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Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers

Past member Lisa Cooke came home to COFW from West Virginia to speak of the "12 Steps of Intimacy" as a method of further enriching the relationship between heroine and hero in romance stories. From "Eye to Body" to "Intercourse," Lisa explained each stage and gave examples for each using excerpts from her recent release *A Midwife Crisis*.

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Central Ohio Fiction Writers (COFW) <http://cofwevents.org> is a non-profit professional association for romance writers and a local chapter of the Romance Writers of America (RWA) organization that offers monthly meetings. Since 1987, COFW has promoted excellence in fiction writing, encouraging writers to grow and gain knowledge in their craft. Members provide a networking system to share knowledge and support the goal of becoming published.

♥ *Lisa Cooke: The 12 Stages of Intimacy* ♥

Recap by Saralee Etter

How do two people fall in love? How can we as authors show the development of our protagonist's relationship in a believable, step-by-step way?

One useful technique is called the "12 Stages of Intimacy."

Lisa Cooke, who has successfully published 11 books in the areas of historical romance, romantic suspense, paranormal, time travel, and science fiction, explained how she has successfully used the 12 stages of intimacy in her own stories.

When she was writing her first romance, Lisa attended a lecture by the late, well-respected senior editor Kate Duffy, who offered the following advice for new writers:

"Don't write a scene where your heroine is fleeing her pursuers through a crowd, and in order to hide from them, your heroine grabs a man she doesn't even know and pulls him into a deep kiss."

Kate called this the "kiss out of nowhere" – unbelievable and unconvincing. What woman would ever kiss a stranger like that? One reason it rings so false is that it doesn't follow the natural progression that everyone follows when meeting and getting to know a person.

Lisa took this advice in creating her novel *A Midwife Crisis*. She deliberately included scenes that matched the 12 stages of intimacy.

In *A Midwife Crisis*, the heroine is a midwife in Appalachia in the late 1800s. Her "crisis" is, without consulting her, her family members have talked three local men into considering themselves all but married to her. As if this isn't enough, her position as a well-respected medical resource for her small rural community is threatened when a handsome, widowed doctor moves into town.

Stage 1: Eye to body. When you meet someone for the first time, you quickly look them over to determine if they are friend or foe.

This is a very quick assessment. When a man looks at another man, he's deciding whether the other is a threat or a rival. When a man looks at a woman, he doesn't usually see her as a threat. However, he might consider her a romantic interest.

When a woman looks at man, she evaluates whether he's a threat, a rival or possibly a romantic

partner. (In *A Midwife Crisis*, the heroine sees the hero as a rival in the field of medicine. Will her patients stop coming to her, now that a properly trained doctor has arrived?)

Stage 2. Eye to eye. When we look into someone's eyes, we are communicating on a more intense level. Usually this contact is brief. Sometimes people will "lock eyes across a crowded room" to signify a romantic interest. Or such a sustained glance can be interpreted as a challenge, a prelude to a fight.

Stage 3. Voice to voice. Speaking to another person includes simple social interactions like greetings and social chat. This is an opportunity to judge a person on intellectual details like their apparent level of education, and on sensual details like the sound of their voice.

All these stages are part of the regular frequent interaction between people, done in public and between people at all different levels of society. Writers shouldn't get bogged down spending pages describing these initial steps.

The next steps show greater levels of intimacy.

Stage 4. Hand to hand. Handshakes have rules, so make sure you get this right, said Lisa. Our social etiquette describes how hard you shake someone's hand and for how long. Some societies have rules about whether an adult male can touch a female's hand. A lot of variety exists in the levels of intimacy when it comes to hand-holding.

In *A Midwife Crisis*, the characters explore hand holding on different levels.

On their first introduction, the hero finds that touching the heroine's hand makes their professional rivalry more personal. He "shook her hand like a boxer entering the ring."

