

Write the Damn Book!



Your FREE Guide to Getting Started



Many aspiring authors (like you) struggle for way longer than they need to when trying to write their book. Writing isn't easy, but it can be simple. My clients find that going from idea to final draft can happen in a fraction of the time when you know the steps to take.

Here's a big-picture overview of the process that my clients and I use to create an entire book.

STEP

1

What's the

Big Idea?



What's the *Big Idea?*

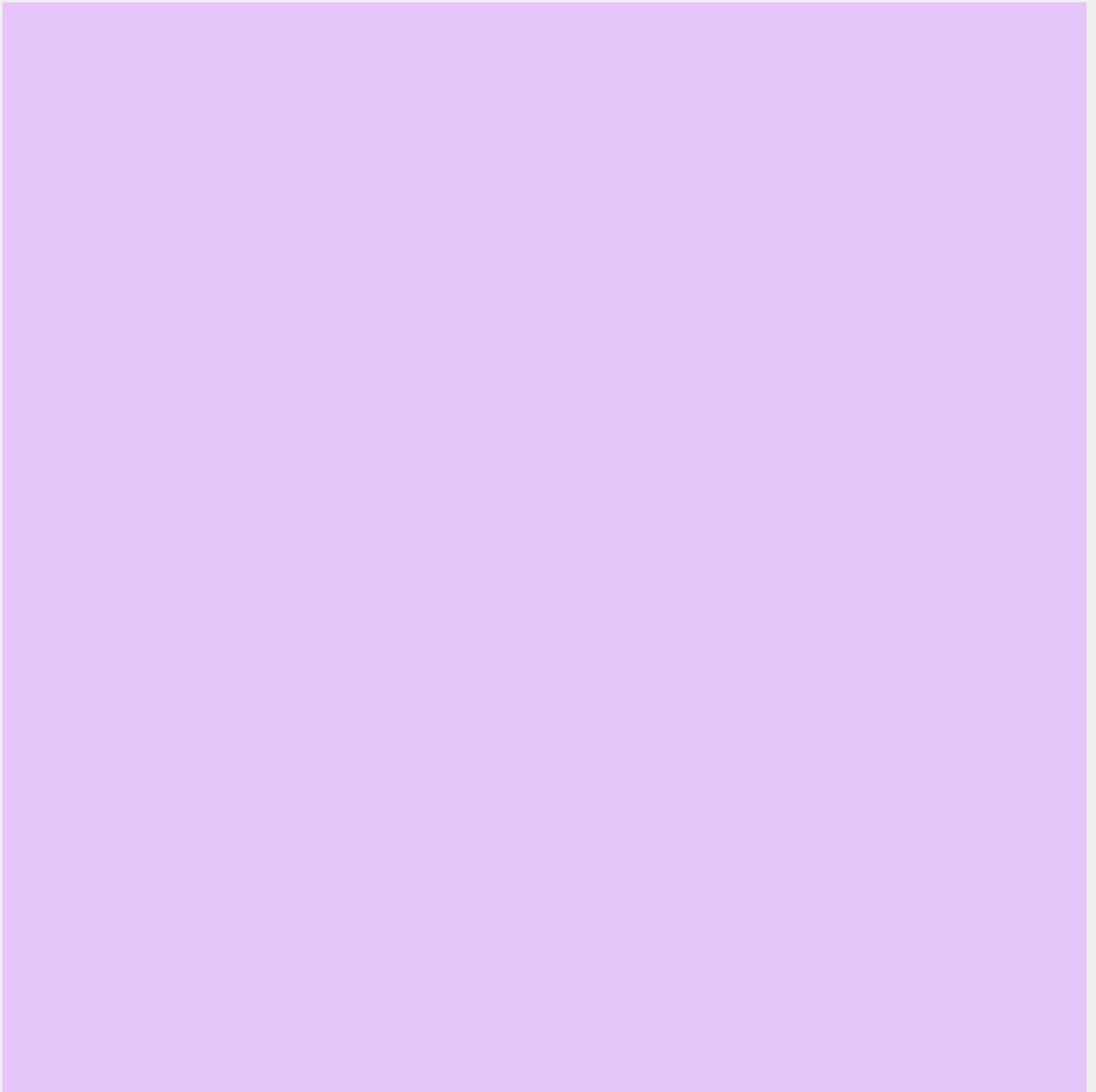
This is the part that is probably the most fun, for me, anyway (you too?). Ideas come along in the course of daily life. Your job is to snatch them out of the air and capture their essence (before you lose them or they choose another person to birth them), whether in writing or in the basket of miscellaneous things in the backseat of your mind.

Some ideas will stick with you, and keep poking their heads back up to make sure you're paying attention to them. Others may wander off. That's okay. They'll come back to you if you're meant to work together.

