Welcome to May 🌸

*We tell ourselves stories in order to live.*
— <u>Joan Didion</u>, writer and journalist

Summer here in NC is just around the corner, and it's getting warmer by the day! In this month's newsletter, we'll explore the importance of uncovering your voice and understanding tone in your writing. Also featured are recent blog posts on the psychology of book cover color design and a revisit of romantasy with a focus on tropes, the Technica resource "The Art of Plotting: A Quick Guide," and our project spotlight.

If you plan to attend the Society of Scholarly Publishing (SSP) event (May 28-30), be sure to stop by and visit our table (Table 313)!

Happy Reading! 📖
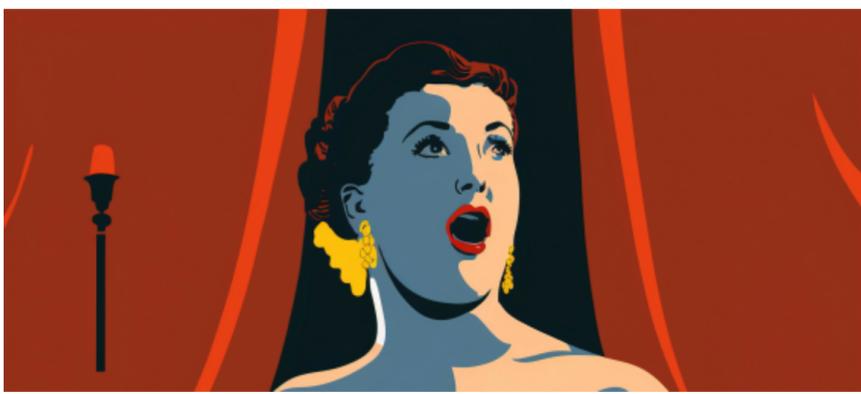
Uncovering Your Voice (and Understanding Tone)

Today we want to talk about something that *feels* elusive but is absolutely essential to everything you write, whether that's a heartfelt memoir, a high-concept novel, or content to support your business or brand: your **voice** and **tone**. We don't believe you can discover or create it because it's already in you. What you can do, however, is *uncover it*, kind of like peeling back the layers of an onion.

First, let's look at what, exactly, voice and tone are.

> ➤ **Voice** is *you*. It's like your unique fingerprint as a writer. Voice is your personality. It's the language you use, your syntax, and the rhythm of your sentences. It's the way your words feel when they land on the page. It's what makes your writing unmistakably *you*, even if someone else tried to write the same thing.
> ➤ **Tone**, on the other hand, is your attitude. It's the emotion behind the words—the *way* you *deliver* your message to the reader. Tone can be warm or distant, playful or serious, formal or casual. While your voice stays fairly consistent across your work, tone can and should shift depending on the subject matter, the audience, and your intention. It's what tells your reader how to feel about what you're saying, whether you're making them laugh, inviting them to reflect, or challenging them to think differently.

Think of voice as your wardrobe (your style as a whole) and tone as what specific items you wear for different occasions. You're still you regardless of whether you're in jeans or a blazer—but *what* you wear sets the mood.

So, how do you actually *uncover* voice and tone?

That's a great question, and exactly why we're talking about it today. Let's break it down with a few key takeaways (and some examples from authors who, in our opinion, have nailed it).

1. Read Aloud What You Write
This might sound like a middle school exercise, but trust us—it works. Reading your work aloud highlights awkward phrasing, helps you hear your natural rhythm, and shows you when something doesn't "sound like you."

> **Example:**
> Elizabeth Gilbert (*Eat, Pray, Love*) writes like she's your best friend texting from an Italian piazza. Her approach is conversational, curious, a little vulnerable. At the same time, she's always confident. That's voice. We see her tone as generally warm, reflective, and often pretty funny.

2. Pay Attention to Your Sentence Structure and Word Choice
Short, punchy sentences vs. long, lyrical ones are choices that shape your voice. So do the words you use. Are you straightforward? Playful? A little snarky? This all feeds into your voice and tone.

> **Example:**
> Celeste Ng (*Little Fires Everywhere*) has a voice that's intimate and observant. Her tone often leans into quiet tension. Her prose is layered but at the same time, we see it as very accessible. These choices, and her style, help her *build* emotion.

3. Know Your Audience
Voice stays (mostly) consistent, but tone can and should shift to meet the needs of your readers.

> **Example:**
> Malcolm Gladwell has a distinctive narrative voice in nonfiction. He comes across as curious, engaging, and smart without being smug. We've observed, though, that his tone shifts depending on what he's exploring. In *Outliers*, it's fascinating and analytic; in *Talking to Strangers*, he's definitely more cautious and contemplative. All the while, though, it's clear that he's always Malcolm Gladwell.