But later in the story, as they've gotten to know one another and are walking side by side, the doctor's young daughter Julia puts her father's hand into that of Kate, the midwife. Kate feels uncomfortable holding his hand, even though she wants to honor Julia's trust in her by letting the hand-holding continue. Then she feels him rub his thumb lightly over the back of her hand—and the caress makes the moment more intimate.

Lisa read an example of an even more intimate version of hand-holding from *Romeo and Juliet*:

ROMEO (taking JULIET's hand):
If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET:

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this,
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

In many performances of the play, Juliet and Romeo then put their palms together to demonstrate the holy palmer's kiss – and then thread their fingers together. When the fingers become so entwined, it's even more intimate and romantic.

These first 4 stages can occur in a matter of seconds upon meeting, but the following stages are slower to happen, if they occur at all. Now is the time for the author to slow down the action, so readers can fully appreciate them.

In our society's "bubble of space," people generally stand at least an arm's length apart. That is our bubble. If people get pushed too close together, they drop eye contact; this is what happens in an elevator.

Stage 5. Hand to shoulder. This stage is basically the hug. Hugs that are not romantic stop at the shoulder. Romantic hugs touch trunk to trunk.

In *A Midwife Crisis*, Lisa increased the tension between the hero and the heroine by having the hero get a bee sting on his back, requiring the heroine to touch his bare skin as she applies a salve. Although the situation is not romantic, touching the hero makes her think about him in a romantic way.

Stage 6. Hand to waist. Although women may put their arm around another woman's waist in a friendly way, men don't do this with other men in a non-romantic situation (except sometimes in sports).

Sometimes, a man may put hand on a woman's waist to show ownership, such as when he's steering her through a crowd at a restaurant.

Stage 7. Mouth to mouth. We finally arrive at the kiss. Readers love to read the first kiss in a romance story – it's delicious proof that the romance is heating up.

The first kiss in a romance novel often happens by about page 100 – about 25% of the way through a 400-page book. With metrics such as Kindle, it's been discovered that many readers stop reading when they've read 35% of a book.

This statistic argues against having characters kiss too early because if readers are waiting to read that important first kiss, the longer the author can make the reader wait, the longer they might read.

To keep the reader interested in the story until the kiss, Lisa recommends a lot of sexual tension. If the story and characters are engaging, the reader will keep reading and looking forward to the kiss. Progressive complications pull the reader through to the end of the story.

Stage 8. Hand to face. A caress to the face can be more intimate than kissing. There's a great deal of trust involved in letting someone touch the face—faces have lots of vulnerable spots and hands are less vulnerable. It may be easier to let someone kiss you than to let them touch your face.

In *A Midwife Crisis*, the hero doctor has to apply ointment to the heroine's face and he marvels about how soft her skin is.

Stage 9. Hand to trunk. For a woman, this means touching the breasts. It's very serious for a woman because it's a risk for her. It's not quite the "point of no return," but if the couple stops at this point, one or both are likely to feel rejected. This could be a good point where the characters stop to consider the emotional repercussions of their acts.

Stage 10. Mouth to breast. This stage is very intimate for both participants, and like stage 9, if the characters stop at this point it can cause a lot of emotional complications for them.

Stage 11. Touching below waist. If a woman lets a man do this, then she will probably let him have sex with her. An author who writes this stage in the hero and heroine's relationship as a separate moment from the actual first sex scene can heighten the reader's pleasure by providing two "first times."

Stage 12. Intercourse. It's not necessary for the sex scene to be graphic, but it is important to include a lot of emotion. In most romance novels, physical intimacy and emotional intimacy develop at the same pace, and as the characters share themselves emotionally with one another they also feel trusting enough to share themselves physically, with intercourse being the deepest expression of trust and intimacy.

You can also increase the tension between the characters by switching the order of the stages – not in huge leaps, like a kiss before hello, but maybe by having him touch her face before he kisses her, for instance.

Another aspect of the relationship between the hero and the heroine that Lisa has developed in her own stories is Conversational Intimacy.

