

(WRITING-TEACHING-SERVING)

Good Things Come In Small Packages

First sentences. The moment our hero walks into the room. The “meet cute.” These are the small packages that if done well, grab your reader, pull them close and say, “you’re not going anywhere.”

We long to develop the craft of hooking our readers and scour books upon books on “writing the novel that sells.” What if I were to tell you there are ways to hone the craft of these hooks, and put them to the test without having to write an entire 85,000-word novel?

When I was at the University of Delaware studying English Literature, I took a course on Shakespeare. I struggled with the language, the desire to get through the thick of it, and my professor’s delivery of the text. This professor was more like I imagined my great-great grandfather Dr. William Heiskell, professor, and inventor of proper dentistry to be—dry and confusing. I longed to hear the articulate and passionate man I expected in Shakespeare.

However, I was saved by the Sonnet. Shakespeare’s short form won my heart, hook, line, and sinker. His sonnets helped me deeply appreciate the author. I became a groupie, went to London, England for a semester abroad, visited his grave, and paid good money to attend his plays.

You can break into publishing and get super creative by writing short fiction. It’s something that any age can do! See the magazines for kids at the library? Why not start there? Periodicals are the short story writer’s best friend—open to new things and ready to run with your ideas.

Last month I invited my friend, award-winning flash fiction author, Ronnell Gibson, to speak to our ACFW Chicago chapter. She explained that with flash fiction, which is 1000 words or less, you still need to have a well-developed story with a killer first sentence, and a spine-tingling aha ending. Everything matters in short fiction. The writer seeks brevity in every line which takes careful crafting of dialogue, setting, and plot.

FIVE TIPS TO GET STARTED

PREP: Go to the library and look at magazines to get ideas. Online, you will find www.GoHavok.com and read through some of their flash fiction authors’ works. Check out the 2024 Christian Writers Market Guide to get ideas for your stories.

STUDY: Read short stories and flash fiction and study what makes them work. Pay attention to the first line, the number of characters and their roles and functions. How much setting detail and dialogue is there?

WRITE: Write something that you really want to write. Try writing a thriller, a romance, or a mystery for a change.

SUBMIT: Where is the best home for your flashy-flash fiction, swoon-worthy love story, or life affirming Biography? Find out and be mindful of each publisher’s unique submission guidelines.

KEEP GOING: You may get discovered through your short story or flash fiction, and find a whole new world of readers jumping to your website wondering, “who is this person that just captured my heart?”

@jcfenfen juliafenstermacher.com

CAPTURE
theLiGHT
TALES, LESSONS & TIPS FROM THE LIGHT SIDE

julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR



(WRITING-TEACHING-SERVING)

Good Things Come In Small Packages

These proverbs have changed my life as I learned to live by them. Wisdom only comes when you take God's word and apply it to your life. You struggle with your sin and weakness then grow in character, and then you gain wisdom.

The Proverbs of Solomon,
son of David, king of Israel
For attaining wisdom and discipline;
For understanding words of insight;
For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life;
Doing what is right and just and fair;

PROVERBS 1:1-2

Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

PROVERBS 3:3

Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.
Put away perversity from your mouth;
Keep corrupt talk from your lips.

PROVERBS 4:23-24

Blessed is the man
who finds wisdom,
the man who gains understanding,
for she is more profitable
than silver and yields better
returns than gold.

PROVERBS 3:13

There are six things the Lord hates,
Seven that are detestable to him:
Haughty eyes, A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked schemes,
Feet that are quick to rush into evil,
A false witness who pours out lies,
And a man who stirs up dissension
among brothers.

PROVERBS 6:16-19

Do you have a favorite proverb that you can start living out today?

Julia Fenstermacher is a writer of children's literature and poetry and is polishing up her first novel. She also writes songs, poetry and riddles for scavenger hunts. She lives in the Chicago Suburbs with her husband, Friesian horse, Diesel, and three cats. Julia currently serves as ACFW's Chicago Chapter Vice President and Treasurer, is a member of Realmakers, and coaches authors in their craft. Born on April Fool's Day, she naturally cherishes the silliness, jokes and laughter of life.

Join the fun at www.loveandhorses.com

**A woman who entrusts herself to
God is a woman who can be trusted.**

@jcfenfen juliafenstermacher.com



julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR

(COMPANIONSHIP)

Guardian Angels

According to the bible, we have guardian angels! They serve us and take care of us. How does that make you feel?

Are you going through a hard time in your family or friend relationships?

We all hurt each other. No one is perfect. Did you know brothers and sisters can be each other's guardian angels. Can you be a guardian angel? How can love cover the sin or hurts in your family?

What would that look like coming from you?

Don't give up! It's hard to be the one who does what is right, who loves first. But God will be with you and bless you if you turn to him for strength and guidance.

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

HEBREWS 1:14

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 PETER 4:8

@jcfenfen juliafenstermacher.com

Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed,
for I am your God.



I will strengthen you
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with
My righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 49:10

julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR

CAPTURE
theLiGHT

TALES, LESSONS & TIPS FROM THE LIGHT SIDE



(ENCOURAGEMENT)

I Love That About You

July 1st, 1975. The bomb dropped on the kitchen floor and burst in silence. We all felt its' heat and horror, but our minds could not fathom the impossibility of it. The news that my beautiful, lively, fierce mother had died in a car accident that very morning while we slept, could not be true. But it was.

