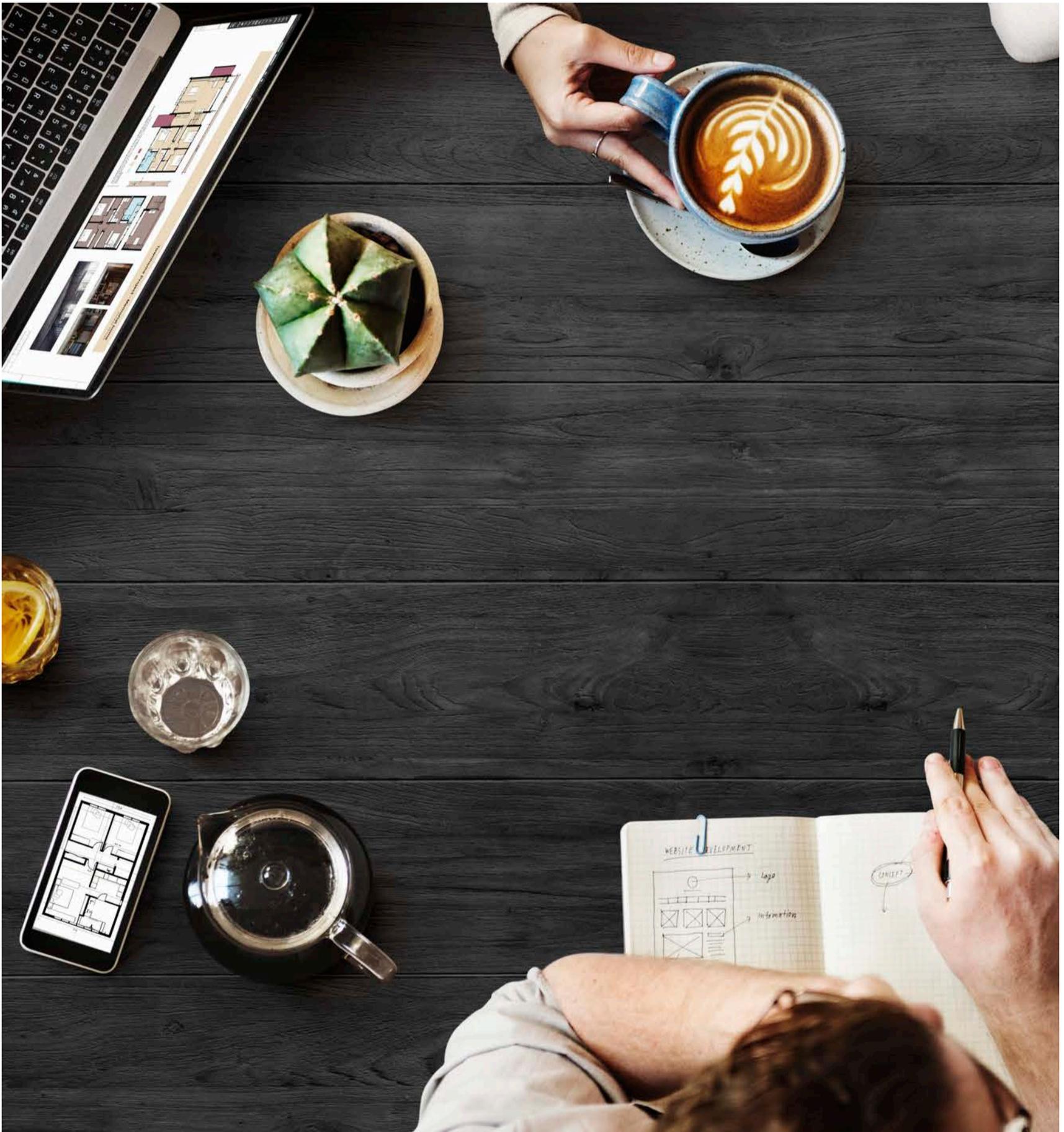

A UNIVERSE OF SUPPORT



author
accelerator

A UNIVERSE OF SUPPORT

Writing is a solitary process, but any writer who wants strangers to read their work is going to have to share their work with the outside world. This can be a terrifying thing. After all, you've put your heart and soul into your writing. You've laid it all on the line and with the flick of an eye, someone can dismiss it or disparage it -- or worse.

It's natural to want to find someone who will be really, really nice to you, and super supportive of you -- which is why so many writers make the mistake that might mean they will never write a book:

They give their work to someone they love.