Conversational intimacy addresses the way two people express their trust and closeness by gradually revealing more about themselves through conversation.

Level 1: Greeting. Usually these are only minimally addressed in a novel, since there's not

much depth to them.

Level 2. Small talk. These conversations cover the weather or other general topics and are pretty boring. They should also be kept to the barest minimum if included at all.

Level 3. Personal but not intimate. Getting-to-know-you anecdotes about work and life – external matters fall into level three. These conversations can hint at deeper emotions and give insight into a character.

Level 4. Personal about others. Talking about one's children, family and other “hostages to fortune” in a character's life displays more intimacy because they hint at who the character loves and cares about.

Level 5. Private non-sexual thoughts and fears. Men don't do this unless they are falling in love. Men are taught not to talk about their fears or beliefs with someone they don't trust.

Level 6. Sexual desires, thoughts, fears and fantasies. Because sex is such a taboo subject, very few people discuss their sexual desires with others. In many ways, *Fifty Shades of Grey* is more about sexual thoughts and desires than about sex.

Lisa Cooke gave a real-life plan to increase the intimacy between romance characters in a believable way. She reminded us to make sure to slow it down. Although we don't need pages devoted to each step along the path to complete intimacy, we should consider incorporating some of these elements. We should pause and use the character's thoughts, feelings, and other reflections to increase the tension and involve the reader in the experience of our story.

She wished us all happy writing!



COFW members welcomed past member and guest speaker Lisa Cooke (middle).

RECAP WRITER: **Saralee Etter** is the author of three traditional Regency romances. New release this summer, *A Short Sharp Knock*, is the first book in a Victorian-set mystery series featuring sleuth Lucy Turner and her friends, William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. Visit her at www.saraleeetter.com and her blog www.saraleeetter.com/blog1

Minutes for April 15, Norwich Township Building, Hilliard

By Jeanne Estridge, Secretary

At 12:30, President Jenessa McRoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Jane Conner moved to approve the minutes from March; Julia Blaine seconded. Members approved.

Three members, Donna MacMeans, Jenessa and Jeanne Estridge, volunteered to be on the committee to review the financial books of COFW.

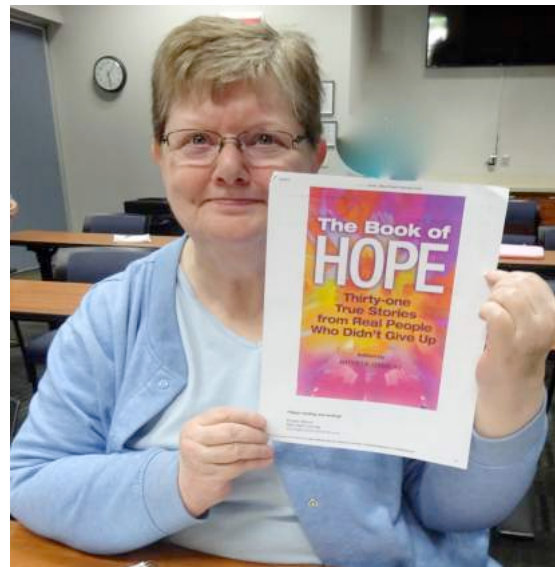
Treasurer Stacy McKitrick reported the current balance at \$12, 382.65.

Linda Rice was sending an ad to *Romance Writers Report* (RWR) of the October Workshop with Larry Brooks within the following week. Jane Conner had registered to ensure the registration process on the COFW website works. Linda gave a detailed explanation of the workshop to new members and guests in attendance. Julia Blaine announced that she was the one to contact if donating a raffle basket.

Julia Blaine presented incentives to members, including: Nancy White's published non-fiction piece in an anthology on Amazon; Jane Conner's new book on Amazon; Donna for her upcoming class at Thurber House on April 24; Sandy Rice who made PAN; Jan Beckett's and Andrea McConnell's receiving requests for a full from SoulMate; Julia Blaine's receiving a contract from SoulMate; and Eva Gangloff's rejection.