4. Write Like You Talk, Then Polish It
One of the keys to making your writing sound authentic is to start with your natural voice. One idea is to record yourself explaining your topic or telling a story. Once you've done that, translate that onto the page.

> **Example:**
> Nora Ephron (*I Feel Bad About My Neck*) wrote essays with a dry, sharp, and (we think) utterly charming voice. She made you feel like you were getting to know the real her, like she was sitting across from her at brunch.

5. Practice, Practice, Practice
Your voice is not something you create. It's already in you. It's *part* of you. You may not uncover it overnight, but it is there. It may take a little bit of experimenting, imitating (at first), and then refining until what's on the page actually feels like *you*.

Here's our unscientific proof of that. Revisit early Stephen King novels and compare his writing to *The Institute* or *11/22/63*, two of his more recent works. His voice has deepened in his latter work. It's more layered, more confident, and more distilled. But despite that growth as a writer, it's still and always will be Stephen King.

Let's review:

- **Voice = your personality on the page**
- **Tone = your attitude in each piece**
- **Both evolve with intention and practice.**

If you're still figuring it out, that is okay. Developing voice and tone is part of the *craft* of writing. We believe it's part of the fun. The more you write, the clearer your voice will become, and the more tone will make sense.

The bottom line is that no matter what you're working on, just be you.

Technica Tidbits

📖 Strengthening and Expanding Access to Scholarly Publishing
🧑 The Young Publishers Association Is Nurturing the Industry's Next Generation
🧑‍🤝‍🧑 IU Researchers Co-author Study Challenging 'Publish or Perish' Culture, Call for Overhaul of Academic Publishing
🎓 NEA Literary Grants Terminated, Staff Depart as Trump Proposes Eliminating the Agency

Psychology of Book Cover Color Design: How Colors Impact Readers Across Genres
by Emma Montes

Have you ever walked down the aisle of a bookstore or library and had a book immediately catch your eye? Maybe you homed in on an intricate design or an interesting title, but what was more likely, is that it was the color of the book cover that struck you the most! While your parents may have told you not to judge a book by its cover, this life lesson doesn't necessarily apply when referring to book covers. Book covers are an important characteristic of what attracts potential readers to an author's novel. Picking the right color for a novel goes beyond just surface level; there is a psychological component to why people are attracted to certain colors and the influence colors can have on humans. This is called Color psychology, or the study of colors and hues as a determinant of human behavior.

Delve into the details here.

Romantasy Revisited: Focusing on Tropes
by Matt Wade

In a previous blog post, I offered Tips on Writing a Romantasy. In this blog post, I would like to hone in on tropes—what they are, how to best incorporate them into your novels, and examples of popular tropes (some of which I touched upon last time and some that are new). **Read on.**

Project Spotlight
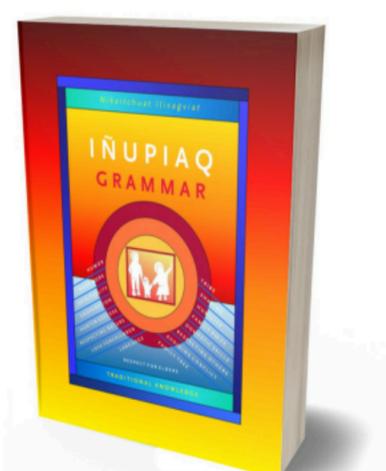
Inupiaq Grammar Book

Technica has been working for several years with the Elders of the Native Village of Kotzebue to develop an original open-access textbook for Native children and anyone interested in learning the Inupiaq language.

Technica helped to edit, design, and and format this grammar book, along with two additional curriculum immersion guides.

Looking to finally finish that manuscript you've been working on? Take the next step. Technica Editorial offers editorial support including copyediting, developmental editing, interior page layout and design, cover art, and more.
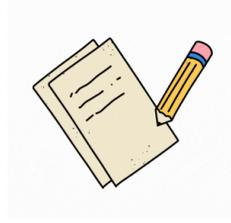**Contact us!**

The Art of Plotting: Quick Guide
A Technica Resource

Whether you're a seasoned, novice, or aspiring novelist, mastering the art of plotting is essential for crafting a gripping narrative that will keepreaders

on the edge of their seats. But how do you go about it? Use this <u>Quick Guide</u> to keep on track with your plotting.

Seeking additional guidance or inspiration? Explore our **<u>Resources</u>** for downloadable author guides and tools!

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