

TEACHING TESTIMONIALS

Susan Shapiro is the recipient of The New School Distinguished Teaching Award, New York University's Award for Teaching Excellence and the National Jewish Book Council's Carolyn Starman Hessel Mentorship Award

"I appreciate the work Susan Shapiro does at The New School in Manhattan, where she has been teaching writing for many years, specializing in the short, personal essay. Her students are enthusiastic and serious about writing. They cheer each other on. Sue cheers them all on. And they publish like mad." --Daniel Jones, *New York Times* Modern Love editor

"Watching Sue Shapiro teach is like watching a tornado in reverse. She blows in quickly and grabs everyone's attention, and in the span of a few very intense minutes, rearranges everything around her-but instead of leaving a path of destruction in her wake, she leaves order, clarity, confidence and purpose. She is clear and constructive...helpful and full of advice -not just vague encouragement, but concrete advice to help her students actually get articles and books published. As a cheerleader for her students, she is entirely beyond compare, posting with pride every story her students and former students publish...She makes personal connections, which is why so many of her former students refuse to leave her, sitting in on her classes long after they're officially done. She is fast - Sue can teach you more in ten minutes than most teachers can in a semester....I've been her guest speaker, panelist, editor, colleague and friend...Sue has helped thousands of writers and I'm one..." -Tablet editor Wayne Hoffman, introducing her Jewish Book Council mentorship award

"It's no secret that writing is hard, but getting that writing out into the world is often even harder. Susan Shapiro is not only a beloved professor here at The New School, teaching undergraduate, continuing education, and graduate students, but she is also a genius literary matchmaker, with superhuman powers of connection. If Sue sees a piece of writing, she instantly has ideas about where that piece could flourish in the world, reaching not only the widest audience, but also the right audience. Through her own experience as a writer (with a brand new book coming out this summer, the novel *What's Never Said*), her profound generosity as a teacher, and her professional savvy, she has launched countless writing careers. There is really no one like her." -Laura Cronk, Associate Director of the New School Writing Program, presenting Sue with Distinguished University Teaching Award

"Sue is truly an inspiration, and a huge reason why I continue to write. If it wasn't for her class, I wouldn't have **published my first clip in the *New York Times***, gotten a job, or completed an internship for *Playboy*. I continue to work with her

because she's an incredible teacher who always gives each new piece the attention it deserves." –Alex Miller

"Sue is a force of nature: intelligent, probing, quick, witty, insightful and caring. A decade ago I was working as a freelancer when I first took Sue's personal essay class. Looking to brush up on my writing skills and absorb some of Sue's hard-earned wisdom, I recently signed up for her cleverly and aptly titled-- 5-week Instant Gratification course. The insight she gives is golden. I took her advice to change the ending of a perspective piece, had it [published in USA Today](#), and watched with amazement as it circulated widely on social media. Sue gave me, as she did with all her students, two things writers need most: brutal honesty and encouragement." –Wendy Knight

"Sue Shapiro's class gave me the kick I needed. **I learned more from her in one day than I learned from most of my college professors.** With her help, I broke into the *New York Times* and *Salon* and sold my first book!" -- Kimberlee Auerbach author of *The Devil, The Lovers, and Me: My Life in Tarot* (Dutton)

"Sue helps her students break into print by sharing her knowledge, expertise and connections without reservation. Within five weeks, **my assignment for class saw print in the *New York Observer*.** Sue went beyond my expectations to help me get three other pieces published. What Sue offered that was just as important as her practical and constructive advice was the feeling that she really wants to see her students succeed. She helps every step of the way." -- Paul Smalera, *QZ and Fast Company* editor

"As an undergraduate at the New School, I didn't find my purpose until I took Susan Shapiro's class. Every Monday night I looked forward to going to class to share my stories and struggles with my classmates. That's when I realized I had more than just one story, I was a writer all along. I found my voice, which led to my first time ever getting published – in *The New York Times*. The positive feedback was such an amazing experience that I'm now working on a memoir. I entered school a student and left a writer." –Giselle Perez

"Sue Shapiro is the most passionate, generous professor a young writer could wish for. Because of her smart assignments and her brilliant editing, personal essays I wrote for her class were published in *The New York Times Modern Love*, *Psychology Today*, *The Daily News*, and *Tin House* literary magazine, and I landed an agent who sold my memoir. None of this would have happened without Sue's class. My book would not exist. That's why I dedicated it to Sue. I don't know what I'd be doing in New York without her." –Aspen Matis, author of *Girl in the Woods* (Harpercollins) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/fashion/a-hikers-guide-to-healing.html?mcubz=0>

"Sue Shapiro saw my rough essays and cleared the chaff, gave me the wherewithal to publish – the tools, rules, formats, and contacts – and said: go for

it! I was shocked when my first assignment (the terrifying humiliation essay) was bought by the *New York Times*! I sold other pieces to *Out* and the JTA. If the question is "How can I get published?" Sue has the answer. She gives more than a push to act, she gives the most generous gift of all: opportunity." –Isaac Lobel

"Sue is great. Any writer at any level will find a lot to learn from her." -- Sheila McClear, author of *The Last of the Live Nude Girls* (Soft Skull Press)