Andrea McConnell, social media chair, gave several reminders: (1) give her info on new releases via Google Doc. She will send a link to anyone needing it; (2) share info about upcoming meetings on their social media sites; (3) when signing up to follow COFW Facebook page, choose "See First" on the drop down menu to ensure seeing COFW posts; and (4) Rachel Conner, web mistress, had put a form on the Members page to allow new members to request to be added.

Saralee Etter asked if Rachel could make the newsletter available through the website. Cautions were explained that since the newsletters were members' only, it might require membership validation. Saralee suggested making it a hidden page because the newsletter was too large to



Nancy White earned an incentive for her published writing.

upload to Yahoo but might show up in a Google search. Jenessa will follow up with the request.

Newsletter editor Sandy Kachurek thanked everyone for the great interactions in German Village last month. The last issue was 25 pages long, and she loved having room for photos and stories. Reported issues from members not receiving the newsletters continued, and she was still learning about Mailchimp. She was going to check in with RWA for a place to post the newsletters, which used to be done but hadn't been updated recently.

Saralee volunteered to write the day's recap with Lisa Cooke.

Programs Chair Sheri Adkins presented a results report from the March meeting with Eloisa James. Fifty-four attended, \$1200 was spent and \$602 recouped. COFW's part in cost for the room was \$575 (Book Loft had paid part).

Sheri reminded members of the upcoming COFW meeting programs; Lisa Cooke who was today's guest; Lori Langdon in May; Lori Foster in June; Laurie Schnebly in July for a full-day workshop at the Columbus downtown library, which seats 200, to be free for members and a \$10 donation for non-members; RWA Conference recap in July; Lita Lawson and Kat Sheridan in August on self-publishing, and all-day workshop with Larry Brooks on October 21.

Nancy White and Jane Conner, Ignite the Flame Contest Coordinators, reminded membership that there were seven categories to enter and be judged. They clarified that if a writer hadn't published in the previous five years in a category, she or he could enter it. The contest would be open for entries during the entire month of May. They were looking for judges who needed to be PAN or PRO.

Jenessa asked for information on what was needed to be a judge or contestant to share on RWA Chapter Leadership loop.



Programs chair Sheri Adkins and Lisa Cooke.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Works In Progress and Attendance for April 15

1. Jeanne Estridge: Contemporary.
2. Stacy McKittrick: *Ghostly Protector*.
3. Sandy Kachurek: 20,000 words to the finish!
4. Julia Blaine: Publishing contract with SoulMate Publishing.
5. Nancy White: Into Historical Western.
6. Andrea McConnell w/a Lena Welston: Editing *The British Captain*.
7. Kelsey Kamentz: Plotting an L.I.S. idea!
8. Eva Gangloff: Planning a YA Romance (third novel).
9. Linda Rice: Plotting.
10. Saralee Etter: Midway through "A Short Sharp Knock." Yay!
11. Donna MacMeans: Tax season is over! I'm back to writing my historical and teaching at Thurber House later this month.
12. Kris Branch: Almost finished with first book in a series. About 48K in and nearing climax.
13. Karin Shah: *Chimera Chronicles 5*.
14. Darcy Gafeira: Revising *Zombie Fairytale* for SP.
15. Janice Bennett: Contemporary Romance.
16. Sheri Adkins: Hoping to get back to writing very soon!
17. Jenessa McCoy: *My Lady Spy*.



Spotlighting New Member in Q & A: Eva Gangloff

By Sandy Kachurek, Editor

One of our newest members is Eva Gangloff who writes from Dayton. She uses Eva Greenleigh for her YA works and is considering another pen name for her adult romance.

Q: How did you hear of COFW and why join?

