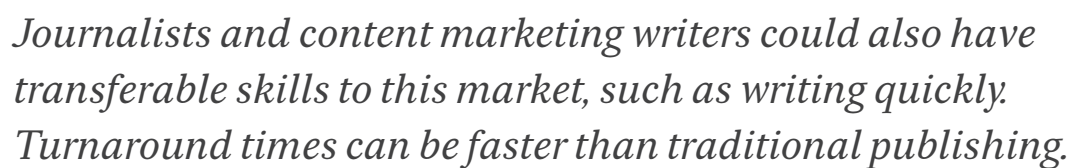
Other ASJA members write nonfiction books for this market. In addition to books for adults, ASJA member Tara Haelle has written nearly a dozen nonfiction books for the educational market, mainly about science. ASJA member Lisa Crayton also writes books for kids and adults. For her children's books (including her 17th children's book, which comes out this year), Crayton specializes in nonfiction, focusing on U.S. History, Black history, and biographies. However, she's also written about money, self-esteem, and other topics. Self-esteem falls under the category of social-emotional learning (SEL), which is now very popular with educational publishers.

Who is a good fit for educational books?

If you've worked as a K-12 teacher, you might already have a good grasp of this market. Books about Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) are in high demand, so if you've worked in a STEM field and have a knack for explaining these concepts in a kid-friendly way, that could be just what an editor needs.

Journalists and content marketing writers could also have transferable skills to this market, such as writing quickly. Turnaround times can be faster than traditional publishing. Haelle says many of her projects, ranging from 100 to 1,500 words, have had a timeline of two to three months. Most of my projects have had about a month of writing and research time, but Crayton has written WFH books on a two-week turnaround. She adds that good headline writers can use that skill to write snappy chapter headings for educational books.







TYPES OF PROJECTS

Here are a few different types of WFH projects:



LEVELED READERS

Written for students reading at a specific grade level. For instance, a 4.5 on the ATOS Book Level means the average fourth grader could read it in the fifth month of the school year.



HILO BOOKS

This means a high-interest level but a lower reader level. These books are designed for reluctant readers, English language learners, or people with learning disabilities.



TEACHER GUIDES/ LESSON PLANS

An excellent niche for people with an education background. This might include vocab words, discussion questions, classroom activities, etc., based on another text.

Writing to specific parameters is another key skill. If you're used to following a client's style guide or SEO standards, that's helpful because some projects do not allow for much leeway or creativity.

"What I like about [these assignments] is, it's very clear what you need to do," says Haelle. "For instance, it needs to be six chapters; each chapter needs to be split into two sections. It's very prescriptive in that way. There's no guesswork."

A generalist could become an editor's go-to writer because they can quickly jump from researching hurricanes or cybersecurity one week to NFTs [non-fungible token] or TikTok influencers the next. When covering a new-to-you topic, Crayton recommends reading other kids' books on the same topic.

"If I were writing about space shuttles, for example, I would read kids' books at the same level or younger, and that will help me then to articulate those scientific terms because the text in the other book is going to be easy to read and understand," she explains.

How do you break-in?

Instead of submitting a manuscript or proposal to publishers or securing an agent to submit it on your behalf, WFH educational writers typically submit writing samples (ideally written for children in the style of one of the publisher's recent books) and a cover letter via email. Some publishers also want a resume, so follow each publisher's instructions. Editors then assign projects based on the writer's expertise and interests.

Authors don't need a literary agent for this work, although some agents connect their clients with WFH projects. If you're unagented, check out www.evelynchristensen.com/markets.html for links to publisher submission guidelines. Sometimes, you can also meet WFH editors via conferences or webinars through the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI).

I haven't worked with book packagers, but that's another route to these book projects. Book packagers such as MTM Publishing are like mini publishers. They act as intermediaries, hiring authors and delivering their content to a publisher. Sometimes a book packager pitches book concepts to a publisher; other times, they're contracted to execute on a concept the publisher concocted.

In your cover letter, mention any teaching experience or subject matter expertise, especially if it's in a STEM field. Graphic novels are currently in demand, so mention if you have any experience writing those. Also, specify what grade levels you're most interested in. If you can explain science or math concepts at a very low reading level, that's a great skill. I learned the hard way that writing for first graders isn't for me because it requires such short sentences and limited vocabulary. Most of my projects have been at a third or fourth-grade reading level, which feels like the sweet spot for me. Other writers prefer higher grades.

Haelle says her ability to adapt to different publications' writing styles as a freelance journalist has helped her hit the assigned grade level for her educational books. "Being able to look at other books in that reading level and study how many words per sentence, how many sentences per paragraph, what kinds of words are used is something that was familiar to me in my journalism work," she explains.