Just because someone loves you doesn't mean you should give them your work to read, and yet writers make this mistake again and again. They write a few fragile pages, then hand them off to their spouse or partner or lover or mother, holding their breath, waiting for the supportive words of encouragement they desperately need -- and the words don't come. Instead, the writer gets some version of the following:

- Empty praise. The person who loves you says something like, "It's so cool you're writing a book. This is awesome. Keep it up." The praise is so vague and empty that you're left thinking, "Did they even read it?" This is not good for either your relationship or your writing.
- No respect. The person who loves you says something like, "Oh, I meant to read it, but then I got to eating that chocolate cookie dough in the freezer and I ended up taking a nap instead." This goes on for weeks, until you are so furious, you rip your pages back into your possession -- and the person who loves you doesn't even notice.
- Hurtful criticism. The person who loves you says something petty or mean or hateful about your work and it's not necessarily because they hate it, but because they're not qualified to judge it. Maybe they're not part of your audience. Maybe they don't know squat about the creative process. Maybe they have no clue how to read a room with a writer in it. Either way, it doesn't help and it usually hurts

Love is not a good enough reason to give someone your work to read.

You need to be much more discerning about who sees your work, and who sees it WHEN. You need to THINK before you share. It's one of the simplest, easiest things you can do to ensure that you will actually write a book. So how do you do this? Start thinking about the universe of people who support your work.



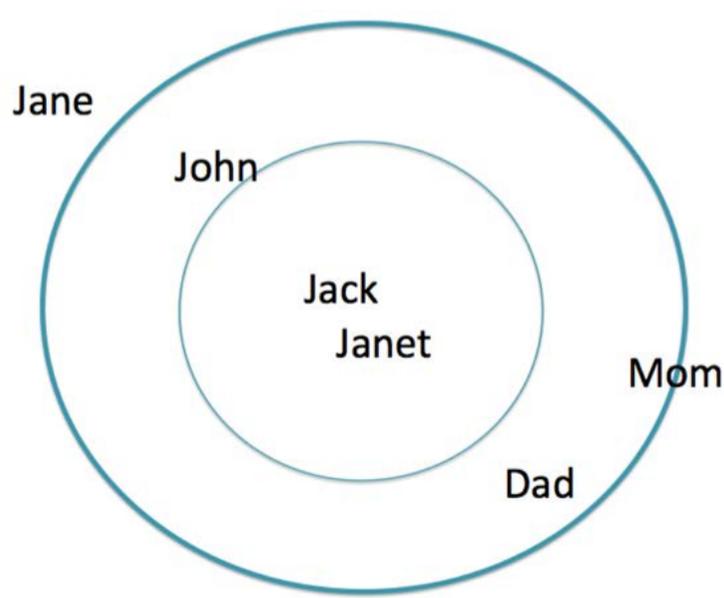
- For years, I made the mistake of giving my rough drafts to my sweet husband, Rob, to read. I was so invested in it, and so wrapped up in it, and I mostly wanted him to share in my passion, and to tell me that it was great, and to talk to me about the emotions on the page -- but couldn't do that. It's not in his DNA. He's a finance guy. What he would say is something like, "Isn't that a dangling participle on page 2?" We would fight and I would always end up crying. It was bad -- until I finally figured out the solution: just don't show it to him. Let him tell me that he loves me, let him toast my accomplishments, and brag to his friends at the office that I am writing a book. The trick is to keep him away from my early work.
- I had similar problems with my sister, Laura, who is an academic, schooled in the art of precise research. Anytime I gave her a rough draft, she would rip my work to shreds and I would end up feeling hurt and angry. I finally stopped giving her my rough drafts. What I would do was call in Laura at the final, polished, make-it-perfect stage and say, "Rip it apart." It was at that stage that I could take it, and at that stage that I needed it. I mean, Laura once figured out that I couldn't say the Harvard baseball team had a winning season in April, 1952, because they were, in fact, losing during that month. They didn't start winning until May. There are times when you need this kind of feedback, and there are times when you really don't. It's up to you to know the difference.
- My mom? Let's just say that the time I like my mom to read my work is when it's available in the bookstore.

So who reads my work when I need the emotional help and support to go from "I have a good idea" to "I have 50 solid pages and I am on my way?" Who reads my work when I am on page 212 and stuck and thinking that all is lost?

It's a tiny, specialized group of awesome people. One is my college roommate. Another is another writer. The third is my hairdresser. I can give these women anything I write and they will find a way to be honest and supportive and helpful, even if they are saying, "Throw it out." They support my writing 100%. I couldn't do it without them.

Here is what my universe of support looks like (the names are changed):