A: I found COFW through RWA's website when I joined in January 2017, the day after the deadline for the Golden Heart, unfortunately. I joined to engage in person with a group of writers who appreciate and understand the romance genre.

Q: What are your favorite genres to write in?

A: I am still pretty much a novice and still trying out different genres. So far, I've written a contemporary fantasy novel for young teens and a dark contemporary for older teens. What I discovered in the process was that I took the most pleasure in crafting the romantic subplots for those stories, and several beta readers felt that was where my writing was strongest. I realized I would be happier writing romance. It also makes sense considering romance was my favorite genre to read as a youth. When it comes to subgenres, I'll likely settle with contemporary or fantasy.

Q: What is your writing regimen?

A: It's been poor lately! I wrote the rough drafts for both of my previous novels when I was either taking months off work or not working at all. My writing regimen suffered since returning to work in late 2015. After recently going through a very busy period at work, I am now scaling back. I hope to make some headway on my writing during evenings and weekends.

Q: Where do you like to write?

A: I'm most comfortable writing in my own home when no one is around, either in a recliner or at my desk with headphones playing my favorite music.

Q: What or who inspires you?

A: I'm most inspired by my deeply spiritual sense that I am supposed to be a writer. It seems like I have always identified that way, but I recall a profound moment at 13 when I knew that's who I am and what I want to do for a career. (Why it took me so long to get serious is another story.) On a day-to-day basis, I'm inspired by great stories I'm reading, fantastic music and my own need to see if I can get on the page the scene I imagine in my head.

Q: Who's your favorite author and book?



COFW welcomed new member Eva Gangloff.

A: I've always loved and admired Jane Eyre. It was probably the first classic I truly enjoyed (in ninth grade). It blew my mind how intelligent and nuanced it was. And gruff Mr. Rochester is still one of my favorite heroes!

Q: What are you reading now?

A: I'm always reading more than one thing. I'm reading two nonfiction books on similar topics: *Girls and Sex: Navigating the Complicated Landscape* by Peggy Orenstein and *Challenging Casanova: Beyond the Stereotype of the Promiscuous Young Male* by Andrew Smiler, PhD. I am interested as a writer for teens and as a parent. I'm also reading Book 3 in a contemporary YA romance series by Katie McGarry. Not many authors publish strictly romance in YA, though plenty include romance in their novels. McGarry is one of the few who writes romance as a focus. I'm studying her writing at the moment. Maisey Yates's cowboy romances are also on my reading list to see if I could write one. Horses and the ranching lifestyle used to be a big interest to me.

Q: What have you read or written that's helped you in your writing process?

A: I've learned a lot from *Absolute Write* online forums. I'm a former member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and may join again. I've attended the Midwest Writer's Workshop (MWW) in Indiana twice. I've live pitched to an editor and queried a fair bit.

I've had good luck finding intelligent, ambitious critique partners through the Internet. I'm excited to find writers who match my reading and writing interests.

My YA manuscript was selected in a contest last year, which set me up with a published author who mentored me for two months. She critiqued my entire manuscript and was a lovely cheerleader. The manuscript is still out with three agents who've had it for several months. I'm also considering submitting it to an Entangled Publishing editor who requested it or I may revise it extensively to make romance the main plot.

Q: And when you're not writing?

A: I work part time from home as a medical transcriptionist. I've been married to my college sweetheart for 23 years. We have five fine children, two sons and three daughters, ranging in age from 21 to 8. We have a 13-year-old dog and two goldfish.

I never set out to get married young or have a big family, but I here I am with a family I get much joy from. I'm as eager to have my own career and travel the world...forever young at heart, I hope. I began taking a mixed martial arts class and three of my kids started too. It's physically challenging and empowering. Most days, however, I wonder what the heck I'm doing there. LOL I overcome knowing I can use what I learn in a future novel.