Instead of submitting a manuscript or proposal to publishers or securing an agent to submit it on your behalf, WFH educational writers typically submit writing samples (ideally written for children in the style of one of the publisher's recent books) and a cover letter via email.

Not sure where your writing falls? A few tools can analyze a text sample and tell you the grade level. Try HemingwayApp.com or Google "ATOS for text." Publishers more commonly use ATOS, but Hemingway can give you a benchmark while flagging issues like passive voice or overly complex sentences. Or try the Flesch-Kincaid grade leveler that is embedded in Microsoft Word.

If you need to find a simpler word to hit a lower grade level, *The Children's Writer's Word Book* is essentially a thesaurus that gives grade levels for each synonym. For instance, it tells me that "gallop" is a fourth-grade word, so if I'm aiming for a lower grade, I might choose "run" (kindergarten) or "rush" (first grade) instead.

Writing educational books has helped me flex different writing muscles than writing for magazines as I work toward my traditional publishing goals. Sometimes, those goals can be symbiotic. Crayton says her book projects have helped improve her magazine writing. "You definitely learn how to capture an idea in a specified word count," she says.

Of course, writing for educational publishers doesn't mean you can't also pursue magazine writing, traditional book publishing, self-publishing, or other avenues. It's just another market to consider.

THE SANITY- SAVING ART OF SAYING “NO”

Eight steps to help reclaim your life

Have you ever stared at your to-do list and felt a wave of dread, frustration, or regret? Wondered why—why?!—you took on that 2,500-word feature on a topic you’re not even interested in when you were already completely booked? Or how you allowed yet another book project to scope creep so far that you’re now behind on other deadlines? And what were you thinking when you agreed to add two sidebars to that story you submitted weeks ago—for no extra pay?

Believe me; you’re not alone. We’ve all said “yes” to things that should have been a hard “NO.” Becoming a successful freelance writer starts with scrambling to reach a target—a byline in a dream publication, a book deal, or hitting six figures—and we’re taught never to turn down work. Yet, we end up with way too much on our plates all too often. Saying “yes” can quickly backfire, leading to resentment, stress, and burnout.

Author Elizabeth Gilbert’s 2015 Facebook post encouraging us to practice saying “no” while smiling at ourselves in the mirror went viral because it resonated with our experience: We give away too much of ourselves. In addition to crafting words, freelance writers are often asked to navigate onerous onboarding systems and complex invoicing procedures and learn 50-page style guides. We’re expected to find multiple expert sources and write snappy headlines while also annotating every other word or plugging our copy into SEO tools and readability apps.

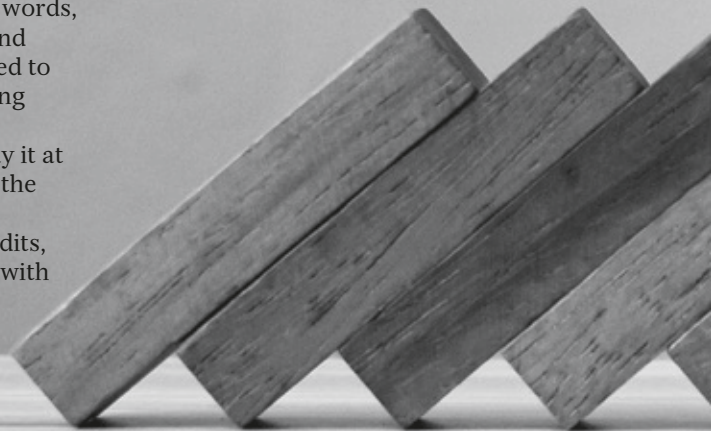
To be frank, we’ve never needed to say “no” more, yet many of us rarely say it at all. Saying “no” and not backing down from it, Gilbert pronounced, could be the key to our kingdom, our palace of peace.

Whether it’s a punitive contract clause, too many tasks, or unreasonable edits, ASJA members share their experiences and how they learned to refuse it all with grace and professionalism.



WENDY HELFENBAUM

Freelance Writer



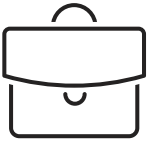
Wendy Helfenbaum is a Montreal journalist and content marketing writer who covers real estate, travel, lifestyle, and automotive. You can find her on Twitter @WendyHelfenbaum.

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To be frank, we've never needed to say "no" more, yet many of us rarely say it at all. Saying "no" and not backing down from it could be the key to our kingdom, our palace of peace.



No
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1



Turn down work you don't need or don't have time for

Take a good look at your income goals—and if you don't have any goals, create some. If you surpass your monthly income goal at the end of week two, make a new rule: For the rest of that month, you will ONLY work four days per week. Carve out time for yourself, your hobbies, and your family.

