



Hi, and welcome to Module 1: Honing Your Voice.

In this module we're going to talk all about the craft of writing, and what it takes to hone your message before you even begin thinking about sharing it with an audience.

A lot of people will tell you that in order for you to succeed as a writer, to take your message and share it with the world, that what you need is a topic, or a subject, or you need to go find a niche and target that. But I don't think that's where you should start.

As somebody who really cares about the craft of writing, I found that the best way to build a powerful audience is to focus first on your voice. And you'll hear people talk about finding their voice, "I wrote for years, and then finally I found my voice." But I don't think that's true. I think that you already have a voice. You just need to know how to use it. And to illustrate that point, I want to share a little story.

Back in high school I was learning to play the guitar, and I wasn't a part of any extracurricular activities at school, and some of my friends were in choir. And so I thought that would be cool, you know? It's probably not cool for a lot of people who think about joining choir. But choir was totally a cool thing for me, and my friends were doing it. I joined the choir not really knowing if I could sing at all. In fact, quite sure that I couldn't sing. I would meet every day after school with the choir director just to sort of get this like boot camp training on vocal lessons.

And what happened was over the course of several weeks, I realized that I knew I had a voice, but I didn't know if I could sing, and I realized it was just a matter of figuring out how do I match the tones in my voice with the tones, the different notes on the piano that the choir director would play?

By the end of that several weeks I didn't become the world's best singer overnight, but I realized, I could sing. And I found my place within the choir. I was a second tenor, and I learned how to sing – or rather that I could sing. It was just a matter of finding where my voice fit into that overall scheme of things.

And I think the same thing is true with writing. It's not so much a matter of finding your voice. You have a voice. You're probably already writing right now. You're writing emails, and text messages. You're writing letters to your spouse, or your friend. We are writing. Everybody writes. It's just a matter of figuring out how do I hone my voice? How do I take this voice that I already have and really figure out how I can make the most of it? And that's what we're going to talk about in this module, the process of learning how to say more with less. We're going to learn how every writer really at the end of the day is a copywriter, somebody who writes not just for themselves but for an audience. Unless you're journaling, all writing you do should be writing for an audience.

And, ultimately, we're going to figure out why good writing is really subjective, why what's good to you may not be good to me, and what's good to you may not be good to your audience. And we're going to

talk about really what it takes to begin those building blocks of honing your voice so that you can build the platform that is going to command the kind of attention that your message deserves.

So, that's the overview of the module. Your next step is just to jump into the next lesson. But before you do that, I want you to think really quickly, because we're going to recap this at the end. What does your voice right now sound like? When I started those vocal lessons many years ago, I used to play guitar. I was playing guitar, but I didn't really know how to sing over these songs that I was playing. I would just sort of like make these utterances, and they were definitely not on key. But after just a little bit of training with my vocal coach, I learned how to match the notes in my voice to the notes the instrument was playing so that I went back to playing guitar while still being a part of the choir. And all of a sudden I knew how to use my voice. And I started a band, and I was the lead singer and guitarist.

You know, we didn't win any awards or anything. But we recorded some CDs and did some cool things, and it was all a result of me not finding my voice but honing it, taking the voice that I already had and really focusing how I was using it on a particular purpose. And that's what we're going to get out of this module together. And, so, real quick I just want you to kind of stick a pin in this moment. Take a moment. Grab your workbook, whether that's online, or on your computer, or you've printed it out and you're going through it with pen and paper, write down just a few words that you would use to describe your voice.

What is your voice sound like right now? Your writing voice. And at the end of the module I'm going to ask you that same question, and let's see how that's changed. Because, for me, after just a few weeks of figuring out my singing voice, there was a dramatic difference. And I think the same thing is going to be true for you. So, write that down. And, then, move on to the next lesson.