"When I met Susan Shapiro at the New School, I was a depressed 20-year-old. She honed my ambition, encouraged my voice and positively reshaped my universe as she has done for thousands of others as a journalism professor. Ten years later, I write regularly for *The New York Times*, *Interview Magazine*, *The Forward*, *Bomb*, *The Rumpus* and *The New York Post* and I'm an author proud to share my book publisher with Shapiro. Her criticism is sharp, poetic, fast paced and addictive." -Royal Young, author of the memoir *Fame Shark* (Heliotrope)

"If it weren't for Sue's class I wouldn't have a book deal. Sue is extremely savvy and extremely generous with her publishing network. That who you know thing paid off for me. I met an agent who spoke to her seminar. He heard my first page, emailed me the next day, and long story short, I had a deal with Penguin." --Louise Sloan, author of *Knock Yourself Up* (Penguin)

"Quite simply, Sue Shapiro's course is responsible for launching my career as a journalist. In fifteen weeks she managed to teach me how to use my professional expertise and personal experience to create great, sellable articles and essays. Of the assignments I did for the course, I sold three, including my first clip in *The New York Times*. Fifteen years and two columns later, I'm almost up to 900." --Seth Kugel, former *New York Times* Frugal Traveler and author of *The Intrepid Traveler: Rediscovering Discovery in a Wired World* (Norton, March 2018)

"Sue's critique of my work was a crucial step in improving it. My essays have been published in the *New York Times*, *Psychology Today*, *Self*, *Jane* and *Salon*. My novel sold to a fantastic imprint of Random House. I couldn't recommend studying with Sue more." -- Liza Monroy, author of *The Marriage Act* (Counterpoint) and *Mexican High* (Spiegel & Grau)

"I was coming down the homestretch writing my book proposal. Before panic set in, I signed up for Sue Shapiro's workshop. As soon as Sue started to talk, fear backed off. Sue is passionate, fiercely strategic, authoritative, and demanding. Hers was just the kind of high-energy-get-your-ass-in-gear pep talk I needed. **Just weeks later, I got a deal with Penguin to publish my first book!**" - Bruce Frankel, author of *What Should I Do with the Rest of My Life* (Avery)

"Working with Susan Shapiro helped me break into the *New York Times* Modern Love and Op-ed page, *The Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Poets and Writers*, and made me feel inspired and

supported with every step. My clips opened up both publication and work opportunities, including a new job at university supporting a yoga program, a topic I wrote about often. I'm so thankful for Sue and her mentorship. She helped me turn some of my most challenging experiences into something beautiful through writing. I can't recommend working with her more." -Sarah Herrington, author of *Essential Yoga* (Fair Winds Press) & *Wanderlust* (Rodale)

"Sue's class was both fun and informative. I had already had some personal essays published years before, but had gotten out of the groove and needed guidance getting back into it. Sue gave insightful, encouraging feedback and had lots of great ideas about ways to rework essays and recast them for different publications. She has lots of great tips to offer, plus **she shares contacts, which is absolutely invaluable**. I've placed all the essays I worked on in Sue's class – in *The New York Times*, *Marie Claire* and *Village Voice*. *Sari Botton*, Longreads editor and bestselling author of *"Goodbye To All That"* (Seal Press) and *Never Can Say Goodbye*" (Touchstone)

"English wasn't my first language and I had no writing experience, but Susan strongly believed my story was important to share. She diligently worked with me on improving my writing on a daily basis, helping me publish my work in *The New York Times Magazine* and Op-Ed page, *Wall Street Journal*, *Slate*, *Salon*, *Newsday*, *International Herald Tribune* and *Best American Travel Writing*. Attending Susan's book seminar was essential in landing the great WME agent who was speaking. She collaborated with me on the memoir I could not have written without her persistence, direction and heartfelt dedication to helping me tell my life story. And it was so mind-blowing, we worked together again on the middle-grade version which just came out in hardcover and as an audible." –Kenan Trebincevic, author of [The Bosnia List](#) (Penguin 2014) and [World In Between](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2021)

"I wanted to only write something funny and not touch anything revealing with a ten foot pole. But in her class, Sue challenged me to write something real, pushing me hard which made me want to throw up. But it helped me turn a corner to get a really good draft. I sent it out and almost sold it. But it was rejected and because it was timely, I planned to put it away for a year. Hugely disappointing! Then Sue called me at 11pm with VERY specific instructions to get home asap and send it to an editor she knew at the *New York Times*. I did, though part of me said, "Couldn't this wait until I got home?" Had I waited, it might not have been published in the *New York Times* that week. My piece still makes me cry because it's so raw. It has a similar effect on people who read it. That's classic Sue! No wonder I've taken the class six times." -Danielle Gelfand, TV producer

"I entered Sue's class confused about my career, and left as an author with big bylines and the conviction that I could make it as a writer. Sue was generous, brutal, compassionate, tough, inspiring - and immediately sensed

my talent. Thirteen years later I'm the editor of one of India's leading magazines, and am struck by how her insights continue to inform my creative decisions. Sue Shapiro will always be my guru."