My company's year-end is April 30. When I realized on November 5 that I had exceeded my annual revenue goal, I decided to take five weeks off. I said "no" to everything that came in unless it was due at the end of January or later. When I informed my regular clients, nobody batted an eye. Most said they were jealous.

No
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2



Shift away from the scarcity mindset

When an assignment offer gives you the slightest pause—low pay, tight deadline, a topic outside your expertise—ask yourself: Must I do this, either for money or client loyalty or because I am super passionate about the topic? If the answer's "no," say so!

Holly Leber Simmons, a writer in Silver Spring, Md., finds it difficult to turn down assignments, especially from new clients. But she's doing it anyway.

"I've been trained to take what you can get because you don't know when the next assignment is coming or to lower your rates because something is better than nothing," she says. "I recently declined a job that's outside my niche and my wheelhouse. I'm sure I could have done it, but I'm trying to streamline my focus."

Marcia Layton Turner, a business book ghostwriter in Rochester, N.Y., says she's getting much better at saying "no," especially to new projects. "As I've gained clarity on the type of writing work that I'm best at, and which I enjoy the most, it's been easier to decline other opportunities," she says.

No
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3



Work smarter, not harder

Turner finds it challenging to turn down clients who ask her to do things like drafting an author bio for the book jacket.

"It's not really part of the original contract, but I do it because going back and forth about the cost will probably take me longer than just writing it," she admits. "Yet when I do that once, the client thinks I'm available for other tasks, and then I'm pulled in to tackle a steady stream of related items, but with no additional income." I know I need to practice saying 'no' in those instances, or to quote a fee. It's one of my opportunities for improvement."

Some freelancers, like Milwaukee, Wis.-based Nancy Peske, get creative about keeping scope creep at bay.

"I've raised my rates to accommodate my tendency to give free strategy information to clients," says Peske, whose other tricks include refusing to watch "helpful" videos or read articles clients send along; she asks them to summarize the material instead. When she ghostwrites a memoir, she asks authors to send her their story in writing rather than sit through extended discussions.

"I know many memoir ghostwriters or collaborators might balk at this, but I find it shaves time off the work and the cost for the client while keeping me from getting confused when they're first dictating a complicated story," she explains.

“

Be upfront with your client about what you will and will not accept. Keep things conversational but clear.



Don't make every client problem your emergency

I wrote half a dozen stories for an editor at an alumni magazine. When she became short-staffed, she piled extra tasks onto writers' plates—like approval from various stakeholders, image chasing, and more. After realizing this added up to two hours to my workload for no extra pay, I said “sayonara.”

Peske pushes back against technophobes who take up her time with their “emergencies.” “My response to ‘Can you resend the email?’ is ‘Can you search for it using my name or email?’” she says. “It’s amazing how many people feel entitled to have technological challenges and treat you as a personal secretary rather than solving the problem on their own.”



Stick to the script

Be upfront with your client about what you will and will not accept. Keep things conversational but clear, suggests Lorain, Ohio-based writer Kelly Boyer Sagert.

“I’ll say, ‘That sounds like an interesting project, and I wish I could say ‘yes.’ However, right now, I’d need to (decline/ask for more time),” she suggests.

Some of the scripts I use include:

“I’d love to take this on, but I am fully committed this (week, month, quarter). But please keep me in mind for the next round.”

“I’m out of bandwidth this (week, month), but I can do that for you next (week, month). Otherwise, I can recommend another writer.”

“I wish I could help with this, but I’ve booked a much-needed break beginning (date). I’ll be ready for new assignments (date).”

“Thanks for thinking of me! Unfortunately, I’m completely booked until (date).”

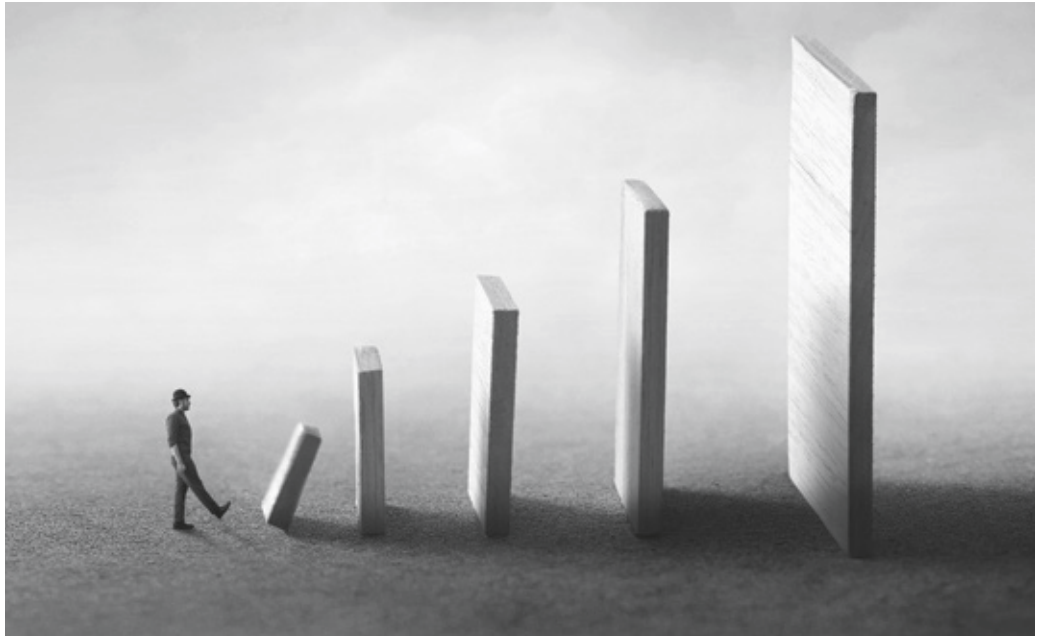
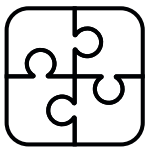
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Work up your courage to
find that palace of peace by
reaching out for support.