My website is in its beginning stages, but it's live, which is saying something, I guess. I recognize the importance of social media, but it tends to be a low priority at the moment.

evagreenleigh.com @EMGwriter



COFW Meeting for May 13

Lorie Langdon

How to Hook Your Reader

YA co-author of the Amazon #1 Best-selling *Doon* series, Lorie will speak about emotionally descriptive writing.

Lorie Langdon is one half of the author team that writes the best-selling *Doon* series, a YA re-imagining of *Brigadoon!* published by Blink/ HarperCollins. She has longed to write her own novels since she was a wee girl reading every Judy Blume book she could get her hands on. A few years ago, she left her thriving corporate career to satisfy the voices in her head. Now a full-time author and stay-at-home mom, she spends her days tucked in her cozy office, Havanese puppy by her side, working to translate her effusive imagination into the written word.

Lorie's first solo novel, *Gilt Hollow*, a YA romantic thriller, was released in September 2016.

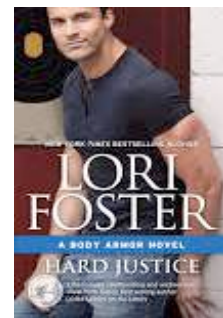


COFW Meeting for June 17

Lori Foster

NYT Best-selling Author

Founder of RAGT



Lori Foster will share her personal experiences with the current industry and its changes along with her recent struggles with issues such as an insane schedule. Questions and Answers, too.

Since first publishing in January 1996, Lori Foster has become a *USA Today*, *Publisher's Weekly* and *New York Times* best-selling author of over 80 novellas and novels. Her newest release, *Hard Justice*, came out in March 2017. <http://lorifoster.com/>

Coming July 15 to COFW: A Full Day with Laurie Schnebly

Different Location and Time

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Columbus Metropolitan Library, Main Branch

96 S. Grant Avenue, Columbus 43215

614-645-2275

COFW Members: Free

Non-Members: \$10 Donation

Morning Session:

Plotting vs Motivation: Any one of us could write a book in which characters set out for a three-hour tour and get shipwrecked on an uncharted desert isle. But if you nail down the characters' motivation, it doesn't matter whether the ship capsizes or lands safely three hours later. Your characters will create a plot from WHATEVER happens because you've got their motivation built in from the very beginning...and here's how to do it.

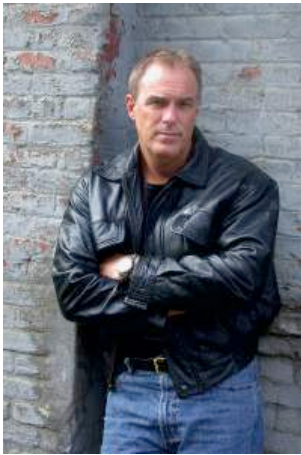


From Plot to Finish: Once a writer knows the elements that belong in her characters and her plot, she's all set...right? Well, not always. Making the move from a few basic answers to a manuscript which is ready to type involves a series of steps that people have called "incredible...a plotting system which truly RESPECTS that I'm a pantsier" and "the easiest way I've ever seen of getting from Basic Idea to Finished Book."

Afternoon Session:

Building Conflict from the Head Down: They're perfect for each other, right? So why can't things ever seem to go as smoothly for these people as they deserve? Well, you know why--it's because nobody wants the happy ending to arrive five minutes into the book. Which means we need to stir up conflict for these characters, and no matter what kind of conflict is happening around them it'll be even more dramatic when you get the conflict happening inside each one.

Laurie Schnebly also writes and produces videos, brochures and commercials for a Phoenix advertising agency. She'd written six books for Special Edition before turning to non-fiction, using her research into the nine personality types to help writers create plausible, likable people with realistic flaws. <http://booklaurie.com/>



Saturday, October 21, 2017

All-day Workshop. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

with

Larry Brooks

*Author of **Story Fix** and **Story Engineering***

Location: The Courtyard Marriott 2350 Westbest Drive, Columbus.

Fee: COFW Members: \$55. Non-members: \$75 (includes continental breakfast, lunch, raffle).

