

Hey there, beautiful! 🌈 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! 🚀



Engage Readers: First & Last Sentence Tips

Carmen Hecox: Have you ever wondered what story lies untold within you? Lynne Golodner, a seasoned writer and a passionate writing coach is helping women in midlife find their voice through writing and is here to help us explore just that.

Hey everyone and welcome to Create the Best Me. I am Carmen Hecox and you're in for an extraordinary treat today. Lynne has turned her profound connections to writing into a tool for others to discover and express their deepest selves.

Lynne's Multifaceted Career

Carmen Hecox: With a career spanning in journalism to authoring award winning novels, marketing and public relations, and podcasting, Lynne's life is a testament to finding and using one's voice through the written word.

Today, she'll share why midlife is the perfect moment for self-discovery and reinvention. So, grab your coffee and let's get inspired to write the next chapter of our lives with Lynne Golodner.

Lynne Golodner welcome to Create the Best Me. This is totally a privilege to have you on.

Lynne Golodner: Oh, thank you so much for having me, Carmen. I'm thrilled to be here.

Carmen Hecox: I am going to start off by saying, holy smokes, your work, what you do is incredibly impressive. What you do, I would imagine four people can do. And this is coming from little ol you, doing all these things. So, with that said, I mean, I'm like, besides myself, totally impressed. Can you impress the viewers and the listeners as to who Lynne is and what she does?

Lynne Golodner: Sure. So, you know, it's funny, my late grandmother used to say, you do too much. And she probably was right, but I've always been a multitasker. I do a lot of things. A lot of things interest me. And I would say first and foremost, I'm a writer. I've always been a writer. Writing is how I make sense of the world, how I figure out what I think about something. How I communicate and, you know, articulate my passions. So, with that in mind, I'm the author of 10 books and hundreds of articles and essays. I am also a writing coach and writing instructor. So, I teach a lot of writing classes and I have for decades, at universities and to adults and online and everything.

And I have a marketing company, which grew out of my first career, which was journalism. I made that pivot to marketing and public relations in about 2008. And I've been doing that ever since. And so now, that I focus more on writing novels.

I help a lot of authors with their author brand and marketing their books and things like that too.

And of course I'm a mom of four young adults. They're all adults now and that's a big job as well. So yeah, I do a lot of things

Carmen Hecox: And you left something out. You also have your own podcast show.

The Make Meaning Podcast

Lynne Golodner: I do, yes, The Make Meaning Podcast. Thank you for reminding me. I started that in 2018. And I actually, I started it, really just to figure out, I was nosy. I wanted to interview people about how do you find meaning and purpose in work and in life? But, you know, a little more of a somber reason that, inspired the podcast my dad was diagnosed with, an untreatable leukemia. And he was 79 when he was diagnosed. So, I thought, well, I need to start this podcast and start with him as my first guest. And we were very close. He was an entrepreneur. And so,

the podcast launched on his 80th birthday. And he was a return guest on his 81st birthday, but sadly we lost him before he was 82. And so, that's what started it. And it's been going ever since. And I just interview people about what they do and who they are and how they find meaning and purpose. And it's really a fun way to learn about people.

Carmen Hecox: What you do is totally impressive. And I am so happy that you had the opportunity to interview your father twice, because now you have a recording of his thoughts and his voice. Which is something that a lot of us don't get to take advantage of.

Lynne Golodner: I haven't listened to it since he died, either episode, but I know they're there so that when I'm ready, if I'm ready, I will. But I think right now, I don't even know if I can talk to you about it without tearing up. But hearing his voice would really. Uh, Yeah, In time. In time.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, no, and I'm really sorry for your loss. I lost my father too, back in 2019 and I know what you mean, it's, it's hard. You know, they say time helps, but it's hard. It is hard.

Lynne Golodner: You always miss them. Always.

Carmen Hecox: hmm. Yeah. So, the reason why I asked you to come on the show is because of what you do.

Helping Women Find Their Voice

Carmen Hecox: One, well, one little, tiny slice of the pie of what you do, and that is helping women in midlife find their voice.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah. It's a big mission of mine. It really is. It's funny. So, I've always been a writer. I had eight books published between 1996 and 2013, and I was always doing other, you know, paid work. But I did that as a labor of love and something I was always passionate about. And I always defined myself as a writer, but I really wasn't earning my income from doing that creatively.

