

THE FOCUSED WRITER *or* WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

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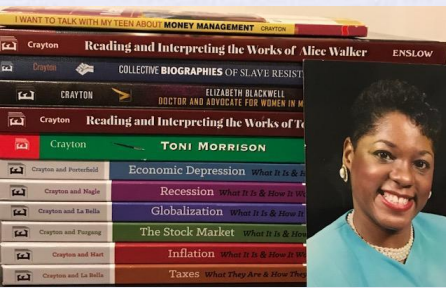
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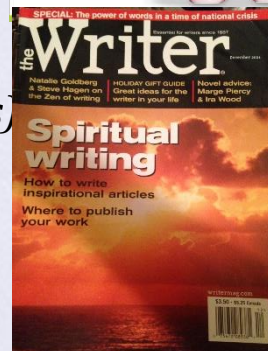
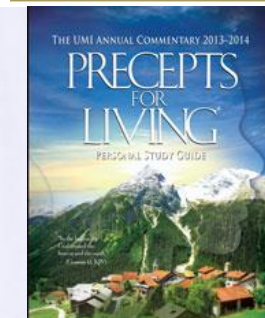
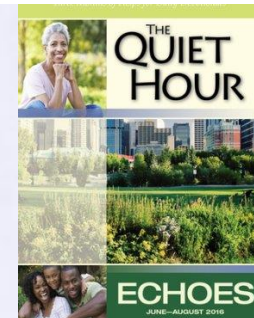
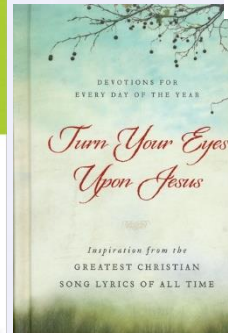
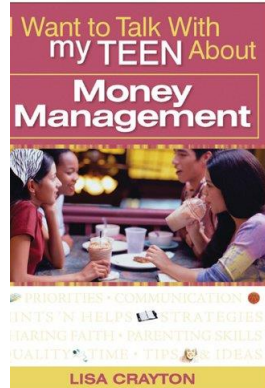
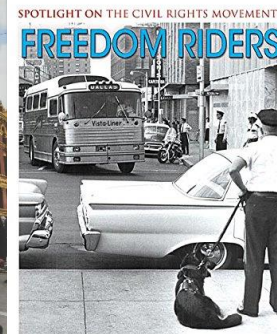
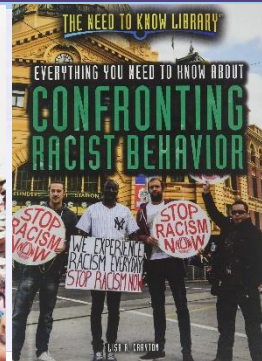
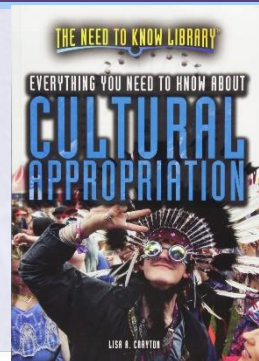


WHY THIS WEBINAR?

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Opportunities abound to publish *YOUR*....

- ✓ Articles
- ✓ Bible Studies
- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Devotionals
- ✓ Novels, Novellas, Short Stories
- ✓ Nonfiction Books
- ✓ Book Chapters (i.e., novellas)
- ✓ More!



OPPORTUNITIES EXSIST BECAUSE...

4

Readers, editors, and publishers

✓ *Seek*

✓ *Need*

✓ *Are hungry for*

clearly focused material.

BENEFITS OF A FOCUSED MANUSCRIPT

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- **Invites Reading**
- **Includes Timeless Themes**
- **Opportune/Timely**
- **Relatable**
- **Sells Manuscripts**
- **Yields Results!** (Editors and readers respond positively to manuscripts – articles, devotionals, books, and novellas and novels – with well-written stories)

ROADBLOCK

6

*Unfocused manuscripts
are difficult to pitch
and get published.*

OVERCOME ROADBLOCK

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Identify and overcome structural roadblocks inherent in unfocused manuscripts to:

- improve focus
- readability, and
- marketability

FOCUSED WRITING =

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1. Vehicle of Communication
 - Easy to Read
 - Easy to Understand
2. Reflects Light (Jesus)
3. Connects Mankind to God
4. Informs
5. Heals
6. Entertains
7. More!

ASK YOURSELF

9

**What is *my* manuscript
really about?**

*Every writer must answer this key question to
write a clear, focused manuscript.*

PRIMARY QUESTION

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WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

My manuscript is about :

- ▶ One **WORD** answer
- ▶ One **SENTENCE** answer
- ▶ One **PARAGRAPH** answer

SECONDARY QUESTIONS

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1. **WHY** Did I Write This?
2. **WHO'S** It For?
3. **WHY** Should People Care/Read/Buy? (Benefits to Readers?)
4. **HOW'S** It Different?