No
>>>

6



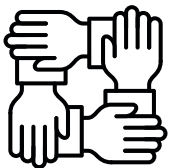
If you're hesitant about saying "no," do it anyway

Writer Stephanie Bernaba of South County, R.I., supports several local and national non-profits and has trouble saying "no" when they need help with daily functions or specific assignments. But she's getting better at it.

"At an earlier point, I would have taken on projects either out of guilt or obligation, but I learned it's not worth the hassle," she says. "By navigating all those wrong avenues, I learned what types of tasks, organizations, and people were in my wheelhouse and which ones were not. I sleep much better not being a people pleaser or sacrificing my mental health or my family—I have three children under 12—for the sake of a project. If things feel off, they probably are, and I say 'no' with much more confidence now."

No
>>>

7



Leverage your peer network

Work up your courage to find that palace of peace by reaching out for support, suggests Turner.

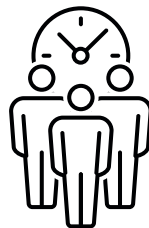
"With the help of other writer friends, I'm getting better at boundary-setting, which is related to saying 'no,'" she explains.

For example, Turner learned to cluster interviews and client discussions mid-week instead of scheduling them throughout the week, leaving Monday and Friday open to write, think, and strategize. She tells clients she's booked on those days if they ask.

Simmons also turns to trusted colleagues when she's grappling with whether to turn down a gig. "And an emphatic, 'No, that is definitely NOT worth your time' from my partner can help bolster my resolve that I'm making the right choice," she adds.

No
>>>

8



Draw your line in the sand and stay on your side

Newsflash: As a business owner, you can refuse to accept over-reaching indemnity clauses, pennies per word, or 17 rounds of Friday afternoon edits due Monday morning.

Consider this: Other professionals don't agonize over saying "no." I recently had to wait more than a month for a plumber to fix something. He's busy! He didn't come at 10 p.m. or on the weekend; he booked a date that worked for him, and we took it.

BE MY PLUMBER.



Tools of the Trade

AUTHORY

Authority is an intuitive portfolio management tool with functionality more valuable than many of its competitors. Offered on a subscription basis (\$96 annually), Authority can find, display, and back up work from any site on which an author has written or been featured.



STEPHANIE BERNABA

Freelance Writer

For print journalists or those who write for other non-digital sources, Authority can back up and display any works uploaded in PDF format.

The content collection process is simple. After signing up for a trial, users input the URLs of all sites containing their work. The platform then searches for all past pieces, future pieces, or both. Once the pieces are uploaded to Authority, they are safely backed up in users' accounts. Once the connection is established, the tool will continue to search for and curate the user's work automatically, notifying the user of each uploaded piece via email.

Authority is quickly becoming a haven for writers who have occupied the digital space for years and have had to deal with the unfortunate circumstance of losing content to website mergers, platform changes, or the expiration of URLs.