And so, as I was approaching midlife or maybe a little past midlife, I said, when am I going to just focus on the writing? Like, when will I do that? And, you never

know how long you have. I hope I have decades still, but who knows. And so about five years ago I decided I was going to pivot to writing books as my main focus. And if that wasn't earning me the money then I would relegate other work to other hours but my most creative time of the day would be devoted to books. So that's when I started ramping up my teaching of writing as well because I wanted to surround myself with all things writing. And the first class that I created at that time, because I've taught freshman composition and other writing classes that are, you know, they need a writer, and they need a teacher for it. But I created a class for an online writing workshop called "Finding Your Voice at Midlife."

Because I felt like, especially for women, there was nothing more important. And a lot of us get to this point and say, what have I always wanted to do? And who am I? And who do I want to be? I've been spending all this time taking care of others and building a career and whatever it is. And so, this class, "Finding Your Voice at Midlife," people came from 30 to 85 and they all defined themselves as midlife. So, I finally dropped the at midlife and just called it Finding Your Voice. And it always sold out. I offered it again and again and again. And it's sort of become a mission of mine because, I think it's really important work. And while there are men who have taken a lot of my classes. Mostly women and mostly in this middle life range. Um, a lot of them after retirement or contemplating retirement say, I always wanted to write, but. Either it was that somebody told them it's a nice little hobby, or they can't make a living at it, or whatever it is. So, they never really pursued it, and it was itching at them to keep, to come to the surface.

And so, my classes and the writing communities and the writing retreats that I lead, gives them permission to put themselves first and to work on that.

And, so much of finding your voice is really about stepping into who you truly are at the core, not who everybody else wants you to be. And it takes some work, but it's so worth it. And then everybody wishes they had done it sooner.

Carmen Hecox: And I think, you know, being a woman, being a mom, we have become professional multitaskers. There is nothing that we can't do. And sometimes we might look back and say, how on earth did I do that? And you might talk to someone and tell them I did blah, blah, blah, and this is how I went through it. And it sounds impressive to them. And they say, you should write about it.

I think a lot of us have had people say, you should write a story about blah or this or that. And maybe in the back of our mind, we think, yeah, I should.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah.

Carmen Hecox: But I think that a lot of times, like you mentioned, we keep that buried because life continues to keep us busy.

And we do say one day, one day I will. Or we say, I don't have the skills.

Lynne Golodner: Right, the lack of self-belief, lack of self-confidence is huge. And in my classes, a lot of the writers say, wow this is like therapy, and I am not a therapist. Although I've been to therapy a lot, but it is, it's soul work is what it is. And we're really told that our lives are focused on others.

And we're not encouraged, especially women of a certain age, to focus on who we are and who we want to be and realize we have options.

I felt like, oh, it's kind of late to get here, but at least I got here, but it's not too late. It's never too late. In fact, so many women I know don't even get started until older than I am right now.

And it's just about waking up to yourself. It really is.

The Writing Process and Overcoming Challenges

Carmen Hecox: And so, Lynne tell me, the people, because you said sometimes men, the people that attend your courses, do you teach them how to write fiction, non-fiction, or both?

Lynne Golodner: Well, you also forgot poetry. That's in there too.

Carmen Hecox: Oh, and poetry, sorry.

Lynne Golodner: Yes, yes, that's okay. I don't teach them how to write anything. I teach them to find their unique and authentic way of putting words on the page. And, honing their ideas and understanding technique and craft to make their writing stronger and more relatable. And how to trust themselves and to be patient

too. Because writing is something that takes time and revision and effort and you need other eyes on it to say this is decent or this makes sense, or this is inspiring.

But ultimately you have to believe in it more than anyone because writing and reading is so subjective. So, if somebody doesn't like something I write, somebody else might, and you have to remember that too.

So, I do help them with all of those things, and I do teach about different forms. So yes, fiction, yes, nonfiction, yes, poetry, both short form and long form. So, I help people writing books. I also help people writing short stories and essays and, you know, small little pieces.

We talk a lot about getting published, and goals. What do you want for your author career? Not everybody wants to get published and that's totally valid. But for those who do, there are many publishing paths. And so it's about realizing that you have choices and you have control. You're not at the whim of other people. And you have to say yes to you, more than anybody else.

Carmen Hecox: So, for that woman out there that says, I have a book inside me, but I don't know how to get it out. How do you help them find their voice? Because I think that the voice that they put on paper might be different than the voice that they express themselves every day in conversation with others.

Lynne Golodner: It might be different, but the authentic voice is one and the same. And so, it's about really getting to know themselves. And having the courage to have the same voice across the spectrum. You know so, if somebody wants to write a book, they should write a book for sure. And we talk about what is the theme. What is the focus? What is the message that they want to send to their reader? How do they want their reader to be changed or inspired afterwards? So, there's a lot of talk about purpose and the journey of writing a book, which is not easy. You know, my mom always says if it were easy, everyone would do it.

