

Finding Your Author Voice: And How It's Different from All the Other Voices in Your Books

with Author Stacy Gold

AT HOME EXERCISES

AT HOME EXERCISE Analyze and Copy

Choose three authors whose voices you love and would love to have inspire your own voice.

- First, study the technical aspects (sentence/paragraph length, sentence structure, etc.) that make each one's voice unique.
- Next, word-for-word copy at least one page from each of their books—preferably using pen and paper if you're able.
- Finally, write or rewrite a page of your own work and see what's changed.

AT HOME EXERCISE Create a Stylesheet

A stylesheet is a list of personal rules for your writing that you can refer to for consistency across all your work.

- This list can include: sentence structure, dialogue tag preferences, words you will or won't use, preferred spellings (gray vs grey), and anything else you can identify.
- You can also create unique stylesheets for a particular genre or series, but unless you're writing under a different name many of the rules should remain the same.

AT HOME EXERCISE

Theme analysis

Think about three books you've read and adored, and answer these questions:

- What are the big ideas you remember from each of their books?
- What is unique about the lens through which they see/portray the world?
- What are they trying to say with their work/what themes are they addressing?
- Where does this show up (Dialogue, actions, introspection, GMC, etc.)?

AT HOME EXERCISE

Finding your themes

Ask yourself...

- What themes do I gravitate toward in other people's stories?
- What themes already seem to occur in my writing?
- If you could have readers take away one big, overarching idea from your work, what would it be?
- Name two more.

AT HOME EXERCISE

Reading Reviews

What do readers say (or what do you wish they'd say) about your writing and how it makes them feel?

- Read positive reviews/comments/feedback/critiques and list any mentioned two or more times.
- List emotions/positive descriptions you see mentioned regularly (IE: transported, hopeful, happy, sad, LOL funny, surprised, page-turner, steamy, excited, all the feels, etc.) and analyze your writing to determine what aspects may be contributing to that effect.
- **No readers yet? No worries!** Ask yourself: If you could have readers give you three complements about your writing, what would they be?

AT HOME EXERCISE Create character backgrounders

List each character's physical attributes, personal histories, dreams, hopes, fears, and more on paper.

- **Basics:** What do they look like? Where are they from? Job/career? Where do they live? Kind of car? Own or rent? Hobbies or passions? Age? Level of education?
- **Background:** Family/upbringing? What are their core values? What are their beliefs about themselves, others, the world? Are they glass half-full or empty? What makes them happy? How do they define success? Greatest fear? Biggest regret/mistake? Nervous tics?

AT HOME EXERCISE Create Character Stylesheets

Having a stylesheet for every main and secondary character ensures each one sounds unique.

- Make a short list (3-8 items) of each character's most identifiable speaking and thinking traits.
- Do they use big or small words or vocab specific to a career? Do they curse or use slang or colloquialisms? Accent? Are they quiet, talkative, nervous, confident, etc.? Do they speak/think in full sentences or sentence fragments? Is how they think different from how they speak?
- Anything else you can identify that would be specific to them.

Got questions or comments about this material or presentation? Drop me a line at stacy@stacygold.com.

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About Stacy Gold



Award-winning author Stacy Gold gave up her day job as Communications Director of a nonprofit mountain biking organization to write sassy, steamy, contemporary romance. Her stories are packed with independent, kick-butt women finding love and adventure in the great outdoors. When Stacy's not

busy reading or writing, you can find her dancing, laughing, or playing

hard in the mountains of Colorado with her wonderful hubby and happy dogs. Learn more at stacygold.com

