

# WISE WOMEN WRITE™

December 2009

Local author and Wise Woman Write founder Diane Amento Owens brings women together to write, share, and grow.

Need some inspiration? Visit Diane's [Weekly Wise Words](#) and sign up to have them delivered to you each week.



## Simple Gifts by author Diane Amento Owens

As I jotted down my thoughts during my Morning Pages journaling time, Josh Groban distracted me. The nerve! His voice floated in from the family room as my visiting daughter listened to a Tivoed concert. Wishing for the return my usual quiet mornings, I tried to focus, but the power of Groban's voice stopped my pen. *Such a gift--why can't I sing like **that**?*

Few are blessed with this kind of musical gift, but our writing voices are gifts, too. I once read that writers often fail to appreciate that not everyone can so easily spin words together into paragraphs, pages, or books--almost as effortlessly as Josh Groban blends notes into song. Acknowledging a writing gift doesn't mean you need to boast or feel superior to those whose words fall flat, but being grateful is good practice.

Whether you discover early or late that you can "sing" on the page, you have many choices in how you use your gift. Words skillfully strung together can entertain, empower, inform, and inspire. Answer email or tweet. Reminisce, tickle funny bones, motivate. Challenge or teach. Share.

The mission of Wise Women Write is to share our writing, and there's no better time than the holidays for sharing your writing gifts. Use your words to craft a clever (and concise) holiday letter. Write about a childhood tradition for your children. Create a special story for grandchildren. Collect family recipes for gift booklets and write stories about the recipes. Or give someone the gift of words written from the heart. Perhaps you can "sing" a love song in a letter to a family member sharing how much he/she means to you. Or write a letter to your child recapping the year's high points. Handmade gifts are wonderful, and your writing as a gift will be both handmade and heartfelt.

We writers may never sing like Josh Groban, but with our words we have the power to change the world. -Diane

Learn more about Wise Women Write [here!](#)

# \*ANNOUNCEMENTS\*



**WINDY LYNN HARRIS'** short story, "Canned Strawberries," her first attempt at writing a romance, was published in the November/December edition of *The Chick Lit Review*.

**SUSAN POHLMAN'S** award-winning memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*, is selling so well that a paperback version will be published in January of 2011.

Congratulations on the continued success of your project, Susan!



**TRISH DOLASINSKI** will read her recently published story, "Above and Below the Board," at the Consortium for the Arts Family Culture Day, December 12th at the Peoria Expo Center.

Also, read as Trish and other local learning specialists discuss the future of Arizona education in this month's edition of *Raising Arizona Kids Magazine*.



Got some news you'd like to share? Contact Wise Woman Write Newsletter editor [Windy Lynn Harris](#).



# Returning the Favor

by author Susan Pohlman

## THE BIG DAY (LANDING AN AGENT)

Here's how it plays out (if you're me, that is). After months of hopeful query letters and heart-sinking rejection, you come home from the store on a regular Wednesday to see a blinking light on your answering machine. You press the button almost absentmindedly with one hand as you plop the grocery bag on the kitchen counter with the other. In between unloading the cereal and reaching for the Oreos you hear the word "manuscript" and then "interested."

The Oreos crash to the floor as you reach for the repeat button. Again, you hear "blah blah blah Ms. So-and-So, blah blah blah, agency blah blah blah, please return my call at your earliest convenience." Yesssss! You call them back immediately.

An hour later, after a lengthy conversation to determine that you actually wrote the manuscript material yourself and that you are reasonably sane, you and your new agent come to a verbal agreement. She would like to represent you, and you love her immediately.

She is, without a doubt, the greatest human being you have ever met!

Emotion aside, it's now time to do your homework. Entering a legal relationship with an agent is serious business. She will send you a contract that will determine what happens with your manuscript and how you will be paid. Don't let the thrill of the moment cloud your good judgment. Research every clause in the contract or hire a lawyer to do it for you. Know and understand what you are signing when you sign it.