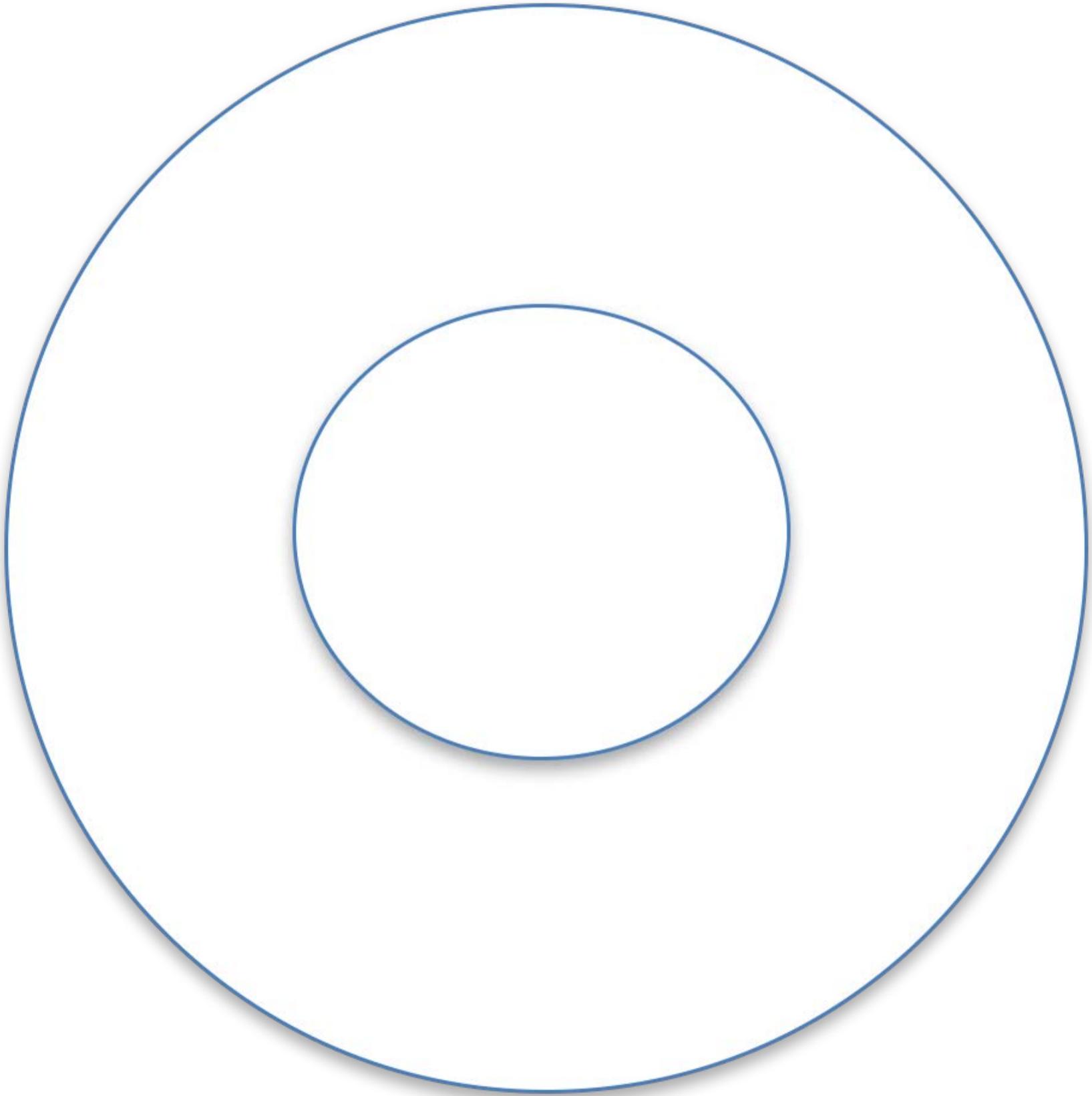
- Jane isn't in my universe. She never gets to see me work.
- My mom is definitely in the danger zone – almost banished.
- John supports me, but isn't in my inner circle. I might give him my work to read at a certain specific point well into the process, when my work is not so fragile.
- Jack and Janet support my work 100%



A Universe of Support — Your Turn

What about your universe of support? Download the Universe of Support graphic and fill it in. Only put people in the inner circle who support your writing 100%. And yes, you can put dogs and cats there. And dead people. Support can be spiritual or animal — absolutely. You can also put people there that don't actually know anything about your work. I once had a client who was writing a raunchy story about his years as a gay phone sex operator. His boyfriend called me one day to say that he wanted to buy my services for six months as a gift for his lover. "I have no idea what he's writing about, and no idea what you are doing, but he is so happy working with you and I want him to keep going." That, my friends, is 100% support.

If you have no one to put in that space? Fine. At least you know it. At least you can have it as a goal. Use the graph to fill in your universe.





DID YOU FIND THIS WORKBOOK HELPFUL?

PRO-TIP:

Do you know you need help, but aren't sure what exactly you need?

Visit our website to start your research.



We invite you to check out what we have to offer at Author Accelerator:

BLUEPRINT FOR A BOOK

An intense weekend of live video, Q&As and building the foundation to your novel. Personalized feedback on all your assignments from a book coach within a week.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

STORY GENIUS WORKSHOP

A 10-week program based on Lisa Cron's Story Genius method. Personalized feedback on all your assignments from a book coach.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

MANUSCRIPT ACCELERATOR

A 6-month no-excuses for starting and *finishing* a rough draft — and finishing strong. Working with a coach is the best way to make your dream of writing a book a reality.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)