- Che Kurrien, Editor-in-Chief, *GQ India*

"Sue Shapiro's assignments teach students exactly what editors want. As an undergraduate in her fun New School feature journalism class, I sold my very first piece to *Cosmopolitan* for \$2000. Since then, I've been published in *The New York Times*, *New York Observer* and *The Forward*. Sue is the only teacher I've had who really helps her students break into newspapers and magazines. 'Tell the story only you can tell' works. Sue is simply the best." -Susie Kantar Cohen

"When I met Susan, I was a college kid with no idea what I wanted to do. I can't believe I now call myself a writer with hundreds of clips in *Salon*, *Newsday*, *Dame Magazine*, *DailyDot*, *TheFrisky*, *Vox* and *The New York Times*. She even recommended the great agent who recently sold my debut memoir to a top publisher. It's crazy how much influence ONE person can have on your entire existence. I can't imagine what my life would be like right now if I didn't end up in her New School class. I imagine, not half as good. I credit her brilliant advice for my success. She is the 'how to get published' guru that all writers need." -Tiffanie Drayton, author of "Black American Refugee" (Viking 2022)

"When it comes to the art and business of writing, Susan Shapiro has it all covered. Her endless wealth of information, connections and spot-on criticism will be beneficial to any writer, new or experienced. Thanks to her, I published in *The New York Times*, *Quartz*, and was able to interview Pulitzer prize winner, Tom Reiss, author of *The Black Count*. I worked as the features editor for *SFWire* and became a contributing writer for *Out Magazine*, *Interview*, *New York Press* and *dot429*. If you're looking to get published, Susan is the best chance there is—hands down!" -Emillio Mesa

"I took a class with Sue in 2006 right after graduating from college and it was my first introduction to the New York writing world. I got published halfway through the six-week course and I was beyond thrilled. She gives tons of straight-shooting, practical advice which would benefit anyone who wants to figure out how to get published. She had great editors come to speak and I'd highly recommend her classes and lectures. I really appreciate Sue's guidance in helping me launch my career in journalism." Katherine Goldstein, former vanityfair.com editor and Harvard University professor

"I am grateful to Susan Shapiro for teaching me the basics of how journalism and book publishing really work. She not only helped me with getting published, she's introduced me to some of my best friends and a great writing community."

-Victoria Moy, author of *Fighting for the Dream: Voices of Chinese American Veterans from World War II to Afghanistan*

"Not long after I moved to New York City, I took Sue Shapiro's writing class and it changed my life. Sue introduced her students to many editors, including one from the *New York Times Book Review* who spoke about the type of pitches he liked and what he wanted in his writers. Not long after that, I had my first small piece accepted by the *Book Review*. Taking Sue's class isn't just a rite of passage, it is simply essential for anyone in the city who wants to be a published writer. She's one of the sharpest editors I've known, and she understands everything there is to know about the in's and out's of newspaper and magazine publishing. It's always a buzz to reconnect with Sue and talk writing whenever I'm back in town. This trip, I returned to my old New School classroom to be interviewed by her new class. Sue goaded me to tell them my book got a rave on the cover of the next week's *Times Book Review*." -Christine Kenneally, author of *The First Word: The Search for the Originals of Language* (Viking) and *Invisible History of the Human Race* (Viking)

"Susan is more than a high octane teacher who guides students to win in the high stakes game of writing professionally. She is a passionate mentor, a sharp-eyed editor and a guardian angel who gives her students wings. Her network of editors, publishers, agents and writers is a currency that she shares and we all profit from her generosity. I took her 5-week course and published two op-ed pieces about an illness I'd contacted after the World Trade Center attacks in *Newsday* and *The New York Daily News*. My essays are now part of the 9/11 Memorial Archives and have been referenced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand of New York who is sponsoring new legislation for the continuation of benefits for the victims of 9/11 toxic dust exposure. Susan changed my life." -Richard Dodd

"Sue is an amazing editor and literary matchmaker. The first "humiliation essay" I wrote in her class sold for \$300 and won a *NY Press* award. My next piece "Defriending My Rapist" wound up in *The New York Times* and on Dr. Drew's TV show. After that I started speaking publicly about the rape and my recovery. My next talk is at John Jay College, where my essay is required reading for a criminal course. I'm now working on a memoir the essay inspired. I also write for *The Forward*, *The Fix*, *The Frisky* and *The Blot*. Through a travel editor I met in Susan's class, I've had free trips to Puerto Rico, Curaçao, Cancun and Costa Rica. I've interviewed Laverne Cox, Shia LaBeouf, Woody Allen, Susan Sarandon and Steven Spielberg and I speak on freelancing panels at the American Society of Journalists & Authors (ASJA). Sue really is the best writing teacher on the planet! -Dorri Olds

"I can't say enough about Sue's class and her skills as a teacher. She's clear and practical, while at the same time genuinely supportive and encouraging. She's responsive and available, always eager to help. She's an experienced and prolific writer, a bestselling author who has published countless articles and ten books. *Unhooked*, about how to recover from drug addiction, was particularly useful to me as an addiction psychiatrist. I read the Spanish edition of the book and found it to be thought provoking and inspiring. Sue's goal is for her students to publish before the end of class, and she has an incredible success rate. Her efficient, to-the-point teaching style helped me make the most of class and time in the midst

of my busy schedule. With her help and guidance, my first piece was published in the *New York Times* by the end of the semester, an immensely gratifying experience. If your goal is to grow as writer and get published, Sue is the teacher for you." -Dr. Carlos Saavedra