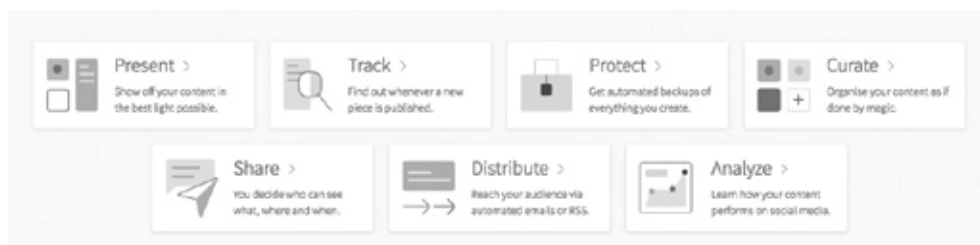
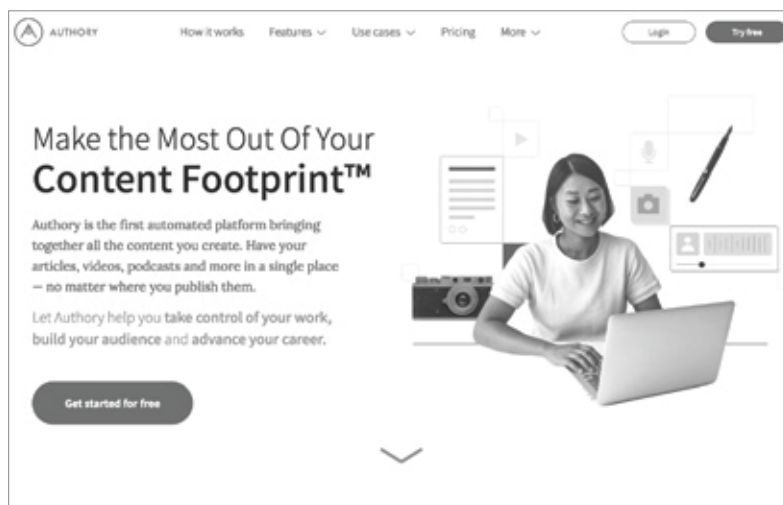
Authority can not only display and link to users' work but can also save and store full versions permanently in their accounts. Once a writer's work is backed up in Authority, the author will never lose it. If a user decides to leave Authority, they can download their data and take it with them.

Authority has recently branched into digital media such as podcasts, LinkedIn posts, and YouTube content for users whose content is mainly audio or video or for writers who have appeared on these platforms as guests.

Users can easily categorize uploaded content using a simple menu, helping to separate work by subject or specialty. For writers with diverse portfolios, being able to isolate and share relevant genres with potential clients is both time-saving and convenient.

Authority features a detailed analytics system across platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. Authority's analytics explore deeper than one might expect, displaying metrics based on individual interactions with each piece of content, such as comments, shares, and pins.

Authority allows users to choose their pages' looks, and profiles can feature authors' photos, short bios, and social media links. Its customizable interface is agile and adjusts quickly with any movement in one's career.



»»» *Authority allows users to choose their pages' looks, and profiles can feature authors' photos, short bios, and social media links. Its customizable interface is agile and adjusts quickly with any movement in one's career.*

The founder of Authority, Eric Hauch of Berlin, Germany, explained that he founded Authority based on a need of his own to keep up with one of his favorite writers. After finding colleagues with tech expertise to help make his dream a reality and speaking with hundreds of journalists about their needs, he created Authority.

Authority is used primarily in English-speaking countries, but he says he serves members from all over the world.

One of the greatest features, Hauch explained, is that Authority "gives the person interested in hiring the customer the option not just to see one good piece, but to get a feel for whether this person is delivering quality on a consistent level."

Stephanie Bernaba is the owner and principal at White Orchid Media, based in southern Rhode Island. White Orchid Media provides journalistic/photojournalistic coverage as well as marketing, communications, development, and event support. Stephanie works extensively in her local community and with regional and national nonprofits. You can find her work at platforms including *Redbook Magazine*, *Care.com*, and *Yahoo Entertainment*. She was also recently featured in stories at *NBC News* and *NBCU Academy*. Stephanie gives back to her professional community by mentoring with the National Press Photographers Association and judging ASJA's Annual Writing Awards. Her local cause of choice is Make-a-Wish Massachusetts Rhode Island. She is a wife of 13 years, a mother of three, enjoys music, and is currently learning steel pan drumming.



Jennifer Billock

2022 ASJA ANNUAL CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

► *Why did you decide to co-chair the ASJA annual conference?*

I believe the ASJA conference is one of the most valuable perks of membership, not just for the networking opportunities with other writers, but for the incredible opportunities to meet, learn from, and potentially work with, editors. I wanted to be a part of putting that together so I could help independent writers (myself included) get the most out of their careers.

► *What is the most rewarding part of chairing the conference?*

I love the collaboration of putting everything together! I've met some phenomenal people through ASJA, and those relationships are only getting stronger while organizing the conference. It's also incredibly gratifying to see so many people come together to work toward the same goal.

► *What are the most challenging parts?*

Particularly this year, working around the pandemic has been an ever-changing goal we need to meet. It's a challenge to ensure

everyone feels safe at the same level while everyone is in varying stages of being ready to reenter the world. But, I believe it's one we are accomplishing well.

