

5 x 5:

Tips for Writing with Strength & Clarity

with *New York Times*
bestselling author,
Amber Smith



Have
you ever heard
of the saying “five by five”?

It goes back to World War II-era radio communications, and it means “I understand you perfectly,” as in the signal has excellent strength and perfect clarity – in other words, it could not be better. In this presentation, you will learn the best tips for writing with both strength and clarity from bestselling author, Amber Smith. Featuring Smith’s top five writing tips that can be applied to all genres, including poetry, prose, fiction, and nonfiction, followed by five personal tips that Smith has developed throughout the past decade of writing and publishing. Together, these 10 tips will be sure to bring something fresh and new to your writing process.

5 Tips Anyone Can Implement Right Now

1. Ask WHY of everything you write. It is never the first or second answer.
2. When it comes to CONFLICT and TENSION, go deeper and push further than you think you should. Don't be afraid of writing too much conflict and tension; finding the right balance is a back and forth process.
3. Muddled messages: See the forest for the trees. If it doesn't make it better, cut it out.
4. A third draft is NOT that many. Writing is re-writing.
5. Revisions: always read your work aloud before submitting it—there are even apps that will read your work aloud for you! Hearing your words will help you not only catch errors and mistakes, but will also connect you with the rhythm and flow of your words and sentences in a new way.

BONUS TIP: Find a trusted reader who will read your work in its entirety and give honest and constructive feedback. Most importantly, does this person pass the TP test?

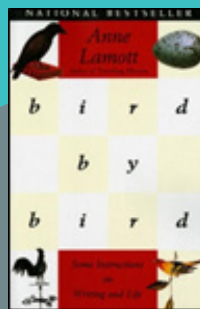
Best Books on Craft & Writing



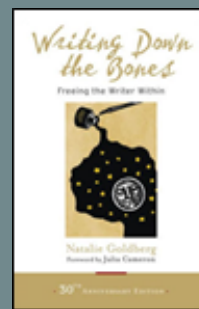
The Artist's Way
Julia Cameron



On Writing
Stephen King



Bird by Bird
Anne Lamott



Writing Down The Bones
Natalie Goldberg

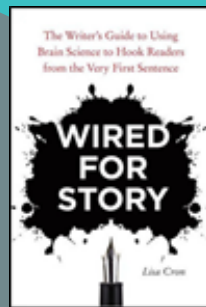
5 Personal Tips: How to Get EMOTION onto the Page

1. Take notes/write down all ideas, even the “bad” ones. My favorite time-tested tool is my handy composition notebook.
2. One size does NOT fit all (in clothing and in writing styles). Experiment to find a process that works for you.
3. Create your sacred writing space. (Physical/mental/emotional)
4. Get out of your way! The truth about writer’s block, distractions, and procrastination. Teaser: writer’s block does not exist, at least not in the way you might think.
5. How to find that oh-so-elusive authentic voice. Questions to ask yourself: What’s my point? Why do I need to write this?

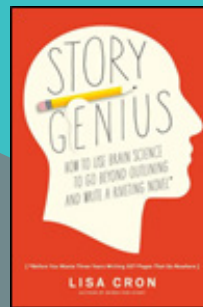
BONUS TIP: Try replacing the old adage “Write what you know” with “Write what you feel.” I like to think of writing as therapy, and so I take on subjects and characters that reflect issues I know I need to work through myself. I write not because I have the answers, but because I have questions.



Big Magic
Elizabeth Gilbert



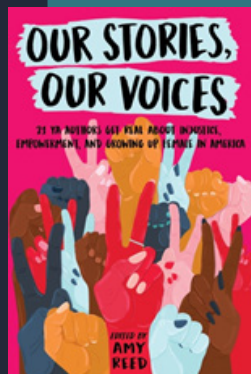
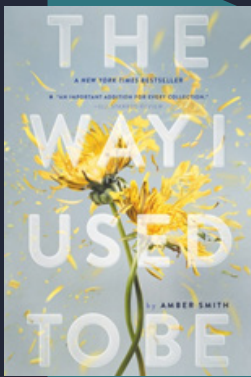
Wired For Story
Lisa Cron



Story Genius
Lisa Cron



Save the Cat Writes a Novel
Jessica Brody



ABOUT AMBER

Amber Smith is the *New York Times* bestselling author of novels for young adults.

Her debut, *The Way I Used to Be* (2016), was selected for the American Library Association's Amelia Bloomer List of Feminist Literature and Texas Library Association's TAYSHAS List, named a Bank Street Best Book of the Year, an Eliot Rosewater Award honor book, and nominated for Goodreads Choice Award in YA Fiction and Connecticut's Nutmeg Book Award. Her second novel, *The Last to Let Go* (2018), received starred reviews from *Booklist* and *VOYA*, and was named a most-anticipated book by *B&N Teen Blog*, *Elite Daily*, and *Bookish*. Her third novel, *Something Like Gravity* (2019) received starred reviews from *VOYA* and *Bookpage*, was named an Amazon Best Book of the Month, and a most-anticipated book by *BookRiot*, *NewNowNext*, *B&N Teen Blog*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *The Advocate*.

Amber grew up in Buffalo, New York and now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina with her partner and their ever-growing family of rescued dogs and cats. Fueled by a lifelong passion for the arts, story, and creative expression, Amber graduated from art school with a BFA in Painting and went on to earn her master's degree in Art History. When she's not writing she's usually reading, but can also be found in her studio making art or freelancing as an art consultant. She has also written on the topics of art history and modern and contemporary art, and contributed to the nonfiction YA anthology *Our Stories, Our Voices: 21 Authors Get Real About Injustice, Empowerment, and Growing Up Female in America* (2018).

An advocate for increased awareness of gendered violence, including sexual assault and domestic or intimate partner abuse, as well as LGBTQ equality, she writes in the hope that her books can help to foster change and spark dialogue surrounding these issues.

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