"Within five weeks of meeting Susan Shapiro, I had a *New York Times* Modern Love and a bulldog literary agent who negotiated a book deal with my favorite publishing imprint. There is a difference between knowing how to write and knowing how to write in a form that is recognizable to the literary gatekeepers--the editors--and Sue breaks it all down and then makes sure you break in. If you're a writer who wants to play with form, Sue's classes will get you through the important doors, which will give you more freedom to experiment. Sue is a fairy godmother, a literary rainmaker, my Jewish mother in New York." -Kassi Underwood, author of *May Cause Love: An Unexpected Journey of Enlightenment After Abortion* (HarperOne)

"I felt seriously lost and in need of guidance. I needed to recharge my batteries. I'm so glad I took Susan's New School class, which helped me write an essay about how I finally graduated college at 47, the same time as my daughter. I was so excited when a Newsday/AMNY editor who spoke to our class said he wanted to publish it. I couldn't think of a better way to end my undergraduate career than to have my first piece see print. A year later, I took another one of Sue's courses and published several more pieces in Newsweek and The Independent. These helped me land a literary agent for the memoir they inspired. Susan is amazing at what she does and how she helps her current and former students. It's incredible. I'm Team Susan. You will never find a better class or professor. This is it!! Don't over think it. Do it. Your future you will thank you." -Ralph Ortiz

Letter To Sue:

"Thanks for your encouragement/mentoring/talking with me. You gave me a lot of hope when I needed it. I always looked up to you. You're so sharp and you say what's on your mind. I never felt any of your positive feedback was you being nice or your negative feedback didn't make perfect sense. You taught me what makes something publishable and what doesn't. At that point it was difficult because I had talent and ambition, but I didn't know how to mold it into something a magazine/newspaper would take. I'm grateful (as many are) that you choose to use your powers to help others. I just know how to be talented in a very narrow square box whereas you can branch out and have wider appeal. You're someone I always wanted to impress which brings out my best writing. Mother issues! But seriously, all the mentors I had were men and you really did make an awesome impression on me, being a super funny, strong, cool woman. You're the only one where I could see: Oh that's how I can be when I'm older. It's not just a choice between art/self-destruction at 29 or marrying/giving up at 29. You can be cool and a woman and not be soft spoken/polite or a bitch. You can be cool and still be open. I needed to see that. Getting your approval means more than I can say." -Jade Sharma, author of the novel *Problems* (Emily's Books)

"If anyone is interested in writing in New York, there's an awesome teacher named Sue Shapiro who teaches at The New School and also out of her apartment. She teaches a class I took called 'Instant Gratification Takes too Long.' When I was at Parson's I took it as an elective. It's all about how to get essays, memoirs and Shouts & Murmur type humor pieces published in different places. She's fantastic." -interview with Meredith Scardino, TV writer for Colbert & The Unbreakable Kimmi Schmidt

"After taking Sue Shapiro's 5-week 'Instant Gratification' class and doing the op-ed assignment I published my first piece in The New York Times' On Campus section. I couldn't have done it without Sue's guidance and connection to the editor. Sue's class gave me the push I needed!" -Kate Chia
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/17/opinion/my-asian-pussycat-parents.html>

"Susan Shapiro is so important to me and many young writers. I took her class Writing for NYC Newspapers and Magazines three times at the New School-- I paid out of pocket twice. It's the best class in NYC. She teaches you how to freelance and brings in the best editors and writers. I got my first clip from Sue's class! I remember being so enthralled by the guests who came to class and now I'll be speaking there in December about my own book!" -Cat Marnell, author of *How to Murder Your Life* (Simon & Schuster)

"The first thing I read aloud in your workshop was about this boy's death. And I cried. And you said that crying was a good sign. Thank you for everything you've given me." -Jessica Ciencin Henriquez
<https://nytimes.com/2017/03/31/fashion/modern-love-the-accident-no-one-talked-about.html>

"Whether you're a novice in search of your first byline, you want break into bigger publications or focus on books, a class with Susan Shapiro is the best investment any writer at any level can make. In my case, it changed my life. Though I'd had minor successes after graduating with a journalism degree from Emerson College, they were sporadic until I took her New School class. After that, it's like a light switch flipped on. I become better at my craft. I learned how to freelance in New York, from how to spot and pitch timely stories to how to deal with editors, an art itself. I made great contacts through the guest editors who came to her class that led to assignments from The New York Times Book Review, Time Out NY, The Daily News, The Wall Street Journal and The NY Post, work that led to my publishing three books. In fact, the class I took with Sue was so helpful that I took it three more times. I wouldn't have had the career I have without her." -Tripp Whetsell, coauthor of *The Improv: An Oral History of the World-Famous Comedy Club That Revolutionized Stand-Up*

"Thank you Susan Shapiro for your brilliance in helping me establish my point of view for my memoir, and for helping me with the essay I published in *Psychology*

Today that landed me my book deal! You rock!" -Kathleen Frazier, author of *Sleepwalker: The Mysterious Makings And Recovery of a Somnambulist* (Skyhorse Press, winner of the 2017 Independent Publishers Award for Best Non-Fiction)