► *If members are thinking of co-chairing the conference in the future, what skills do they need to have?*

Organization! A thousand times organization. There are many moving parts, and you need to be able to keep track of them. You also need to be willing to work with others and compromise on things.

► *What do you wish members knew about chairing the conference?*

It sounds daunting (and it can be at times), but it's a lot of fun and gratifying. I find that it helps fill a spot in my heart that's dedicated to helping others achieve their career goals. You also don't need to be a conference planning expert to do this. The office team and ASJA leadership are incredibly knowledgeable and helpful.

► *What is your writing specialty/focus?*

I mainly write about food, travel, and history.

► *In which publications/outlets have you been published?*

Smithsonian, The New York Times, WIRED, National Geographic, Travel+Leisure, CN Traveler, Good Housekeeping, Playboy, The Atlantic, and more. I also have seven books (two cookbooks and five history) and edit the *Kitchen Witch* newsletter on Substack (kitchenwitch.substack.com).

► *How long have you been an ASJA member?*

Four years? I think...I can't remember exactly!

► *How long have you volunteered for ASJA?*

Since Day One! I wanted to be as involved as possible from the get-go. You get out of it what you put in!

► *Why do you volunteer for ASJA?*

A rising tide lifts all boats. When we help each other, we help everyone—and this is one of the best ways to do it. I also love meeting other writers and authors, some of whom have become good friends.

» *"I find that it helps fill a spot in my heart that's dedicated to helping others achieve their career goals. You also don't need to be a conference planning expert to do this. The office team and ASJA leadership are incredibly knowledgeable and helpful."*

JENNIFER BILLOCK



WRITING SPECIALTY/FOCUS:

Food, travel, and history

MOST REWARDING PART OF CHAIRING THE CONFERENCE:

I love the collaboration of putting everything together!

► ***How do you fit volunteering in with your work commitments?***

Well, I'm answering these questions on a Sunday night, so....I try to get about an hour a day but sometimes spend an hour or two after work or on the weekends. It's not often—I schedule time in my planner for volunteer duties like it's just another part of my job.

► ***What are the benefits of volunteering?***

For me, volunteering meets two needs: helping others and helping myself. As a volunteer, the work I do is gratifying because I can see how things like the conference motivate and inspire others. And then it helps me personally because I can get to know great people and colleagues and share knowledge that helps people.

► ***What do you like to do when you're not writing?***

Travel, exercise, crochet, annoy my grumpy old dog with incessant hugs, read, and bake.

We love to give away money to deserving writers in need!



The Writers Emergency Assistance Fund (WEAF) is here to help writers through hard times brought on by illness, natural disaster, or other emergency. Since 1982, WEAF has awarded more than 160 grants totaling approximately \$400,000.

You Can Help:

- If you know a qualified writer who is experiencing an emergency, let them know about WEAF.
- If you have had a good year, think about making a tax-deductible donation to WEAF.
- If you want to have a long-term impact, consider naming WEAF as a beneficiary in your estate planning.

To find more information about the WEAF application process and making donations, click the WEAF link on the ASJA website: **ASJA.org**.



Judy Nauseef

2022 ASJA ANNUAL CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

► **Why did you decide to co-chair the ASJA annual conference?**

By the time I sent in my name, Co-chair was what Jen had left. I wanted to be a part of it, and my reluctance was not being very familiar with the organization and its leaders. Her steady leadership has been great. We are both Midwesterners.

► **What is the most rewarding part of chairing the conference?**

Hearing from all these writers and speakers who want to be a part of it.

► **What are the hardest parts?**

Waiting for people to decide it was safe to come to a conference has been hard this year. Enthusiasm grew every day.

► **If members are thinking of co-chairing the conference in the future, what skills do they need to have?**

Listening, problem-solving, creativity, task management, Google Sheets

► **What do you wish members knew about chairing the conference?**

The staff and other members are there to help.

► **What is your writing specialty/focus?**

Sustainable gardening, travel (mostly gardens), climate change, and the gardener, and I am adding horses after a lifetime of riding and owning.

► **In which publications/outlets have you been published?**

I have published in print magazines that no longer exist, writing garden and gardener profiles. I write for *The Designer*, an online publication of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers. I have taken many photographs for my articles.

► **How long have you been an ASJA member?**

Four years

► **How long have you volunteered for ASJA?**

Four years, starting with small jobs at conferences, then judging for our writing competition last year, and now cochairing the conference.

► **Why do you volunteer for ASJA?**

To meet people and get to know the organization.

► **How do you fit volunteering in with your work commitments?**

I use deadlines I make for completing articles. The benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

► **What are the benefits of volunteering?**

Making contacts with people who help me with introductions and advice in the future has been a real benefit. The experience is enjoyable and includes all kinds of learning.