I also coach about, what do you do when it gets tough? What do you do when you have a messy first draft? And by the way, everybody has a messy first draft. Like the first draft is ugly. You're going to have to spend a lot of time revising. What about when there's a saggy middle? That's a real thing. The middle of the book can sort of drag. And so how do we find the different plot points or the different character development arcs?

I also teach them about planning out their books. So, there's something called pantsing and plotting. So, either you write by the seat of your pants, or you plot it out. And I will admit I am a born pantser but, I converted to plotting.

So, because my first novel was very much pantsed and it was pretty hard to write and pretty hard to revise because I didn't know where it was going. I didn't know where it was ending. So, there were a lot of different drafts. My second novel, which just came out yesterday, this day that we're recording, it was yesterday, that one I plotted, and it was so much easier to write. Because I knew where I was heading. And so, I could strategically include little details or, foreshadowing, whatever.

So, I also help writers if they want to write a book, really make it easy for themselves by planning it out.

Carmen Hecox: And do you find that writing in this structure helps eliminate what most of us call, and I'm like, I think I've had this disease, it's called writer's block.

Lynne Golodner: Yes. So, writer's block, can either come from not planning. So, you really just don't know what comes next, and you get stuck. Or it comes from a lack of self-confidence. So sometimes not finishing a piece is procrastination technique.

And I was just asked this last night about, do I edit as I write? And I said absolutely not, and I advise not doing that. You want to just write the draft even if it's messy and ugly and yucky and you have to do a lot of work to it. Because if you go back to edit, you never finish the story. And by the way, it's a procrastination technique. And somebody in the audience last night at the book launch said, I do that, you're right. It is a procrastination technique. And I was like, it is! You know, so sometimes we're our own worst enemies. And, when I help writers, it's not just about the writing. It's about the being, it really is. And knowing themselves and their own obstacles that we always put in front of ourselves. Yeah so

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, and I know what I struggle with because I write my own scripts when I do my solo episodes, and it's more of an organization, what comes first, you know, how should you, organize things. And so, a lot of times I'm just like, just, just keep writing, just keep writing, you know, write the little heading

too, I'm going to talk about this, I'm going to talk about that. And then just keep going, and when you go back to edit it, you know, I'm talking to myself, when you go back to edit it, then you can organize things. But it's sometimes I just get these big bursts of just information overload. And sometimes what will slow me down is I'm like, oh, but that doesn't flow correctly. And so, what I do is I stop myself and say, who cares. Just write, hit enter, go to the next, just keep writing.

Lynne Golodner: Messy first drafts. It's just the way it is. Messy first drafts. And if you know that, then you expect nothing better. And you're like, great, now I have something to work with, because it is so much easier to edit words on the page. And if there are no words on the page, what do you have to work with? So, just get the messy first draft done. And then you can always cut and paste and sculpt and add and whatever. Absolutely.

The Art of Storytelling

Carmen Hecox: And you know, I love reading, I love reading. I've read some of my guests' books and then I interview them about their books. But I usually like to read the book so that we have something to talk about. I've been reading this book about storytelling. And what I've learned in reading this book is about incorporating hooks to keep people engaged. You know, to keep them so that they want to finish the chapter or move on to the following chapters.

How do you teach people how to incorporate these hooks within their writing.

Lynne Golodner: Yes. And so, there are a lot of ways to describe that, like what are the stakes? Like what's at stake here? Or what are the plot points, things like that. But, when it comes to a book, when you're in the fine tuning, you want to look at first and last sentences always.

So, first sentence of a chapter, last sentence of a chapter. First sentence should pull you in and you want to keep reading. And the last sentence should make you want to turn the page and keep going. And so, I love when I get to that part of the editing because, all the big picture items have been resolved and are smooth, and it's a matter of really building that emotion and suspense and little things so that the reader just wants to keep going, keep turning the pages.

That's really fun is to look at first and last. And, you just never know where you're going to end up with that. It's really powerful.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, and I will tell you, I call them hooks. I know that they call stakes. Some people call them stakes. But when I'm writing, my scripts, and so the open hook and then the close hook. And I'll be honest with you, they're challenging to write.

