LESLIELEYLANDFIELDS

YOUR

STORY

MATTERS

FINDING, WRITING,
AND LIVING THE TRUTH
OF YOUR LIFE

NavPress
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SEVEN “FEAR NOTS!”
OF WRITING YOUR STORY

IN THE BIBLE, whenever God or his messengers showed up, in
dazzling brilliance, to issue a task, a call, people fell down in terror.
Who, me? So many times the divine response was, Fear not! Here,
then, are the Seven “Fear Nots!” of Writing Your Story.

1. **Fear not! that your story doesn’t matter.** It matters
immensely to God, who is the author of your story. As the
writer of your story, you’re in charge of making it matter to
your readers. Remember, we write not only for ourselves,
to discover wisdom, truth, and beauty in the simplest and
hardest moments of our lives, but we write for our readers
as well, who are also on a faith journey.

2. **Fear not! that you have nothing “new” to contribute to the
world.** Listen to Madeleine L’Engle: “My husband is my
most ruthless critic. . . . Sometimes he will say, ‘It’s been said
better before.’ Of course. It’s all been said better before. If I
thought I had to say it better than anybody else, I’d never
start. Better or worse is immaterial. The thing is that it has to
be said; by me. . . . We each have to say it, to say it our own
way. . . Good or bad, great or little: that isn’t what human creation is about. It is that we have to try; to put it down in pigment, or words, or musical notes, or we die.”

3. **Fear not! that you’re not a good enough writer to accomplish your goal.** None of us is good enough to finish a project when we start. Some of us aren’t even good enough to start! By the time we finish, though, we have become more than good enough. The struggle, the long hours, and the word-wrangling and prayer-wrestling will get you there day by day.

4. **Fear not! that you don’t have enough time to write.** Of course you don’t. No one does. But if you are serious about this calling and this project, you will find a way to reorder your life: stop watching TV, write while the kids are napping, get up two hours earlier than everyone else, take your manuscript with you on vacation. Yes, it costs you. Nothing of great value is free. Count the cost to everyone. Then, if you’re still so moved, make room and carry on.

5. **Fear not! that you won’t finish what you start.** The beauty of writing life stories is that every piece you write is a story saved from the Closet of the Forgotten. Don’t let guilt or perfectionism steal the joy and wonder of whatever you’re able to do.

6. **Fear not! that people will reject you when they hear your story.** I can make no promises about people’s responses but know that most of us struggle with the same battles and afflictions. If the sharing of your experience offers meaningful wisdom and hope to others, then write it and tell it. Your courage and authenticity will help others move past masks toward truth-telling and healing.
7. **Fear not! that no one will read your work.** Someone *will* read your work. Maybe a few friends, your family, the ones you really care about; maybe thousands of strangers. No one knows this when they are writing, and it has nothing to do with the work. Just get on with the writing and editing, and trust that your life stories will find the people who need and cherish them the most.
Selected Spiritual Memoirs


Zaleski, Philip, ed. *The Best Spiritual Writing*, annual series.

**Selected Books on Writing**

*Writer’s Market* (annual reference guide) by Writer’s Digest Books

*Christian Writers’ Market Guide* (annual reference guide) by Christian Writers Institute


NOTES

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: YOUR BIGGER STORY
1. Name has been changed.

CHAPTER TWO: YOUR FULLER STORY
2. Exodus 10:2, nkjv.
3. Judges 8:34, rsv.

CHAPTER THREE: YOUR OUTER STORY

CHAPTER FOUR: YOUR STORIES TOGETHER
3. To learn more, see https://www.facebook.com/galleytables/.
4. Romans 12:15, esv.
5. Psalm 96:3, esv.
6. 1 Corinthians 14:26, bsb.

CHAPTER FIVE: YOUR INNER STORY

CHAPTER SIX: YOUR HEALING STORY
3. Ephesians 4:25, 32.
5. “Award-Winning Writer Patricia Hampl to Deliver Fairfield University's
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8. As quoted in Ute Lawrence, The Power of Trauma: Conquering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse Star, 2009), xv.

CHAPTER SEVEN: YOUR FOCUSED STORY

1. Ezekiel 37:12, 14.

CHAPTER EIGHT: YOUR STRUCTURED STORY


2. Ephesians 1:4.

3. Ephesians 1:10.


5. From “The Figure a Poem Makes,” Frost’s preface to his 1939 collected poems; see https://www.poeticous.com/frost/the-figure-a-poem-makes.


CHAPTER NINE: YOUR SHARED STORY


5. Ann Voskamp, One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

Your Story Matters. For a lot of us, this has been a rough year, a tiring year, a painful year. Some years carry a heavier toll than others, and this is one of them. Yet in spite of that or maybe because of it, there’s something you need to do: tell your story. I know how tired you are. I know some of you don’t feel heard. I know some of you might fear you don’t matter. You do. Your story matters.

Your story matters phrase handwritten on blackboard with heart symbol instead of O. Conceptual hand writing showing Your Story Matters. Business photo text share your experience Diary Express feelings in writing. Word writing text Your Story Matters. Business concept for share your experience Diary Express feelings in writing. Handwriting text Your Story Matters. Concept meaning share your experience Diary Express feelings in writing. Text sign showing Your Story Matters. Your Story Matters presents a dynamic and spiritually formative process for understanding and redeeming the past in order to live well in the present and into the future. Leslie Leyland Fields has used and taught this practical and inspiring writing process for decades, helping people from all walks of life to access memory and sift through the truth of their stories.