► **What do you like to do when you're not writing?**

I have been a landscape designer for over 30 years and still have a few clients. I love to garden and travel. We live on an acreage with a dog, a cat, and two horses, and they dictate my schedule.



WRITING SPECIALTY/FOCUS:
Sustainable gardening, travel, climate change, the gardener, horses

MOST REWARDING PART OF CHAIRING THE CONFERENCE:
Hearing from all these writers and speakers who want to be a part of it.



"Making contacts with people who help me with introductions and advice in the future has been a real benefit [of volunteering]. The experience is enjoyable and includes all kinds of learning."

JUDY NAUSEEF

VISIT [ASJA.ORG/MEMBERS](https://asja.org/members)



ASJA >>>> Membership Benefits

Did you remember that ASJA provides membership benefits that go beyond this magazine, the annual conference and Client Connections, Pitch Slams and Special Interest Group (SIG) events?



Some benefits you may not have taken advantage of lately include:



Delta Airlines

Special discounted airfare for ASJA members traveling across the world, up to 10% of the fare.



Avis Car Rental

A corporate discount program for ASJA members to enjoy low rates.

SHARON
NAYLOR TORIS*Freelance Writer*

Sharon Naylor Toris is the author of *The Stories of This House* (Tarcher/Perigee, October 2022).

Market Report | REAL SIMPLE



In this era of departing editors and dissolving magazines, it's nice to know that there are still some magazines you can look forward to reading ... and contributing to. *Real Simple* has its feet on the ground and is assigning well throughout its many sections.

Executive editor Rory Evans says that the best way to understand what *Real Simple* is assigning is to read the magazine in print and online. Recent stories include: "4 Ways to Save on Your Kitchen Remodel," "45 Best Shows on Netflix," and "9 Best Laundry Hacks of All Time."

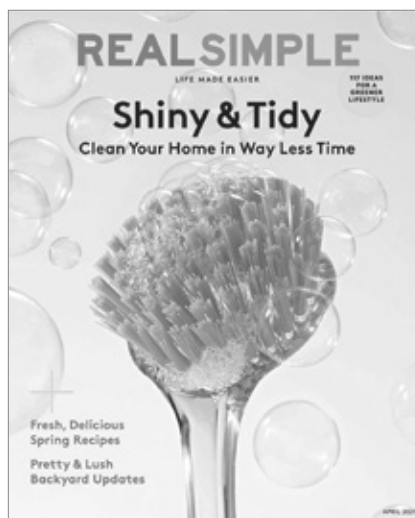
The magazine focuses on lifestyle and what makes a house a home. Also, keep an eye out for spiritual and religious topics, such as a recent piece called "Intro to Passover Traditions." The magazine also includes mental health stories like "4 Ways to Cope with Racing Thoughts."

The opener of the Relating section may be your best bet, with small (900 words) pieces gathering five industry experts' answers



Popular entry points to the magazine include:

- **Real Simplifier**, short how-to pieces of 500-700 words on tackling large goals in five smaller steps.
- **Moneywise**, 500-1,200 words on budgeting, investing, and saving for retirement.
- **Career Coach**, 800-1,200 words targeted to those in mid-level to senior-level work positions on topics like handling work stress, providing stronger feedback, and delegating tasks. This section also includes fresh takes on work-life balance as well as the new formulas of flexible work arrangements.



to one fascinating, fresh question. When you bring five notable experts to the table, you could help open the door to your feature.

Front of book and Well features of about 1,500-1,800 words, perhaps longer when the topic demands, provide opportunities for real-life profiles such as community changemakers such as community garden modernizers and bee farmers.

Digital edition editors want evergreen ideas in home, money, holidays, career, food, and beauty, which offer more opportunities than the print editions in those categories.

Real Simple staffers typically write health and parenting. Evans says that they're not looking for "anything related to parenting small children" and anything that's way off topic from what you see in the magazine.

With lifestyle as their focus, you could look around your home right now and spot a dozen saleable article ideas for *Real Simple*. It's a tremendously large realm of opportunity. Think problem-solving and fresh for *Real Simple*.

Evans emphasizes that she is not the point person for submitting your ideas and clips. Instead, send your pitch to RS_EditAssistants@meredith.com.

Pay varies depending upon article size and depth, a good indication that assigning editors pay close attention to the amount of work your topic would take, inclusion of experts, and length of the story. That's often an encouraging sign that a magazine is not set on shoehorning every story into a \$1 per word (or less) uniform model. I've found the *Real Simple* editors open to discussion about story pay and scope, so don't be shy about asking.

Evans says no pitch should be longer than 150 words when sending your idea and no submission longer than 600 words.

"Just DO NOT FOLLOW UP on a pitch," Evans says (the caps all hers.) "We will reach out to you if it's of interest."