STRUCTURAL ROADBLOCKS

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- ▶ Weak Building Blocks
 - ▶ Unfocused Themes
 - ▶ Unclear Audience
 - ▶ Ineffective Stories
- ▶ Ineffective Research
- ▶ Ineffective Revision

1. WEAK BUILDING BLOCKS

- **Common Content Issues**

- Sentences & Paragraphs
- Beginnings, Middles, Endings

- **Analyze...**

- “Voice” (what is it, how does it work?)
 - Structure (does it make sense?)
 - Theme Development (good, bad, ugly?)
 - Promises Made (are they met?)

2. UNFOCUSED THEMES

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THEME = SUBJECT/TOPIC

It's the **main/overall** point of your manuscript:

- ✓ **Must** be clear in each paragraph
- ✓ **Must** be clear in each chapter
- ✓ **STAY ON TOPIC**

Each manuscript should have one main theme BUT may have sub-themes.

- **EXAMPLE: Main theme:** Teaching Kids Money Management
- **Sub-themes:** Every teens need to know 4 tools to manage money
- *Each paragraph or chapter will tackle 1 tool **and** how reader can teach to teen because main theme is “**teaching kids** money management” not just money management tools teens should know about*

3. UNCLEAR AUDIENCE

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Who are you writing for/to?

Gender

Age

Race

Marital State

Vocation/Occupation

Location (local, national, international,)

Occupation (if applicable)

Faith Background

Genre Preference (i.e., writing for readers of fantasy novels)

Other/More...

IF YOU DON'T KNOW, YOUR WRITING WILL BE UNFOCUSED

4a. TALL TALES

Good stories *MAKE* manuscripts

- ✓ Relevant/Appropriate
- ✓ Universal or Relatable
- ✓ Brief
- ✓ Interesting
- ✓ Enhance Pace (move manuscript along)
- ✓ Draw Readers Into Fiction & Nonfiction
- ✓ Make Themes Relatable
- ✓ Avoid Finger-Pointing/ Preachy Writing

4b. TALL TALES

Bad stories ***BREAK*** manuscripts

- ✓ **TOO LONG!**
- ✓ Boring
- ✓ Off Topic/***Not*** relevant
- ✓ Random (*like why did you put this in here???!*)

IMHO: Better no stories than a bad story!

5. ROCKY RESEARCH?

PET PEEVE ALERT

Effective research **MAKES** manuscripts

- ✓ Relevant/Appropriate
- ✓ Real/Verifiable (**Do Not Type Scripture**)
- ✓ Recent (*is that really/still true today?*)?
- ✓ Mixed (Primary & Secondary Sources)
- ✓ Limited
- ✓ Properly Cited
- ✓ Kept (An Editor May Request Copy)

Bad research **KILLS** manuscripts

- ✓ **FALSE NEWS** (*check your facts!*)
- ✓ Unsourced (*where did this come from??!*)
- ✓ **OLD AS DIRT**
- ✓ Random (*like why did you put this in here???!*)

THE POWER OF OUTLINING

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Most manuscripts can benefit from an outline.

AN OUTLINE...

- ✓ Serves as a **GPS for content development**
- ✓ Aids in brainstorming
- ✓ Easily identifies manuscript/content holes
- ✓ Is Fluid (can move, delete, add content)
- ✓ Combats writer's block (***write to the outline***)
- ✓ Saves time

TRY IT...YOU MAKE LIKE IT

FOCUS MYTHS & FACTS

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- **MYTH:** 1 draft and it's done.
 - **FACT:** Rarely is a piece of writing *finished* after one draft.

- **MYTH:** If it's clear too me, it's clear enough.
 - **FACT:** Huh?" – Consider revising.

- **MYTH:** I write for intellectuals so my phrasing, sentence length, etc. is perfect.
 - **FACT:** Did you just call me dumb?

FOCUS MYTHS & FACTS

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- **MYTH:** Only my editor needs to see this.
 - **FACT:** Critique partners, sensitivity readers, other “first readers” can help with focus.

- **MYTH:** I don't have time to revise.
 - **FACT:** Revision is a writer's best friend.

- **MYTH:** If Jesus told me to write this; it's perfect.
 - **FACT: Jesus is Perfect.** My writing? Not so much. (But it improves with revision.)

ROADBLOCK CHECK

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Manuscript is **whole**?

- Includes everything promised to include.

Beginning, middle, end = **clear/focused**?

- Has a beginning, middle & end.
- Each sentence makes sense.
- Each paragraph makes sense.
- Each chapter makes sense.

Everything is **theme-related**?

- The theme is woven throughout.

YAY...It's not perfect, but it's good to go!

REFOCUS YOUR WRITING

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- 1. Don't overthink**
- 2. Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite.**
- 3. Move something.**
- 4. Make it simpler.**
- 5. Shorten.**
- 6. Ask for help.**

WHY BOTHER?

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Key Reasons to FOCUS Your Writing/Write to Publish?

- Share Faith/Christian Worldview
- Minister/Help Others
- Spark Joy, Laughter, Healing, More!
- Expand portfolio
- Build Platform
- Reach Larger or New Audiences
- Increase Income
- Obey God/Fulfill Call of God
- Live Your Dream!