I was lucky. My story attracted the attention of a terrific agent who had been in the business for many years. Her contract was standard and easy to understand. I sensed from the beginning that she would be firm and fair, and that has been the case ever since. Hopefully you will be as fortunate! -Susan

Join Susan here each month as she walks us through what it takes to make it as a published author today.

Visit Susan at [www.susanpohlman.com](http://www.susanpohlman.com) to check her upcoming event schedule and learn more about her memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*.



### Great News!

Susan's debut memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*, is [available in bookstores now!](#) Get your copy today!



# Spinning a Good Yarn

by Trish Dolasinski, Ed. D.

Good news: Women no longer have to bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan . . . and, well, you know the rest of the jingle. In his newest book, *Find Your Strongest Life*, New York Times best-selling author Marcus Buckingham dispels the myth of balancing all of the balls in the air and perfecting the role of the “Stepford Wives.”

Buckingham, backed up by intensive international research, tells us that women need to focus on their strengths and to put them to work to achieve their best possible life. “If ‘having it all’ means drawing enough strength from life to feel fulfilled, loved, successful, and in control, then that is something every single one of us should aim for and every single one of us can attain,” says Buckingham.

A former researcher at the Gallup Organization and *go-to* consultant for people and organizations wanting to leverage their strengths, Buckingham tells us that even though women have made monumental strides and gained greater personal achievement than ever before in history, they are **less happy** than they were before the feminine revolution broke through the glass ceiling.

Want to learn about YOUR strengths? Take the research-based *Strength Test* at [www.findastrongerlife.com](http://www.findastrongerlife.com). The entire process takes less than fifteen minutes, and the results of your responses are immediate. After taking this test, you will have information about the core traits that are unique to your personality and truly define your character—or *Life Roles*, as

Buckingham defines them. Think about what strengths you can focus on to help you in your writing life, your home life, and your social life. Understanding your strengths is a wonderful tool for self-discovery.

“The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself,” said Anna Quindlen, American author and journalist.

So knock yourselves out no more, Dear Writing Sisters, take the *Strength Test* and live YOUR best life! -Trish

When you slip into your cozy corner this busy holiday season, pick up your pen and that favorite notebook, and consider your strengths. When you took the Strong Life Test, were you surprised at the results? On a scale from 1 to 10, rate your daily focus on your personal strength characteristics.

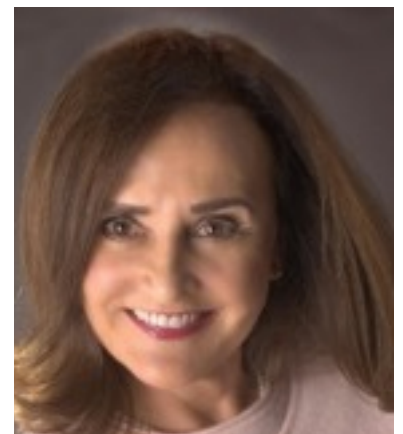
If you are not at a true “10,” what would it take for you to be at the peak of your qualities? What changes would/could you make to achieve “your personal perfect score of 10?” Now jot down one or two goals that will help you maximize those strengths. Congratulations, wise writing woman, you are now on your way to learning more about who that beautiful YOU truly is!

Stop by [www.trishdolasinskiwrites.com](http://www.trishdolasinskiwrites.com) each week for more inspirational journal prompts!



Be sure to stop by the cozy corner of Trish's journal writing page and become inspired to [Spin a Good Yarn](#).

Join the conversation by leaving Trish a comment!



# Corner the Market

by Windy Lynn Harris

## GOAL SETTING IN 2010



I love goals. I love to write them down, study them weekly, and push myself to meet them. My favorite part? Being able to cross them off my list, one by one, in thick black ink.

Some years my writing goals have been an extensive list of classes I planned to take. Other years I've pushed myself to market my work, calculating my efforts in numbers of rejection letters. No matter what my list looks like in January, I usually add a few items to my list during the year, such as a big contest I'd like to enter or a conference I plan to attend.