To Register and Pay: COFW Website: <http://www.cofwevents.org/workshop>.

Workshop Topics:

- ☆ The Hidden Secrets of Story Structure.
- ☆ The Beautiful Collision of Concept and Premise.
- ☆ Dramatic Arc as the Key to Everything (Including Character).
- ☆ When Every Month is NanoWriMo.

Larry Brooks is a career writer from the corporate sector who had nourished a fiction-writing dream the entire time. He's published six novels and two best-selling books on writing, *Story Engineering* and *Story Physics* and the 2015 release *Story Fix*, all through *Writer's Digest*.

For Questions: Linda Rice: lindarice05@gmail.com.



The following article first appeared in the April 2017 issue of Happily Ever After, the monthly newsletter of West Houston RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

What are Hashtags? What are their Benefits?

By Joan Reeves

Why bother using a **hashtag**, a keyword phrase used in Twitter conversations that is written without spaces between words and is preceded by a pound (#) sign, i.e. **#writinghacks**?

The hashtag brings conversations on the same topic under a single thread to make it convenient for those interested in that topic to find all the information about it.

The use of hashtags isn't just for Twitter. You can use them on other micro-blogging platforms, like Google+, identi.ca, Instagram, and even Facebook.

Benefits

Hashtags can tie conversations together from social media users in different countries. Just click a hashtag in a message, and you'll see the list of posts using the same hashtag.

Hashtags also allow an audience to interact live during events. I'm sure you've seen the host of a TV show exhorting you to "Tweet hashtag such and such." They're useful for TV shows, conferences, political events and other kinds of events.

You can find lists of popular hashtags at Hashtags.org. If you use HootSuite or TweetDeck—third-party downloadable Twitter apps—you can set up a column with a chosen hashtag so all tweets bearing that hashtag will appear there.

When using hashtags, even if you have registered yours, you may find someone hijacks your hashtag. By that, I mean they use it on their tweets, which may have nothing to do with the definition of the hashtag. Quick example: Let's say you register #SRF with a definition of Sweet Romance Fun. Yet, in the column you set up, you see tweets about sweating in a gym and fun runs using your #SRF hashtag. Why? Because they thought it matched their gym's workout program: Sweat, Run, Fun.

What do you do then...other than get upset? Nothing. There are no penalties for someone using your hashtag and making it stand for something else. Best thing to do is keep using it as you and your friends defined it. Your frequent usage will predominate, and the other users will stop of their own accord.

What To Do Next: 10 Tips

1. Find out if there's already a hashtag you can use by searching Search.[Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) for a list of those used in the past. You'll find out if the hashtag you find is currently active. If you find an existing one that's active, it might be better to use one that also hits the target audience but not used as frequently.

2. If there is no existing hashtag, you can register one. Go to [Hashtags.org](https://hashtags.org) and sign up for a free account. In the right sidebar you'll see HASHTAGS verified. Click ADD YOUR HASHTAG DEFINITION and fill out the form. Be sure and proofread so you don't have a typo in your desired hashtag.

3. Be smart when creating a hashtag to register. The best hashtags are those that are concise, direct to the point, and universally relatable. **Avoid** the words **love** or **hate** or **a word**. Those hashtags do not fare well with the powers that be. Also avoid sensationalism. You don't want to unwittingly create a social or political furor because of a hashtag. Think it through carefully.

4. Be careful how you use a hashtag. Twitter has a policy on this of course.

"The following usages could cause your Twitter account to be filtered from search, or even suspended:

a) Adding one or more topic/hashtag to an unrelated tweet in an attempt to gain attention in search.

b) Repeatedly tweeting the same topic/hashtag without adding value to the conversation in an attempt to get the topic trending/trending higher. (The general rule is: If you Retweet something, remove the existing hashtag and add a similar one.)

5. Be specific when you use a hashtag. This is an example given on a hashtags.org article I read: if you're a huge Game of Thrones fan, the hashtag #gameofthrones is better than #HBOshows.

