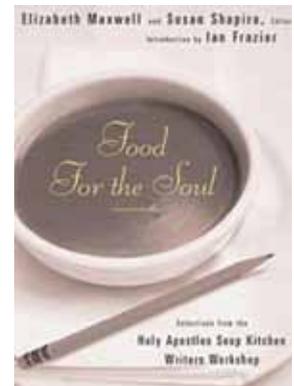
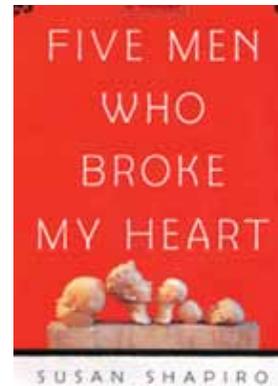
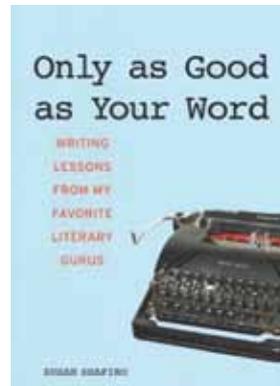
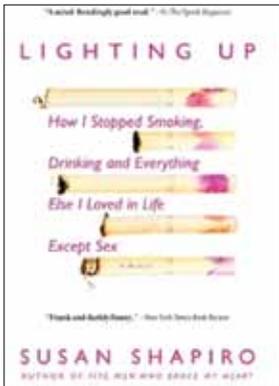


# DO YOU HAVE A TALE TO TELL AND SELL?

BY DORRI OLDS



Helping hundreds of her students break into the *New York Times*, *Salon.com* and *Newsweek* and assisting more than 40 others to nail book deals, Susan Shapiro might be the most popular writing teacher in New York.

"You're supposed to write the book you wanted to read and teach the class you wanted to take," says the funny 49-year-old author of 7 books. After spending \$30,000 on an MFA from NYU and not even learning how to write a cover letter to submit her work professionally, it's no surprise that Shapiro penned a book spilling the inside secrets of her literary gurus and invented the "instant gratification takes too long" method of writing. The goal of her 5-week essay workshop is to craft and publish a great piece by the end of the class to pay for the class. Shapiro has a rule—if you get paid \$1000 or more for one of her assignments, you owe her dinner. She eats a lot of Japanese food (her favorite) for free. Shapiro's Facebook pages are overstuffed with links to former pupils' clips. Editors around the country know to call her first when they need a piece on any subject—fast.

"Luckily journalism is literature with A.D.D. so it's not hard to see print quickly," says Shapiro, who worked at the *New Yorker* and has freelanced for more than 100 top publications herself.

In her 1-day "Secrets of Selling Your First Book" seminars, she brings in experts in the field, i.e., book editors and her beloved literary agent Ryan Fischer-Harbage, who has sold books for 12 of Shapiro's students in the last three years.

"Susan laid out a passionate, strategic, funny and convincing road map. Her critiques were dead on," said Bruce Frankel, a former student and Fischer-Harbage client whose hardcover *WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE* was published by Penguin. "If you want to get published, take Susan Shapiro's class," said Karen McCarthy, another Shapiro student. Fischer-

***"The goal of the class is to have a student publish a piece by the end of class to pay for the class."***

— Susan Shapiro

Harbage sold her debut *THE OTHER IRISH* to Sterling Books. "Not only will you learn what to write, you'll learn how to write it, pitch it and earn a living. She made it all happen for me."

"Susan's classes go beyond typical workshops," said former student Lisa Monroy whose novel *MEXICAN HIGH* was published by Random House. "She teaches writing as a real-world business."

Published pupil Sara Murphy said, "Susan found the angle in my essay that made it timely and relevant and helped me sell it to the *New York Times*."

"After attending Sue's 1-day seminar," said Melissa Malamut, author of *SHE'S GOT GAME: THE WOMEN'S GUIDE TO LOVING SPORTS*, "she introduced me to an agent who landed me a book deal. Sue's more than a great teacher, she's a mentor and role model."

"Shapiro read my first page and told me everything wrong with it and how to fix it," said Kimberlee Auerbach, author of the Dutton memoir *THE DEVIL, THE LOVERS AND ME: MY LIFE IN TAROT*. "She's the best tough love in the city."

***Shapiro will read from her new book OVEREXPOSED at KGB Bar on Monday, August 23 from 7 to 9 pm at 85 East 4th Street, with former student Melissa Malamut. Her next free SECRETS OF PUBLISHING PANEL is September 14 from 7 to 9 pm at the Greenwich Village Barnes & Noble on West 8th Street. For more info, email Profsue@aol.com.***

***Dorri Olds (DorriOlds.com) is a web designer, social media consultant and member of the American Society of Journalists and Authors.***