Today is the anniversary of my mother's passing. Every year on July 1st the details of that morning come flooding back. I remember how she took me to see Bambithe weekend before she died, the look of sadness on my father's face when he told us, the empty pit in my stomach that would not go away, and the venting I did for weeks and months after.

My Dad did his best to raise us three kids single-handedly. Laughter was the tonic he served to soothe the loss, but he was not so attentive to my emotional needs or praising the things I was working on in life. I tried to laugh things off, but I began to only see what was wrong with me.

Just when my teen years hit hardest, a friend of his floated into my world like a fairy godmother—charming, wand in hand, and loads of sparkle! Her excitement about who I was startled me. I was so used to not being noticed, the attention felt awkward. But deep down I loved it, and it began to change me.



What a small effort it was
for her to simply notice!

julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR

CAPTURE
theLiGHT
TALES, LESSONS & TIPS FROM THE LIGHT SIDE



(ENCOURAGEMENT CONTINUED)

I Love That About You

She noticed things no one else did, and each time, a light flickered on inside of me. The words, "I love that about you," made me feel lovable, talented, or fashionable. The darkness of self-loathing softened to a thin gray fog, and when my self image was getting hit by pimples, bad hair days, or bombing my biology test, her words helped me look in the mirror and still see someone pretty cool.

In school I began to get noticed for my writing, my fun attitude, and I became a free spirit, adventurous and eager to live life to the fullest.

Now I love to notice the good in others. I hate slander and gossip that hurts people because I know the power when we believe the best in others. The power when we speak it.

How about you?

- 1 Can you recall a person in your life who noticed you?
- 2 How did that affect you?
- 3 Can you make a list of things you are proud of?
- 4 Do you need help, coaching or praise in areas you want to grow in? It's ok to ask!

Now, go and do likewise. Give your attention to someone this week. Notice what is interesting, cool, or likable about them, and tell them, "I love that about you."

gracious words
are a honeycomb
sweet to the soul
healing to the bones

PROVERBS 16:24



A woman who entrusts herself to God is a woman who can be trusted.

@jcfenfen juliafenstermacher.com



julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR

(INTEGRITY)

Do you do what you say you will do?

Wow! God cares a lot about your word! God is a God of his word, and we can completely trust him, so we must be very careful with what we say we will do so that we can be trusted.

1. We are physically and mentally weakened when we break our word. The brain reminds itself that you can not be trusted when you say you will do something and then you do not do it. Your will to follow through on other promises is weakened. This can happen in very small ways, and so God calls us to be sharply aware.

2. Likewise when we break our word to others, they are warned that we can not be trusted. This causes division and suspicion, and the bible teaches that it is better to say "no" to a command and then do it, then to say "yes" and not do it.

3. You're not perfect! You will break our word. Don't freak out! However, it is very important to restore your integrity as soon as possible.

RESTORING INTEGRITY

1. Confess you have broken your word and do not make excuses—do not explain it unless you have to. Explaining can slip into excuses.

2. Say —"I was wrong." Apologize even if it was silly like if you said you would do someone's laundry, or change the toilet paper roll. Do not allow guilt to get you down. Lingering guilt is useless and destructive. Get open if you are confused and carry guilt!

3. Create a new promise. This is important because it tells the spirit in you that you can overcome this weakness. There might be unity in the relationship, as in forgiveness granted, but the spirit in you needs a new challenge to overcome—so make one!

[@jcfenfen](#) [juliafenstermacher.com](#)



simply let
your yes be yes,
and your no be no.
everything else
comes from
the evil one

MATTHEW 5:37

julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR

CAPTURE
theLiGHT

TALES, LESSONS & TIPS FROM THE LIGHT SIDE



(INTEGRITY CONTINUED)

Do you do what you say you will do?

****It's ok to say—"I can't" or "I'm not sure."
"I will let you know." or "Let me think about it."**

****It's ok to set boundaries. Once you learn this rule of integrity you will learn what you truly can and cannot handle.****

God's promises are true. He is true to his word, and everything he speaks is true.

Shore up your soul and convictions with His word, and as you study, be a person of your word. Think carefully about what you say, how you respond and the commitments you make. Confess quickly and make new agreements that work for you. Keep working it out.

Therefore
my dear friends
as you have always obeyed
not only in my presence
but now much more
in my absence—
continue to work out
your salvation with
fear and trembling

PHILIPPIANS 2:12

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Not fear and trembling of God, but fear of living without him guiding you, and of how a lack of integrity can destroy your convictions, strength and relationships.

A woman who entrusts herself to God is a woman who can be trusted.

@jcfenfen juliafenstermacher.com

LOOK AT PETER'S JOURNEY >>

Matthew 16:17

He was the first to "get it" and instantly makes a promise

Matthew 26: 31-35, 69-74,
Luke 22: 54-62

Oops! Peter broke his word. He is then broken before God.

Acts 1:15, 2:14

Wait, look at Peter now! He becomes the new leader—something transpired! He must have confessed and made a new promise to Jesus.

Results:

He has renewed energy, wisdom, bravery, power, confidence! I don't see a guilt trip here! I see a restored powerful man of God.

**What causes us to break our word?
Give examples in your own life.**

- 1** Rash—we don't think carefully about what we commit to.
- 2** Lazy—we don't feel like following through
- 3** Insecure—we worry about what others will think
- 4** Selfish—we put our needs first
- 5** Fear of change, unknown
- 6** Willing but we are weak.



julia
AUTHOR & MENTOR