Lynne Golodner: I think so, but if your story is solid, if you really have a sense of where you're going, when you know your story, it's easier to add those little suspenseful moments. I think it's a matter of knowing your story, because that's the only way to build it in, is that, you know, what comes next? And how do I leave somebody on like a cliffhanger, and then pull them in again. I think that's where the planning comes in is so that you don't have any little dips or boring moments, or the story doesn't lag in any way. That's what the planning,

Carmen Hecox: So, this is something that when you are, per se, creating the outline, you sort of kind of know what your open stakes and closed stakes are going to be within each different chapter.

Lynne Golodner: Yes, yes. So, I use what's called a beat sheet. I did not create the beat sheet. It is from an author who wrote a book called Save the Cat. And it's actually comes from screenwriting, but the idea is that a whole story has 15 beats.

And so, I end up doing like a whole plan of 15 essential marks, I guess, in the story where something pivotal happens. And I spend a month planning my beat sheet before I write a book. I do, I spend that, and I write every day, five days a week. And so, I put that much effort into the planning so that the writing is so much easier. You know that the big moments, the big ahas, the big tension or whatever is going to happen; here's a problem, here's how it resolves. Here's where we think it's not going to, whatever it is. Is something that you plan in advance so it's just a matter of playing with details, playing with words, you know, making it pretty. But you really have a sense of how one thing's going to lead to the next, to the next.

So, that's how I plan it out; I use a beat sheet. I also do a lot of in-depth character sketches, and this is of course for fiction. But I will say when I teach people who are writing non-fiction, I think character is even harder because when you're writing about real people, you can only know them so well.

And you can only tell the story as you know it. So, when I work with people writing memoirs or something that happened from their life, they often decide they want to turn it into fiction. Because they say, it's just going to be easier. And it usually is, but yeah. So, we write about what we know.

Carmen Hecox: Well, that's what I was thinking, because I thought, you know, if it's fiction it's probably very easy. You know, cause you can make it up as you go. Versus if it's real, real life, then you can't really make it up because it loses its authenticity as to the story you're telling.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah, I mean, and then what if it's not interesting? What if there were some moments that were fascinating that inspired the story? But real life is kind of just very mundane a lot of the time. And so how do we make the story compelling? I mean, that's the thing, I know you said you love to read, and I do too.

And when you're reading a book, especially a novel, it's like thing upon thing upon thing happens. It never stops. And oh my gosh, if we live that way, oh we would be just exhausted. We'd be on the couch; you know all day long. So, I think, yes, inspired by real life and then embellished by the imagination.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. And the book that I'm reading right now, he talks about, that sometimes when you're telling a true story, sometimes things happen within three days, but if you drag it out into those three days, it's kind of boring. And so you have to embellish the three days, condense it into one day, to create interest or to remove any of the boring stuff.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah, the sweeping the floor, the taking out the garbage, the sleeping, you know, it's like you want to build the intensity. So yeah, I agree.

The Value of Writing and Speaking

Carmen Hecox: Do you find that some of your students struggle with to me it's difficult to structure it.

Lynne Golodner: Writing is not easy. And I think this is the thing that people don't get is that, I mean, it, it is an art, I think it's an art form. It is a talent that can

be learned. I mean, I think you have the core inner voice, inner talent or an affinity for writing, but everybody needs to develop it just like any skill, you know?

But it's not easy. And so, when people are expected to write for free or to talk about their writing for free or to teach someone. You know, all the time when I'm invited to speak about my books, in some places it's like, oh, do we have to pay you a speaking fee? And I always think, well, you should, absolutely. This is my work and I'm bringing an expertise and I'm entertaining you. So, what is that worth? You know, not every place does. And I have a philosophy that if I can, if I'm not, if it's not costing me a lot, I will speak to whatever audience, because I, I believe very strongly in connecting in person with, with my readers.

But I find that a little insulting because, this is hard work. I'm not, you know, digging in the dirt. I'm not building a building, but I am toiling over this and the finished product is bringing you an experience. And so, you know, if you think about when you buy a book, what is it, 15, 20 dollars or something.

And that's in the scheme of life, that's not that much. And believe me, I do not get rich off of my books. But, how much enjoyment, how much does it open your mind? How much does it make you think about things in a different way? And what does that worth? So, this is, this is not easy, it's hard work.

Carmen Hecox: No, and I'm glad you say that because when I was reading your bio and just looking at all of your accomplishments, I thought, holy smokes and the fact that you started writing since you were, what was it, six years old?

Lynne Golodner: Six years old? Yeah.

Carmen Hecox: And I thought, oh my goodness, I bet for Lynne this stuff just comes easy. And she is a maestro at writing. And so she is sharing her maestro talents with women. Women who have this story burning inside them that needs to get out.