You can cultivate your receptiveness to good ideas by daydreaming, getting outside in nature, reading and watching things that spark your interest, meditating (or other means of listening within), playing, and having conversations with fascinating creative people.

Write it Down

What's your Big Idea?



STEP

2

The Plan:

*Mischief
Managed!*



The Plan:

Mischief Managed

So many creative people resist this part. We've bought into the myth that organizing your creative sparks will cause them to go out.

To the contrary! Having even a loose outline for your ideas allows you to focus more keenly on what you're working on at any given moment. This will keep you from staring at the blank page and wondering what to do.

Planning can range from a detailed outline with chapter and section headings, all the way to a wild mind map of brainstormed concepts. My clients learn to plan in the way that works best for them. When we work together, I show you how to use planning to support the process that works best for you. If you don't yet know what that is, experiment playfully. There's no need to force it.

Mischief Managed

Take 5 minutes to create or update your flexible outline, in a word processor, Google doc, or notebook.

Here's an example of one of my own flexible outlines, to get you started.

TEXT COLOR KEY:

Black = nothing written yet

Purple = some text written, needs revising/more added

Green = draft complete

My Story (Introduction)

How to Use This Book

What are the Elements of Creativity? -

Overview of the Elements in the neo-Pagan tradition and how they touch on/affect creativity -

the idea of the Triple Self and alignment

overview of the Borderlands

What About the Other Two Elemental Combinations?

Making the Map - the 3 containers you need to write a book or do any kind of big creative project - intention, habit, outline

We Begin and End with Spirit in the Center

About Spirit

STEP

3

The Container
That Allows

*Your Book to
Write Itself*



The Container That Allows *Your Book to Write Itself*

This is another thing that creatives tend to resist. We think that we'll randomly be inspired to write and won't be able to pull ourselves away from the keyboard. That might even be true - however, those times of passionate inspiration can happen when you have to be at your day job, pick up your kids, or get to an appointment.

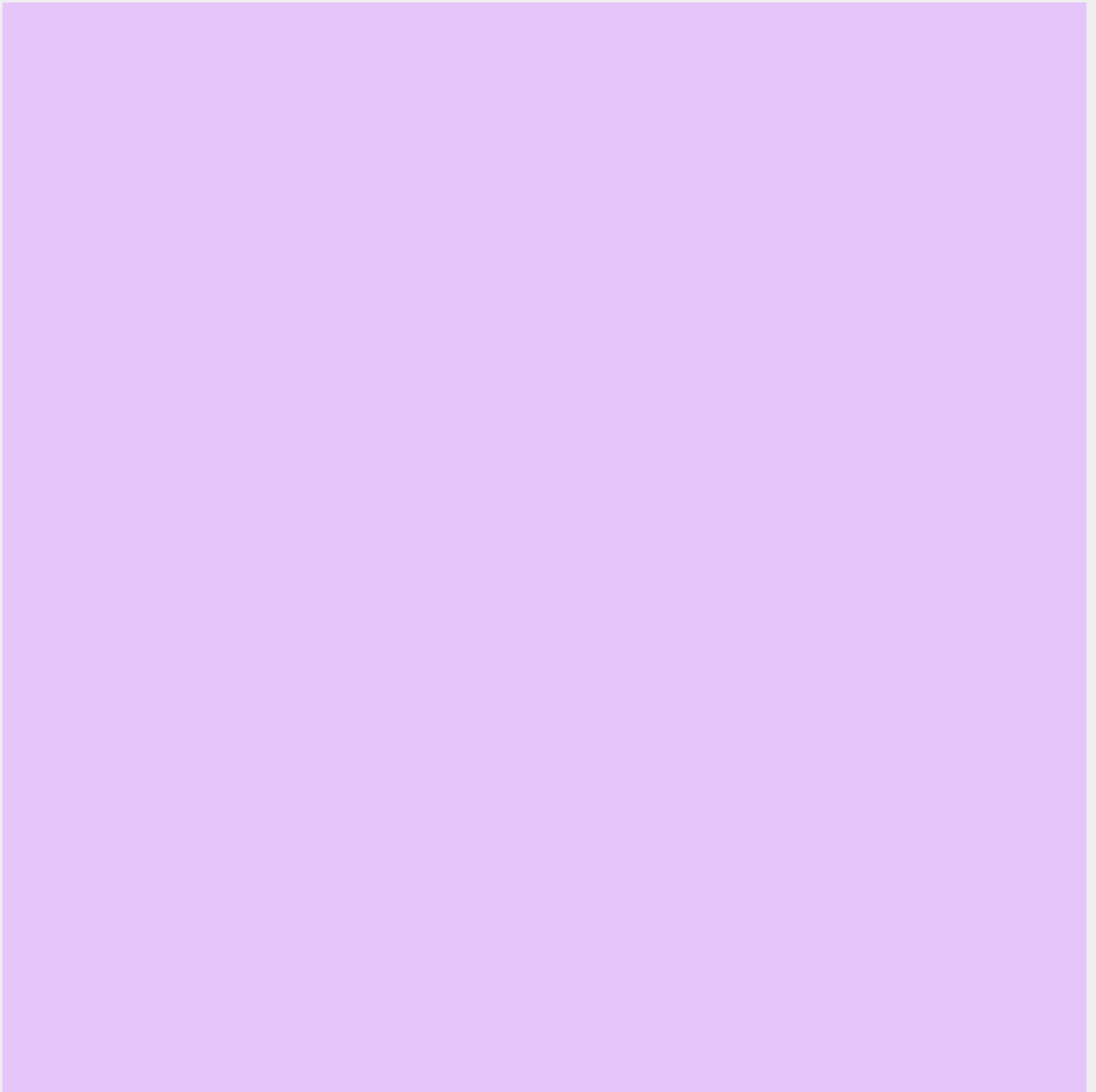
As all of the most productive and successful writers will tell you, having a time set aside that is devoted to writing is essential. This might be 20 minutes in the morning before your household awakens, a couple of hours in the afternoon twice a week, or a dedicated chunk of time over the weekend.