"When I signed up for Susan Shapiro's class, I hoped to better my writing. Getting published felt like a long-shot. But Sue read in between my lines, and helped me make my points more clearly. Because of Sue, I've placed my work in *Salon*, *The New York Times*, *Oprah*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *The Washington Post*. If clips are like crack (a truism of hers), she is simply the best writing teacher you'll find." -Haig Chahinian

"I wanted to write you a quick note to just say thank you. Your political posts have been incredible and sane in a darkly terrible time. I love your spirit and candor, always have since day one in your class so many years ago. I love reading your pieces and hearing about the amazing deluge of students you have elevated to writers by helping them hone their voices and giving them permission to be heard. I hope you know how valuable you are to all of us who have dared to believe we were worthy of writing and laid bare our souls to see our names in print. You're amazing. Thank you." -Jenni Shafiro

"Two years ago, almost 60, I'd never been published before. I took Susan Shapiro's five-session course, and she mid-wived an essay that was published in the Private Lives column of the New York Times. She had asked me two questions about my life, and suggested a topic. As a result of the article, I was invited as a guest on a radio show. Suddenly, I had a writing credit and a media credit. I took her course again. It's like she brainwashes you into believing you can really get sell your work to the best publications in the world and then you do. This time Susan guided me into writing a parenting piece that was accepted by the Well Family Ties column of the New York Times. To me she has been the wizard stationed just outside the entrance to Platform Nine and Three-quarters allowing me to board the train to Hogwarts. She performs that kind of alchemy." -Robert Markowitz

[New York Times: Abandoning the Work I Hated](#)

[New York Times: An Older Dad, Down for the Count](#)

"Sue Shapiro is a powerhouse. She pushed me to write the guts of my story, and helped me get published in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and sell my books. She is incredibly generous and wildly talented." -Abby Sher, author of the memoir *Amen, Amen, Amen* (Scribner) and YA novels *Kissing Snowflakes* (Scholastic) and *All The Ways the World Can End* (FSG)

"If you're looking to change your life and feel ready to publish, I'd highly recommend taking Sue Shapiro's course. As a writer for Paper magazine, I would not have this opportunity without Sue's critiques, guidance and connections to the editor who came to speak to our class. The first pop culture piece I ever published was retweeted by Paris Hilton, and recently my coverage on the Asian K-Pop

sensation and Steve Aoki went viral on Twitter. Sue taught me how to find my audience, take control of my voice, revise my work until it sang, don't be afraid to pitch editors I admire and refuse to take no for an answer. She's no nonsense, blunt, and one of the best writers and line editors I've come across. If you have a chance to study with her, don't pass up this opportunity. Thank you Professor, you made me the writer I am today!" -Fei Lu

"Sue Shapiro helped me turn my ideas, the places I wanted to go, and the people I wanted to meet into marketable pieces of journalism. I took her New School class four times. Using Sue's strategies, I eventually wrote several feature stories for the *The New York Times* and six front-page A-Heds for *The Wall Street Journal*. Now I'm working on a book, expanded from one of my *Times* stories. I don't think I could have done any of it without Sue." -- Tyler J. Kelley, author of the forthcoming *Holding Back the River* (Simon & Schuster)

"Susan is an amazing teacher! She shaped my life in enormous ways. I took a one-night workshop in her apartment and brought in "From Hunger" and this essay: <https://www.thecut.com/2013/04/stalker-sarah-17-only-takes-selfies-with-stars.html>. At the time, if you can believe it, they were one essay, a kind of monstrous half-formed thing. Susan told me to break it into two, and suggested I submit one to the editor she knew at the Anxiety column of the *New York Times*. I did, and received a good response almost immediately. She had mentioned writing for *New York Magazine's* *The Cut*, so I pitched the other piece to *The Cut* not long after. You can guess what happened. Publishing these essays led to two books. All to say, she's a genius and a mensch, and will be loyal to you for the rest of your life. Cherish her." -Sarah Gerard, author of the novel *Binary Star* (Two Dollar Radio) and the essay collection *The Sunshine State* (Harpercollins)

"With Susan's incredible guidance, I published the first essay I wrote in her class in the LGBT magazine the *Advocate*. With her pushing me to mix humor with "blood on the page," I published my next essay in the *Washington Post*. Through her amazing course, I published additional op-eds, articles, and essays in the *Advocate* and in newspapers like *Newsday* and the *New York Blade*. I took time away from personal essay writing to get my Ph.D. and become a professor, but my first book, *Dying to be Normal: Gay Martyrs and the Quest for Equality* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press) builds on the ideas about queer life in America that I first started writing about in Susan's classes. I am deeply grateful." -Brett Krutzsch

"I would be remiss to not thank my teacher Susan Shapiro for making my essay in *The New York Times* possible. My first published piece from my memoir "Television's First Black Child Star" running in the *New York Times*! Now ain't that a hoot and a holler! If you are a writer, whether it be non-fiction, fiction or short stories, Susan will be able to guide you down the fastest path to getting published. She has had success with her students publishing 150 books in the last decade, which is a pretty amazing track record. Sue teaches a class as well as writing

books herself, including "The Byline Bible" which tells you everything you need to know about how to get your works published. I highly recommend it. Thank you Susan! -Marc Copage <http://j.mp/NYTimes-MarcCopage>