The caps suggest they are serious about avoiding the chaos of follow-ups, especially now that editors' colleagues are leaving, dumping their unthinkable enormous workloads on other editors. Editors want something to make their jobs a little easier.

If you arrive as a dream writer who doesn't put more pressure on them, you'll make a great impression throughout your working relationship.

REAL SIMPLE AT A GLANCE

Article lengths:

Real Simplifier, 500-700 words

Moneywise, 500-1,200 words

Career Coach, 800-1,200 words

FOB and Well features, 1,500-1,800

Pay rate: \$2 per word for print. Digital rates vary depending on the story.

Payment schedule: On acceptance.

Rights: All rights; kill fee is 25 percent.

Lead time: About eight months. RS's media kit shows issue themes to help with seasonal pitches.

Contact: Send your pitches to RS_EditAssistants@meredith.com. Email editors directly by using the email format: FIRSTNAME dot LASTNAME at REALSIMPLE dot com. Try an underscore instead of a period between names if you receive a bounce back.

Look for These Four Red Flags from Clients



CHERYL MAGUIRE

Freelance Writer



» AT THE TIME, I HAD A
BAD FEELING ABOUT ALL
OF THESE DIFFERENT
ASSIGNMENTS. I SHOULD
HAVE LISTENED TO MY
GUT INSTINCTS.

As a freelance journalist, you never know when you'll get another assignment for the most part. Often, it feels like it is a "feast or famine" type of situation. For fear of the famine times, I tend to say "yes" to most assignments or opportunities. There are four specific times that, with hindsight, I definitely should have said "no" to the editor or client who offered the job. Based on my experience, here are some possible red flags:

A RATE THAT IS TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW

Rates are important to help pay your bills. I've worked for low and high rates for different reasons. But if the publication or client is unknown—meaning you or other journalists you know have never worked with them—a low or high rate could also indicate other issues. If I accept a low rate, then I'm expecting the job to be easy and only require a few hours of my time. And the opposite for a high rate—more time and more challenging. But even a high rate should have limitations. I accepted a low and high rate for unknown clients in two different situations, and in both cases it was awful. The low rate job kept asking for unreasonable edits, whereas the high rate client wanted me to rewrite a 2,000-word article—suddenly, that high rate wasn't so high, which leads me to my next point.

EDITS THAT WEREN'T PART OF THE ORIGINAL ASSIGNMENT

I've learned the hard way the importance of defining how many rounds of edits will be expected before accepting an assignment. Also, I think it is helpful to ask about their editing style. I've worked with editors that require little or no edits and others that want me to rewrite the whole article. This could vary depending on the draft, but some editors tend to require a lot more work on your part, no matter what the draft looks like. I've also found that clients who are not editors might not clearly state what they are looking for, which can cause issues when you submit your draft.

EDITOR OR CLIENT WHO MICROMANAGES BEFORE YOU SIGN THE CONTRACT

In one situation, the editor was micromanaging many aspects of the assignment before I even signed the contract. I remember my husband saying, "Don't accept the job" when I told him about all the different unusual requests. These included getting approval of sources before interviewing them or approval of the questions I would ask during the interview. And then, when I submitted the draft, the editor wanted me to rewrite it with new sources even though the editor had approved the sources beforehand.

EDITOR OR CLIENT WHO ASKS YOU FOR QUESTIONABLE OR POSSIBLY UNETHICAL MATERIAL

Recently, I had an editor ask me to write an assigned article that didn't feel right. It wasn't unethical, but it could have veered in that direction. I initially said "yes" to the assignment but, based on my past negative experiences with different publications or clients, I decided to trust my gut and backed out before signing the contract. Even though it's hard for me to say "no," I've learned that it will save me a lot of time and frustration in the long run. Plus, when I did say "no" to that recent assignment, I had a pitch accepted the next day for an article I really wanted to write. I was happy that I had the time to write that one instead of a questionable piece.

At the time, I had a bad feeling about all of these different assignments. I should have listened to my gut instincts.

»» Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter. Her writing has been published in *The New York Times*, *Parents Magazine*, *AARP*, *Healthline*, *Your Teen Magazine*, and many other publications. She is a professional member of ASJA. You can find her on Twitter @CherylMaguire05.

Psst... It's No Secret: ASJA's Blog Keeps You in the Loop

Visit ASJA Confidential for the scoop on issues that matter most to freelancers.

As freelancers, we know how important it is to stay up-to-date on the latest happenings. And when it comes to timely information that can grow your business, Confidential helps you stay in the know.

YOU MIGHT FIND:

- ▶ Valuable tips showing how to make the most of your membership
- ▶ News about legal issues concerning freelancers
- ▶ Insider details on what to expect at upcoming ASJA events
- ▶ Opportunities and calls to action

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