Lynne Golodner: Carmen, I'll tell you. So, my second novel launched yesterday and my third novel. So, one of the things that novelists know is, when you're waiting for one book to come out, what do you do? You start writing the next one because you don't want to obsess about the book that's coming out. Like is it doing well enough?

Are there enough early readers? Whatever.

Struggles of Writing a Third Novel

Lynne Golodner: It's good to have two things going. So, I started writing the third novel, I don't know, a number of months ago when I was building up the buzz and the marketing for the second novel. And I wrote 70,000 words in a draft after planning it. So, you know, I already said, and a draft is 70,000 is a publishable size book.

But I told you, I spend a month planning, right? And then I wrote 70,000. And when I got to that point, I said, this is not going in the direction I want. I put all of that time in, and I just wasn't happy with it. So, I replanned it didn't take a month, but I made changes. And then I started writing from scratch.

And I got to about 60,000 words. Thought I was done. And my next step is to print it out and read it on the page and make notes by hand, so I know where to start revising. And I did that all last week, the week before the book launch.

Dealing with Disappointment

Lynne Golodner: And it was awful. It was so boring. And I thought, are you kidding me? My second first draft, I put all this time into it. And I thought, I don't even want to read this. You're not going to want to read this. Like, if I put this out in the world, it's going to ruin my author career. And that was pretty upsetting, you know? So, you think it comes easy to me? I mean, two strikes on this one novel.

And so right now I'm putting it aside. I'm spending the next two months reading a lot, to really study how other writers do it and writing my shorter pieces, my essays and things like that. Just taking a break and then we'll see where it is. But oh, my goodness, I spent all that time and, I don't think it's publishable, not, not at this stage. So yeah.

Carmen Hecox: Thank you for sharing your vulnerability there. I mean, I know that for someone like you, an experienced writer, an accomplished writer as yourself. You've written pieces for some of the largest magazines in the world. And so, you're not like me writing something, you know, that I've only written for my college professor and my blog post and, and whatnot. I mean, you are a

seasoned, experienced writer, a professor. So, thank you so much for sharing your vulnerability there.

Lynne Golodner: Well, thanks for letting me.

Humility in Writing

Lynne Golodner: You know, I think it is humbling because it's easy to say, look at all that I've done. I'm good at this or whatever, but every time you write a new story, you're starting over. And yes, you bring all the skills of everything that came before, but this story hasn't existed before. And so, can you create it adequately and inspire people? And it's always a challenge. So yeah, I think it is very humbling. I think after my first novel, which was my ninth book, I thought, oh, well now that I did that, okay, every novel is going to be great. And then when the second novel came out, I thought, oh, it needs so much work and it's much better than the first one. But here, third novel, I thought piece of cake and clearly not. So again, humility is coming back to me every single time.

Finding Grace in the Writing Process

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, and I think if I were a student of yours, that would be impressive to me because it would allow me to give myself grace with the work that I'm putting out. When I say, well, I'm not experienced, and I struggle and here's Lynne who is incredibly experienced and she shares the same struggle

Lynne Golodner: Yes, we are all the same in this. And every author I know sweats over it, cries over it, tears up the pages, has big X's. Yeah so, that's just the process. It is.

Carmen Hecox: It is yeah.

The Reality of Prolific Authors

Carmen Hecox: I know that there's this author out there it's a male and I always joke with my husband, I say it seems like he publishes a book like every three months. I said, how is it that he does this? Is he just like magic poof it happens? And my husband always says, it's not him, he's got ghostwriters. There's no way

someone can publish that many books that quickly. You know he's now become a brand, and people are working under his brand because, you might see his name and somebody else's name, wrote X book. And the genre is different too. They're not all the same.

Lynne Golodner: I think you're right. I think there, I mean, I don't know who the author is, but I do know people who put out multiple books in a year and my goal is a book a year, which I think is ambitious. And I don't know how they do it. I don't, I don't know if it's all good either. I mean, some, for some people it is. And for others, I don't know, maybe, maybe we all have different standards of what we want to read. It's also subjective. So, what I might not enjoy, somebody else would. And so, but I think that would be exhausting. I think a book a year is exhausting. So more than one. Yeah, definitely.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. And I interviewed a screenwriter who because of COVID, she turned into a novelist. I read her book; her book was impressive. She told me it took her nine months, and I thought, oh my goodness. This girl has been writing all these years and she said, this is my blood, sweat, and tears, and it took her nine months from front page to the back page. And it is a phenomenal book.

Lynne Golodner: Good. Oh, that's good. Yeah.