"I was fresh to NYC from the Midwest, and I knew from the moment I met Sue that she would be essential to my journey to become a published author. Her advice is sharp, her writing family is vast, and she sees the writer in everybody - even before they can see it in themselves. Through her Instant Gratification class, I published [my first personal essay for Teen Vogue](#) and worked out a strategy to publish many more essays. This ultimately led to me editing an anthology, which became an Lambda Literary Finalist, and publishing my debut novel with Penguin Random House. Sometimes all a writer needs is somebody to give them permission to speak on their shame and write what only they can write - Sue does that and so much more." -Lexie Bean, author of "Written on the Body" (Jessica Kingsley Publishers) and "The Ship We Built" (Dial Press)

"From your 5-week online class, I published work in The Washington Post, LA Times and the New York Times Modern Love. It makes my head spin. I'm so grateful. I benefitted so much from the deadlines and your notes and guidance."
-Tara J. Ellison

[LA Times: To be a woman in L.A. involves upkeep](#)

[Washington Post: Borat, TikTok and small talk](#)

[New York Times: Why Would My Father Not Want to Know Me?](#)

"As a Michigan teacher and academic, I've been writing essays for years, but never had luck with mainstream publications. Since taking Sue Shapiro's online class, I've sold six essays to editors who previously were not interested in my work. My defining moment so far is the publication of my Washington Post essay, [I am insecure about my face. For me, masks are liberating](#) that Sue pushed me to write. This essay led to connections with a dream book editor (a former student of Sue's!) contacting me to write a children's book. I could not have done it without taking two of Sue's *Instant Gratification Takes Too Long* classes. I'll be enrolling again soon." -Christina Wyman

[My Writer Success Story Began With Getting Over Myself - Writer's Digest](#)

"To say that Sue has helped me would be an understatement. She has forever changed the trajectory of my life. Her generosity — allowing me to audit her writing classes and offering me personalized feedback because I was a low-income student — led me to publish op-eds in [The New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), and [San Diego Union-Tribune](#). My book, though in progress, also got the interest of a Penguin Random House editor after I published my NY Times piece. Sue is not only acerbic, brutally honest, and invigorating, but also a role model. She lives generously and authentically — a mentor who will breathe fresh air into your work but always tell you the truth. Her impact will be felt for generations and I couldn't be more grateful to be the student of such a wise and noble person. Sue is, quite simply, extraordinary." -Isaac Lozano

[From Remote Learning in High School to Writing Op-Eds - WSJ](#)

"I'm so glad I stumbled across Sue's Instagram feed back (in May of 2020) where she mentioned her upcoming Zoom class, Instant Gratification Takes Too Long. I knew I wanted to break into the freelance journalism world and secure a few bylines. I took two of Sue's classes, back-to-back, I devoured and annotated her book The Byline Bible and I now have 5 bylines! Her methods work. She is generous with her time and her encouragement. All five of my bylines are precious to me but I'm particularly fond of my Washington Post piece, "[How the Pandemic Actually Improved My Mental Health](#)," which Sue helped me perfect. I'm very grateful to her!" -Charles G. Thompson

"At the start of 2020, I was rejected from dozens of writing jobs, barely published anywhere, and unclear what editors were looking for. As a first-generation immigrant, I wasn't sure I could navigate the hurdles of the American publishing world. 10 months later, I've written for the New York Times, Washington Post and have been signed on to write a book with two literary agencies. I got here because I took my education into my own hands and learned what no writing schools had taught me from Susan Shapiro. Her book Byline Bible turned me from an aspiring writer to someone who actually understood what editors were looking for. I signed up for her 5-class course that was open to everyone and soon, Susan Shapiro became my mentor. She's truly a legendary professor who has helped hundreds of students get their first bylines, which has often helped them land book deals and launch their careers. Since the pandemic, she offers her formerly in-person only classes on Zoom where she invites editors to talk about the kind of work they're looking for and sometimes students pitch editors on the spot. She also personally helps revise your pitches and pieces until they are sellable. Here's [my first clip](#), published by an editor who came to Sue's class." -Ian Kumamoto
[At the start of this year, I could barely sell my writing - Insider](#)

"Sue: You know what I love about your book launches and classes? They're so unusually useful. You have a wonderful gift of pushing people to their own finish line. I'm so glad that I found you and was able to publish a piece with a great editor who Zoomed into your class." -Dr. Sharon Washington
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/brown-v-board-of-education-integration_n_609fc167e4b063dcceaa219d

"I really appreciated your online class, Susan. You pushed me on my book title. You brought in so many great agents and editors, then nudged us to introduce ourselves and our books to them as we asked our questions. You gave precise feedback that was never sugarcoated. I came away with a stronger query letter, an agent to query, a thicker skin, and some helpful industry advice. Thank you." - Tracy Cutchlow

"Hey Sue! Just wanted to give you an update on how your writing course has helped my career. I just started a full-time job as an arts editor and a part-time job as news editor. For both jobs, they loved my articles from Wired and The Independent that I sold through your class and were insanely impressed by my ability to cold pitch editors and get published. I can honestly say that your class changed my life, and lead me to the work I've been dreaming of. I did get a significant pay raise so I'd love to buy you dinner." -Virginia Valenzuela