The key is consistency, and sticking to your commitment to your writing like you would to your child or client.

Write it Down

When in your week do you plan to do your writing?

What do you need in place to support that habit?
(examples: an agreement with your spouse not to interrupt you for that time period, your phone in airplane mode, something to occupy a kiddo for that time)



STEP

4

Writing Your Book

Made Easier



Writing Your Book

Made Easier

This is the longest, toughest part. The good news is that the way you become good at writing is to write.

The challenging news is that there's no way out but through. You have to sit down (or anchor yourself at your standing desk, if you prefer) and actually do it. Over and over. Whether it's going well or not.

This part is all about showing up. Don't try to edit while you're writing your first draft. Just spew it all out on the page.

Make it *FUN*



- with your writing playlist

- your favorite hot or cold beverage



- candles

- rewards for finishing a session



- accountability check-ins with other creatives

- or whatever works for you.



Just keep showing up and writing the words.

Write it Down

What will keep you regularly sitting down to work on your writing project?

1

2

3

4

5

STEP

5

The Cleanup Crew

*(Now You Get to
Wear That Fancy
Editor Hat!)*



The Cleanup Crew

Wear That Fancy Editor Hat!

After your draft is done, please, for the love of the muses, take a break! Go outside, hang out with your favorite people (cats totally count), or devour that book you've been wanting to read.

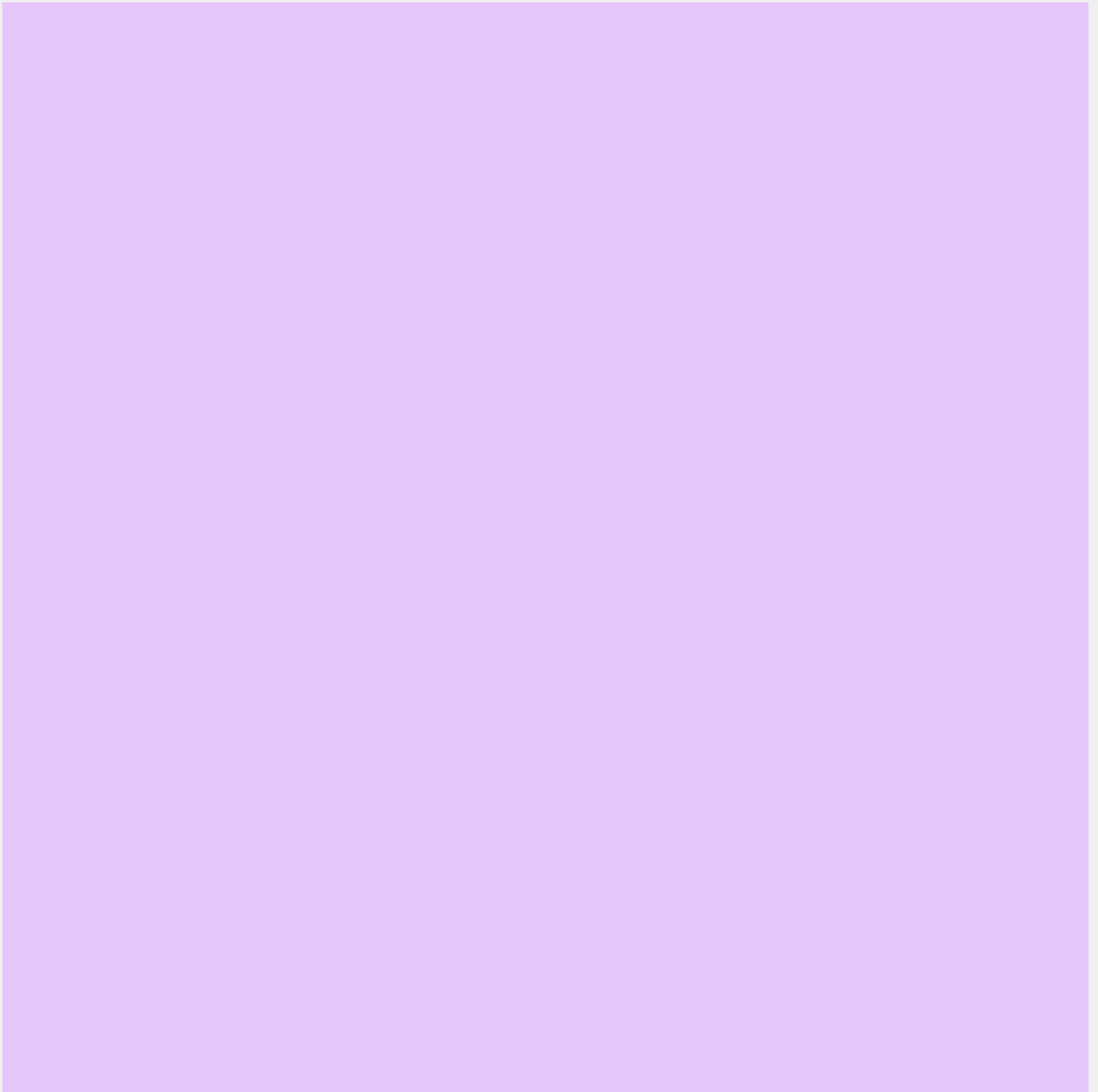
Once you've taken a break from your work, put on that editor hat and jump back in.