Carmen Hecox: You know, I'm still nudging her for book two. But your book, you said you're working on your third, is that like a part of a sequel to the one that just got released? And I'm just going to say this, we are recording on August 28th, Lynne's book has been released officially August 27th. So, is that part of that book?

The Journey of Writing a Series

Lynne Golodner: No, so my first novel came out in 2023, it's called "Woman of Valor," and I always envisioned it as a three-book series. So, my second novel that came out yesterday is called "Cave of Secrets," and that's a standalone novel. But the book three the third novel that I was working on is intended to be a book two in the Woman of Valor series.

So, "Woman of Valor" came out last year, and there's a best friend, to the protagonist, and I wanted book two to be about her, her journey. And so now I

have two drafts that I have rendered unusable. Maybe they will be, we'll see in a few months. But there is an idea already in my head that's just talking at me for, the fourth novel that I want to write.

So, when I come back to this in a couple of months, maybe I'll start that. Who knows? I've started to write down like in my phone, just jot notes, about this next novel because it just keeps talking at me. Like, this is what I want. This is how I'm going to write it. So, we'll see what happens.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. And I heard that's pretty common that, a lot of times when writers write a book and they go back and they edit and sometimes it doesn't sit right with them. That it's pretty normal to set it aside, let it rest for a period, one month, two months. And when they come back, they have fresh eyes, a fresh mind and they can just see where they miss certain things.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah, yeah. I hope so. It'll be interesting to see what I feel after some time. It's interesting, the idea for *Woman of Valor*, my first novel, I started writing in 2011 and I wrote 60 pages and then I put it aside because remember I pantsed that one. And I didn't have a plan, and I just didn't know where it was going. So, I put it aside, and my kids were little, and I was working in marketing every day. Ten years later, 2021 is when I came back to it and said, I think there's something here and so let me see what I can do with it. And it eventually became *Woman of Valor*. But yeah, I put it aside for 10 years. Granted, I had other things that were priorities, but I will not put this one aside for 10 years.

But my husband, when I was sort of feeling bad for myself after this last week, he said, do you know that somebody found an early manuscript of Hemingway's a few years ago and published it. It had never been published. And I think it was in the *New Yorker* or something like that. And I said, was it good? And he said, no, it was terrible, but it was Hemingway. So, we had to put it out there. He said, there's so many famous, wonderful authors who have unpublished works that they put aside, and they went on to do something else. And I, I think that's an important lesson. I was really, grateful to my husband for showing me that side of things.

So, he's my biggest cheerleader. So, it was helpful.

Carmen Hecox: That is so awesome that you have a support system like that. You have a husband who may not know how to write like you but understands that your

craft is something that you're passionate about. And is something that, that inspires you, that moves you forward and says, hey, I share your passion.

Lynne Golodner: Yes.

Carmen Hecox: And is able to like lift you up and just say, hey, it's okay. This happens to everybody.

Lynne Golodner: It's interesting when we met, he's my second husband. And so, it's a blended family situation. And when we met, in 2009, I had just started my marketing business and had left journalism. And so I was fully in marketing, entrepreneurship and all that. And he said, well, I just always think of you as a writer. I thought, I think this is why I love you. I mean, I love him for so many reasons.

But the fact that he saw the real me, and he never lost sight of that. And so, when I said, you know, now fast forward, however many years I want to pivot so that I can write books. And who knew if I would ever make a penny at it, he said, absolutely go for it. This is who you are. And I'm like, thank you for seeing me. You know, it's really, really fortunate.

Carmen Hecox: He saw the six-year-old.

Lynne Golodner: He did. Yeah, he knows who I am at the core.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah.

Lynne Golodner: I love that. It's really special. So.

Carmen Hecox: I will say Lynne what really impressed me other than all of your accomplishments were the testimonials. The women that have taken Finding Your Voice at Midlife. I mean, these women, some of them had said that they got to know themselves. Some of them said it was therapy. You know it was like therapy.

And I don't know if it's because they're digging at their own personal core as to who they are. And the message that they want to share with the world. What's the magic? How do you do that?

Rediscovering the Joy of Writing

Lynne Golodner: Well, you know what's interesting is in this class and then really anything that I do with writers is we have to go back to who they were before they were aware of what other people thought of them. So, when you were a child, what was something that you did just because it was fun? And that is often writing for a lot of these women who come to me. It was for me, and I never thought about like, is this good? Will it be published? Will anybody like it? I never thought any of that stuff. I just wrote because. It was fun. It was just how I connected. How I made sense of things. So, we go back there, and they have to like access that inner child and that's really the core of your voice. And so, I guess I understand why it's like therapy, but it's all writing. And, you know, on the very crowded shelf behind me, there is a corduroy covered journal from my elementary school years, and I keep it there, to remind me of who I've always been. And sometimes I'll open it and be like, oh, that's a cute little poem or whatever.