<https://www.wired.com/story/millennial-teachers-tips-online-classes-coronavirus/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/student-loans-biden-cares-act-faking-death-american-dream-b1823141.html>

"Sue - your book Byline Bible, advice and emails not only inspired me but gave me extremely tactical advice, homework and things to try. I sold the first essay I pitched to Narratively, got an agent from that and suddenly with that clip, my memoir with themes of extremism and groupthink was very appealing. I'll always be indebted to you. I have to say your advice to tell embarrassing stories was excellent, and I made the decision to share ALL of my dirty laundry in my book in order to talk about hard-hitting questions that impact our culture. I thought that it would make me seem weak, but after following your advice, I see that it only makes the book speak to more people. My book sold on proposal in less than 48 hours, in a preempt, to a major publisher in a significant deal, so I owe you dinner and consider myself a student of yours. When people ask me how to start the process of getting published, my only advice is "Get the Byline Bible, read it, do the homework, then get back to me." -Daniella Mestyanek Young, author of the upcoming "Uncultured" (St. Martins Press)

"Sue's class PAID FOR ITSELF in the first week! Sue helped me get a total of 4 clips so far (all in bigger publications than I'd ever had before) and I made incredible connections. Not only do students get to talk to editors at wonderful publications but Sue will help edit your pitches and your piece before sending it off. She's incredibly generous and SO knowledgeable. On the first day of class I said I aspired to be in The Washington Post one day and one month later my very first WashPo clip was published! Wow! I also really recommend her book "The Byline Bible"-- I read it before taking her class and learned SO much. It includes so many details that the class doesn't have time to cover and is a great resource to refer back to. Can't wait to take her class again!" -Jillian Pretzel

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2021/11/01/toddler-play-date-development-pandemic-covid/>

"I cannot speak more highly of The Byline Bible and Sue's classes. My dream was to be a published writer. And 3 weeks later I am so proud to have my first publication. Thanks to Sue Shapiro, the very best writing teacher I've met. Thank you to Sue. Here is my debut published piece in the Washington Post. I'm so grateful." -Karen McKinney

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2021/11/02/prison-gang-prosecutor-holocaust-friend/>

"Taking Sue's seminar and her class, I gained access to editors I could only imagine talking to in real life. After her recent online 5-week course, I had pitches accepted by the Washington Post, Next Avenue, WIRED, Newsweek, the Independent, Shondaland, Next Avenue and Sierra Magazine. These publications were pivotal to launch my books." -Mallory McDuff, author of *Our Last Best Act* and *Love Your Mother*

"I'm from the small town of Asheboro, North Carolina and the distance meant I would never have been able to take Sue's in-person classes in Manhattan. My writing has drastically improved by taking her online class and in fact thanks to Sue, I've been published in *Wired*, *Real Simple*, *The Independent*, and *Poets & Writers*. And I just landed a three-article assignment at *Healthline*. I also have new friends and classmates from all around the world." -- Ashley Memory, Happy IGTTL Student

"I just completed Susan Shapiro's wonderful five week online pitching class. What would've taken me five decades to learn, I learned in five weeks. I sold [a piece on the topic of my memoir to Salon](#) and last night's legendary guests included three New York Times editors Miya Lee, Julia Calderone and Peter Catapano. Beyond grateful." -Dr Tamara MC

"I came into Sue's "Instant Gratification" online pitch class with four essay ideas pegged to the Olympics. I am happy to say that she helped me get all of them placed in the following dream publications: [The Independent](#), [NBC Think](#), [Newsweek](#), and [WIRED](#). Before all this, it had been six years since I'd had a national publication. I can see now that I had no idea how to pitch correctly: I have been writing for over 25 years but I was pitching to general submission e-mails and never following up. I was probably making all kinds of other mistakes, too. Thanks to the support from Sue and fellow classmates, I'm now diving back into my memoir revisions with more confidence and also some new ideas on how to frame my experience. Plus: I'm thrilled to have some recent bylines as I head into the query process." -Jocelyn Jane Cox

"I was taking a writing class at The New School with a fantastic, no-bullshit New York teaching legend Sue Shapiro, who wrote *Five Men Who Broke My Heart* and *Lighting Up*. Some of the things Sue taught me have shaped my approach to life...Sue taught me that rejection isn't personal. She explained life from the editor's point of view...Within weeks of starting Sue's class, I sold a personal essay..." -Zibby Owens, *Bookends*

"What a fantastic first session. Your online pitching class is genius. It's great to learn the basic parameters of what editors are looking for and how to frame your ideas. Your incredible ability to take experiences and give them a place, context, current relevance and meaning is a mind blowing skill that you are so generous sharing. You are so talented at really constructive observation and being able to communicate those suggestions well. I honestly can't wait to learn more from you." -Diane Neal, actor (SVU, NCIS, NOLA, SUITS)