Read through what you've written, and correct or add as you feel it needs. This isn't the final edit so you don't have to worry about it being picture-perfect. Just massage it until it makes sense, and captures the feel of that original idea of yours.

Playfully clean up your draft until you feel good about it, or at least willing to show it to other humans.

Write it Down

What feels scary to you about sharing your writing with others?



STEP

6

The Feedback

You Truly Need



The Feedback *You Truly Need*

Get someone else to read your draft and give you their feedback. Choose wisely. You don't want your first readers to be A) someone who will love it just because you wrote it, like your bestie or B) Negative Nellies who will tear your beloved manuscript into pieces.

Find readers who enjoy reading the genre you're writing in. Ones who will give you constructive criticism. If you're tentative about your first efforts, ask someone you trust, and specify the type of feedback you're looking for, such as "honest but kind."

Give your readers a timeline by which to respond with their notes. While they're reading your draft, do something else entirely.

Write it Down

Who would you trust to give you useful feedback?

1

2

3

4

5

STEP

7

Polishing Up:

*The Revisions That
Make Your Draft
a Gem*



Polishing Up: The Revisions That Make Your Draft a Gem

Read over the feedback you've gotten. Check any notes you made while writing or editing. Read your manuscript again, preferably in one sitting.

Now make the changes that make the most sense for you and your book. If multiple readers mention the same thing, that's probably a clue that you need to clarify or modify it.

However, just because a reader says something doesn't mean you have to do it. You're in charge of this project.

Make the edits, then read the draft again. Work with it until you're reasonably satisfied with it. Notice I didn't say "until it's perfect." There's a point at which you need to stop and believe that it's good enough, or you'll be working on the same book for decades.

Write it Down

What are your feelings about revisions?

A large, empty purple rectangular area intended for writing.

Does this all sound like more than you're willing or able to do?



● ***My very best pro tip for writing a book is to GET SUPPORT.***

Call upon others who've done this before. Learn where you're likely to get stuck - perhaps by noticing which of the above steps makes you cringe the most - and enlist help. What's the step that's got you doubting your ability?

Ready to have your hand held while you begin writing your book?

LET'S CHAT!

Meet Nikki



Nikki Starcat Shields is an author, book midwife, and leader of transformational writing retreats. She's also a licensed Pagan priestess.

Nikki has had five non-fiction books published so far and is currently writing a contemporary fantasy series.

She would love to help you give birth to your heart-centered book, whether it's memoir, fiction, or self-help.

Nikki specializes in bringing your unique voice - your expertise, your passions, your most cherished stories - to the page in a way that will engage and delight your readers.

She also guides you to write your book in a way that supports you and helps you focus on your true priorities.

Nikki teaches people to be Thriving Artists, writing their heartfelt books while also nurturing themselves and their creative lives. She lives in Maine and adores reading, cats, and spending time by the ocean.



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