Last year my growing goal list became too overwhelming to be productive, so I reduced my list to three inspirational pictures: a cup of coffee reminded me to stick to my Marketing Monday routine, the photo of my dog rolling in the sunshine inspired me to create new fiction (my Springer spaniel has had many starring roles in my work), and the picture of me with friends on Bartlett Lake was my reminder to HAVE FUN while I'm at it. And the best news? At the close of 2009, I can cross each one off my list.

Setting reasonable and concrete goals this month will help YOU focus on what you'd like to accomplish in your writing life, too. Here are a few ideas to get you started: What skill do you want to improve the most this year? Is there a magazine where you want to see your byline? How many times a week or hours per week do you want to spend writing?

Write these goals down on a piece of paper and hang it where you can see it each day. Feel free to be creative! You can draw your goals, write them into a poem, or use photos like I do. Soon you'll be reaching for that thick black pen, crossing through your list! -Windy



VISIT WINDY'S  
[WEBSITE](#) TO  
LEARN MORE  
ABOUT HER  
PERSONAL  
MARKET  
COACHING  
PROGRAM SO YOU  
CAN GET YOUR  
CREATIVE  
WRITING  
PUBLISHED NOW!

## DECEMBER WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

DISCOVERING THE UNDISCOVERED NOVEL/MEMOIR CONTEST

[http://shop.notesandgracenotes.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=11](http://shop.notesandgracenotes.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=11)

THE JOSH PRIZES IN POETRY

<http://www.laverne.edu/academics/arts-sciences/prism-review/contests>

THE FOUR HORSEMEN ANTHOLOGY COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

<http://www.pillhillpress.com/4-horsemen.html>

RIDDLE FENCE MAGAZINE (CREATIVE NON-FICTION, POETRY, FICTION)

<http://riddlefence.com/>

# \*COMMUNITY NEWS\*



[The Arizona Consortium for the Arts](#) unites, advances, collaborates, partners, and supports individuals and organizations in all aspects of arts, performing arts, literary arts and cultures in Arizona. Visit their website for information about *The Blue Guitar Magazine* and how to become a free consortium member.

## \*WWW BLOGROLL\*

[Wise Women Write](#) is a community of new and established writers gathered together by author Diane Amento Owens. Read Diane's blog for encouragement, support, and mentoring in your own writing life.

[The Backstory Cafe](#) is a creative space designed by freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris where the characters from her fiction writing come to hang out after a hard day in her office.

[Spinning a Good Yarn](#) is freelance writer Trish Dolasinski's wonderful blog dedicated to journal writing. Stop by each week to have a conversation with Trish and join the fun with her latest journal prompt.

[Moments that Matter](#) is written by Susan Pohlman, award-winning author of the memoir "[Halfway to Each Other.](#)" Susan shares new moments from her world with the same blend of blatant honesty and lyrical prose that captivates us all in her book.

[Maryann McCullough](#) posts a thought-provoking (and often laugh-provoking) new essay at the beginning of each month.

[Being Rudri](#) is the creative spot for musings from Arizona freelance writer Rudri Bhatt Patel. Her inviting tone and nostalgic thoughts will charm you.

# \*WRITER'S RESOURCE\*

DO YOU WRITE ESSAYS, SHORT STORIES, OR POEMS? WANT TO SEE YOUR BYLINE IN MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS?

## **MARKET COACH FOR UNPUBLISHED WRITERS AVAILABLE!**

Award-winning freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris will teach you:

- \*Where to find thousands of markets for your work
- \*How to find the right editor for each piece
- \*How to format your manuscript for submission
- \*How to write winning query letters

There is no magic wand needed to get your creative writing published, only a professional attitude toward the publishing industry and endless determination. Show editors that you deserve to be taken seriously as a writer by professionally presenting them your best work. When you submit an edited piece of writing and an interesting query letter to the right editor, you open the door to success.

**Get the information and the confidence you need to submit your work today!**

**4-Week Coaching Session - \$100**

Visit [www.windylynnharris.com](http://www.windylynnharris.com) for more information.