"Taking Susan's online courses just once helped me break into the industry. Every minute counts in her Zoom workshops. Listening to and applying Susan's critiques will help you get published faster. I got my first professional clips in Wired Magazine, and through her book class, I found my agent, who sent my debut children's picture book to two of the Big Five publishers who made offers for it in an auction. Susan's book and pitching classes have forever changed my life; listening to her critiques will be the key to your success." – Orlando Mendiola, author of "The Last Tamale" (upcoming from Harpercollins)

In the last year and a half since taking Sue's classes some pretty amazing things have happened:

- (1) Article Pitching Class: I have 6 bylines in *Psych Today*, 1 byline in *Salon*, 1 in *Well+Good*, 2 at *Health.com*, and others in a smattering of other pubs.
 - (2) Book pub class: I learned how to write components for a non-fiction book proposal, this class was esp helpful with writing comps.
 - (3) Agent representation: Susan Shapiro helped me connect with someone who ultimately became my literary agent.
 - (4) Relationships: I have met you all- a great group of talented and passionate humans with a heart for writing and a mission to support each other.
- Thank you Sue for creating this wonderful community and for your support in helping each of us in our writing careers.

-Dr. Nicole Caine, author of "Panic Proof" upcoming from Random House

A life-changing writing class

"Extra thanks to Susan Shapiro for her life-changing writing class.

I was in my 40s and wasn't sure [how to become a writer](#). Was it too late in my life to start and achieve success as a writer? I'd taken classes throughout the years for fun. We'd get an assignment, share our stories and then leave. Sometimes I'd make a friend or two. We'd meet up in the city and share essays over drinks or coffee, but I never went anywhere with it. I nearly gave up, but

then I signed up for a unique class that changed everything. I'm not sure if it was the professor or the timing in my life, but something clicked.

Instead of being offered at a university, the class was taught out of the professor's apartment in the city. I entered her home and sunk into a chair while other students read their published pieces like Pulitzer Prize winners. As they spoke, I lingered on every word, every anecdote. I was shocked by both their level of intimacy with their prose and the fact that they were regular people whose work was published in The New York Times and Cosmopolitan. Maybe it was possible for me to be a published writer. I just needed to delve deep, like the students before me.

The writing class had caught my attention with its insistence that you could get published; you just needed to find the right market. A few weeks after the class ended, I took my most personal story and sent it out to a few editors—just like the class taught me.

When my story was accepted for publication, I was overjoyed and terrified. After all, this wasn't a story about college courses. This was an essay about love, obsessions and a devastating loss. I wasn't sure I wanted the public to read it, but soon enough it was released on the Internet. And I was instantly addicted to the feeling of having it published...I went from wishing I was a writer to being published on the [front page of The Washington Post](#)...

It has been over seven years since I got my first acceptance email and to date have published [over 100 essays](#), all while working full-time." -Elana Rabinowitz, Success Magazine, [My Writer Success Story](#)

"My agent tasked me with finding a home for an essay before we went on submission. I signed up for Sue's classes. Susan carefully guided me through the process of crafting and pitching an essay picked up by Allison Klein at [Washington Post](#). Allison was going to be attending our class, so Susan mentioned I should pitch my piece ahead of time. I sent my pitch to Allison the next morning and she offered to buy it. I was thrilled! I never would have guessed that of all the people to read it, Maria Shriver would. Ms. Shriver saw my story and reached out. Three months after taking Susan's class, I have a contract with Maria Shriver's Random House imprint The Open Field. Thank you, Susan! Never give up folks. You never know who is going to read your story." -Banning Lyon

"Holy shit! Someone just told me my story is on the front page of the New York Magazine website and I just went to see for myself and it's now ranked as their #2 most popular story after Ariana Grande (and in an ironic turn of events that story is about her weight!!) I think I need to lie down... From taking Sue's class to having front row access to top editors to being scared and pitching anyway to publishing two essays in a row and seeing this kind of impact, is one of the most exhilarating experiences of my career. Sue, thank you for helping writers find the right editors and outlets to share our stories." -Jenny Powers

[The Cut: Outsourcing My Orgasm](#), [HuffPost: Married Mom Phone Sex Operator](#)

"For decades all I ever wanted was to write a memoir. During my quest to learn as much as I could about writing and the industry I took Susan Shapiro's fantastic pitch class where I published pieces in the New York Times, Salon, Insider and the Independent. After I came to her panel in New York, I talked to one of the speakers, Joy Peskin, a children's book publisher, about my essays & she said she thought my story would resonate with young readers. With her encouragement I turned my memoir into a middle grade novel. The book is my story, my life, my heart and soul. I still can't believe it's going to be out in the world!!!" -Rebecca Morrison, author of *The Blue Dress*, FSG 2026

"I wrote an essay that the LA Times LA Affairs column passed on. Then I took Sue's class and learned the secret sauce. I just pitched this new story to LA Affairs and voila! They changed the title but overall super thrilled about this. And that [it will be in print in the LA Times on Sunday's edition!](#) Taking Sue's class and reading the Byline Bible has been life changing." -Fawn Stone

"I took Sue's 5-week online class for the first time this summer and got four pitches accepted right away! Talk about instant gratification. I had never published before and within weeks, I was working with editors from CNN, Slate, The Washington Post, and Wired. I'm so impressed with the results she gets! She teaches skills and methods that really work - and will last a lifetime." -Jackie Delamatre