But I mean, is it any good? I mean, it's, you know, an eight-year-old, a 10-year-old, whatever. But that's who I always was.

And I think one of the things I talk about in my class is that we lose sight of that person when usually around middle school and we start to think, other people are noticing me, and they have judgments of me, and I have to pay attention to that.

And of course we're sort of guided into, you know, career focuses, and will something be lucrative and will there be opportunities? And I understand it's all for good reasons, you know, but that's when we leave ourselves behind. And so, there's got to be a way to have both at the same time.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, cause I even saw that you had doctors. You know, female doctors that are well into their career. They're saving lives and you inspired them to write their story.

Lynne Golodner: Yeah. I don't think any of the things we do between when we're children and when we come to this point, maybe at midlife or whatever, to reclaim ourselves, I don't think any of it is done in vain. I think it brings us to this moment, and we have so much fodder for writing. So that's why, I mean, I don't know the statistics off the top of my head, but the majority of women I know who publish a novel, do it after 50. And it's probably because they were busy doing other things

and they only took the writing seriously when they got older. And they could just devote time and attention to it.

But I also found I needed the maturity as a, both a writer and as a person to be able to write fiction. I really did. I tried when I was younger, the first novel I wrote I was 29 and it sits in a drawer. I thought it was great, but it's never going to see the light of day. I think I needed to be more mature. I needed to be more developed in who I am. And so, it makes sense to me that, you know, most people don't really get their start writing and publishing until they're much older.

Carmen Hecox: So, tell me, what is the format of your writing course? Is it all, videos or is it, one on one coaching? What's the format? How does it work?

Lynne Golodner: So, it's usually a small group, so it could be anywhere from 8 to 15 people. And I teach a lot online, that way I can access people all over the world. I will do things in person. So, you know, I'll lead writers retreats in person, sometimes some in person classes, but mostly it's online. And, whether it's a four-week class or a six-week class or eight-week class, I have very occasional webinars that might be three hours long. But we have a combination of readings lessons, and assignments. And in some classes, I'll give feedback on the writing and in others I don't, it just depends on what the class is.

The Importance of Writing Community

Lynne Golodner: But it's always a sense of community and a lot of conversation and free writing as well. So, I might give a prompt and people will write like spontaneously. And then we'll always have opportunities to share our writing, like read it aloud and get some feedback or whatever.

And it's not only accessing that inner voice and the core of who you are, it's finding your people. And a lot of the women who come to my classes, are looking for a community. You know, it's really hard to make friends when you're an adult and here are people who share your creative ambitions. And you can support one another.

And I always say it is so important to have a writing community around you because there are going to be moments when you have self-doubt and you need

someone to say, you got this and let's write together on Zoom or let's go to a coffee shop or whatever. You need those people.

Carmen Hecox: That is so true. Cause I had, an episode where I talked about how to make friends. And I got a little tidbit, and I put it on Tik Tok and this woman just kind of asked me, well, how do you make friends? You know, I'm over 50, how do you make friends? I'm challenged. I don't know how to make friends. And so, it is so true. It is hard to make friends when you're an adult.

Lynne Golodner: That is a great topic for an episode. I think it's a challenge. I think when you're not in school or in university or in a workplace or your kids are in school, so the other moms or your friends or something, that forces you to be with people. And even when you think about it, you know, I remember saying to my kids, cause my youngest just graduated high school, but I remember saying, you, have slim pickings. You know, no matter how many people are in your high school, this is the pool to choose from.

So you do your best to find people you align with, but then as you get older and you start to specialize in what really interests you, that's where you find your people and it's really hard to wait. So, my youngest son is a very outdoorsy kid. And there just weren't a lot of people like that in his high school.

But when he goes and does canoeing trips or whatever, he finds his people. And I said, the more you do that as an adult, the more you'll find them.

Carmen Hecox: Um-hum and you know, I saw that somebody had said that they finished their course and they signed up again. And so that's why I was just kind of wondering, is it like section, like this is part one and then things change and here's part two, or is it more that they love the teachings, but they also enjoyed the community, and it allowed them to just stay connected with their tribe.