6. Don't use too many hashtags. Two hashtags is the general rule. Too many hashtags is annoying to see and will result in your tweet not being read. Many will Unfollow you if your tweets are like this.

7. Design the best hashtag which is composed of a single word or a few letters. You should keep the hashtag under six characters according to Twitter experts. This is hard to do. All my registered hashtags – #writinghacks, #wordplay, #thursday3some, #slingwords, #writtenwisdom – are more than six characters with the longest #writtenwisdom weighing in at 13 characters and the shortest #wordplay weighing in at eight characters. Sometimes you have to work with what you've got.

8. When creating a hashtag, use only numbers and letters in your keyword. You may use an underscore, but I personally hate any hashtag or URL with an underscore. They're too hard to miss when the entire link becomes underscored. I've noticed a recent trend of people creating Twitter handles with an underscore at the end. Please don't do this. It's hard to pick up that final underscore.

9. Learn what is not allowed in hashtags:

- a) beginning the hashtag with a number
- b) hashtags composed of all numbers
- c) special characters like “!, \$, %, ^, &, *, +, ”
- d) hyphens or dashes.

10. Be careful using slang in hashtags because slang words can mean something different in another country. Effective hashtags are relatable across cultures.

Takeaway Truth.

When you learn the social media tricks, your efforts will be more effective and your time better spent.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **Joan Reeves** is a *NY Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author. She writes romantic comedy with an attitude—some say a Chick Lit attitude. Her novels are funny, sassy and sexy. See her website at <http://www.joanreeves.com/>



On the Craft and Business of Writing

♥ Fiction Plotting with COFW Members

- ~First Wednesdays, 10 a.m.
- ~Panera Bread, 2374 Taylor Square Drive, Reynoldsburg, 43068.
- ~Sharing and discussing plots. Giving constructive advice on improvements.
- ~Between meetings, attendees stay in touch and ask questions via cofwplot@yahoogroups.com

♥ Live Q & A on Facebook with Author Assistant, Melissa Jolly

- ~Every Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. Eastern
- ~Request to be her Friend on Facebook. Click on it when it pops up in your feed. Or go to her page and click on the "play" icon hovering over her picture.
- ~She takes questions for 30 minutes or until people stop asking.
- ~To ask your question, simply type.
- ~If you can't make it during that time, email her at [melissa\(at\)authorrx\(dot\)com](mailto:melissa(at)authorrx(dot)com) -- melissa@authorrx.com. She'll try to answer your question during one of her weekly chats.

Melissa has spoken at COFW meetings and regularly presents workshops at RWA Conferences. She's been an author's assistant for many years and would love to share what she knows.

♥ Want More of Laurie Schnebly? See Her on Sunday, July 16 in West Chester.

- ~Laurie Schebly Campbell will be giving a free class (or two) at the West Chester Library.
- ~Sunday July 16.
- ~1 p.m.
- ~Free.
- ~Confirm attendance: email Stacy McKittrick. semckitrick@aol.com
- ~This class is the day after the July COFW meeting with Laurie as special presenter. Different topics.

♥ Coming to COFW on September 16: Let's Talk about Self-publishing.

~Self-published, contemporary author and COFW member **Lita Lawson** will discuss how to hire an editor and format your work, along with other handy tips regarding publishing your own work. www.litalawson.net.

~Historical, self-published author **Kat Sheridan** will discuss how to write a back cover blurb for your book. www.facebook.com/Kat-Sheridan

2017 COFW Leadership

Executive Board

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Ignite the Flame Contest Coordinators

[Nancy White](mailto:nancywhite0529@gmail.com) (nancywhite0529@gmail.com)
and
[Jane Conner](mailto:djconner@earthlink.net) (djconner@earthlink.net)



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<https://twitter.com/COFWriters>
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Meeting Days:

The first "teen" Saturday of the month.