Lynne Golodner: Well, I think it's both. And when I started teaching “Finding Your Voice”, I very quickly created a “Finding Your Voice Part Two.” So, people would take that. And I have other classes that I teach. So, once they take one of mine, they often take them all. And I got to a point where people had taken all the classes that I offered, and they wanted to still write together. So, I created something called The Writers Community. And it's a program that has been going for a number of years now and it evolves all the time. So, in the beginning, it was like month-to-month, you could come in, you could go out, whatever. Then I made

it a six-month commitment and you were in a small group and so you knew each other well and you could share your writing for feedback.

And now it's a 12-month program and people have to apply, and I limit it. This year I have 23 people. Next year I'm limiting it to 12. And, we have the big group, but then we have small critique cohorts. So, you can look at each other's work and give feedback. And I'm offering something new called the book writers community.

So, the writers community will be for people writing essays, short stories, poems, short pieces, and learning craft and technique. And then the book writers community are for people who are working on a book. And so, that way you can have like your partner, your critique partner, and you can share chapters each month and learn about how to finish a book, how to edit a book, how to publish a book, how to query agents and publishers, and how to market it.

So, every year it changes because I learn more from teaching. And a lot of the same people come to all the programs, you know, or come on my retreats or whatever. And it's really nice. I'm so fortunate. I'm really, really grateful for all of them.

Upcoming Writing Courses and Retreats

Carmen Hecox: And so, Lynne, when does your course open up again? Because I did notice that it opens, and it closes.

Lynne Golodner: It does so, both [The Writer's Community](#) and [The Book Writer's Community](#) will start in January of 2025. So, if somebody is listening to this and wants to apply, they can find all the information and, and how to apply on my website, which is [LynneGolodner.Com](#). I'm sure we'll put it in the show notes.

And it will sell out so if you're interested, definitely reach out to me. But I teach classes all the time. I teach both, you know, shorter classes. And I teach a lot through [writingworkshops.com](#), which is a great writing website. Lots and lots of opportunities. And I teach retreats every year too. So, if it's, if you've wanted to go away and write somewhere, another opportunity. So, lots of choices.

Carmen Hecox: And where are your [retreats](#) usually at? Do you have a center that you rent?

Lynne Golodner: So, every year in September, I do a retreat on Mackinac Island, which is in Lake Huron between the two Michigan peninsulas. And it's an amazing place. There's no motor vehicle traffic on Mackinac Island. There's literally horse and buggies, bicycles, or your feet. And it's super cool. So, I always do one every year there after Labor Day.

And my retreats are generative, which means it's for generating new writing. It's not workshoping. We're not spending the time looking at everybody's writing. And we write in the mornings and then in the afternoons we do active things. So, like [on Mackinac Island](#), we do an eight-mile bike ride one day and we write during it. We do a hike, and we visit the art museum and we do a kayaking excursion.

And then I always do a second retreat every year that is somewhere I've wanted to go. So, this year, it's in the Redwood Forests of Northern California, Humboldt County, so kind of close to you. Last year, it was in Nova Scotia, and in 2025, it's going to be in [Ithaca, New York](#), upstate New York. So, yeah.

Final Thoughts and Encouragement

Carmen Hecox: Lynne from our discussion today, what is the one thing that you would want a woman in midlife who is listening to this or watching this to hold close to her heart and remember?

Lynne Golodner: Such a good question, Carmen. I think I would want her to feel excited and invigorated at the possibility of rediscovering herself and sort of connecting with our soul and bringing that front and center. That now's the time you have your own permission to do it. And there's never been anything more important either. Yeah, that's the, that's the work that's so important.

Carmen Hecox: I love that, I love that. Lynne thank you so much for coming on. I wish you the best on the release of your new novel.

Lynne Golodner: Thank you so much Carmen.

Carmen Hecox: I hope it sells out. New York times bestseller.

Lynne Golodner: Me, you and me both. Let's hope so. Thank you for having me.

Carmen Hecox: All right. Thank you. Oh, my goodness, wasn't that an amazing episode? I just want to take this time to thank Lynne Golodner for joining us on today's episode of Create the Best Me. Lynne has not only inspired us with her journey but has given us invaluable insights into how we can find and amplify our own voices through writing.

If today's conversation sparked a desire to tell your own story, remember, it's never too late to start. For more about Lynn, including links to her book and writing programs, make sure to visit our show notes at createthebestme.com/ep088.

Don't forget to join us next week for another full episode of motivation and insights designed just for you. Until then, keep dreaming big, take care of yourself, and remember you were beautiful, strong, and capable of creating the best version of yourself. Thank you for watching. Catch you next week. Bye for now.