



LESLEY QUINN WRITING CONSULTANT

Your story. Your Voice. Clear. True.



TESTIMONIALS

Lesley has the rare gift of a talented editor: She makes me sound more like myself – the self I'd meant to put on paper, and was trying to put on paper. She's brilliant with both the big picture (helping me find the deeper meaning of the story) and the details (cleaning up my prose--her line-editing is excellent). For the past several years, Lesley has worked on everything I've written, and I'm so grateful for that.

–Wendy Lichtman, author of *Do the Math: Secrets, Lies, and Algebra* and *Do the Math: The Writing on the Wall*, also writes essays for the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Good Housekeeping*, and many others.



For three years I was the lucky recipient of Lesley Quinn's elegant editorial eye. In exploring the depths of a story, Lesley listens with her heart and digs with a gentle but determined approach in search of your gold. In addition to using her excellent language skills, she employs a rare combination of intuition and intellect that results in a better piece of writing. What more can you ask of an editor?

Aleta George's stories have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, California Wild, Passionfruit, Poetry Flash, Travelers' Tales American Southwest, and the award-winning anthology, A Woman's Passion for Travel.



Lesley's insightful comments improved my law school personal statement tremendously. She worked closely with me to develop my ideas and to produce an essay that reflected what I really wanted to say. Her insights always pushed me toward a clearer and more precise use of my own words. In her caring hands, I felt confident that I had produced a truly polished piece.

Ben Botts is a first-year student at UC Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall). He was accepted by every law school to which he submitted a personal statement edited by Lesley, including Boalt Hall, NYU, UCLA, UC Davis and Hastings.



The college application process was one of the most stressful times of my life. The idea that the next four years of my life would be affected by two 500-word essays was especially frightening, and that fear made them particularly hard for me to write (creativity and stress are not, for me, complementary). While I did manage to cough out essays that accurately depicted both my proudest accomplishments and the most formative events in my life, I knew the writing was forced and dry. Lesley worked with me to infuse my essays with style, creativity and wit, and coached me through the process of converting them into compelling and well-written short stories. Lesley's help made a significant difference in both the process and the final product. I highly recommend her to anyone who wants to add that critical extra pizzazz to make essays stand out to college admission boards. I am currently a sophomore at Tufts University and believe my essays played a big part in my admission.

—Emma Mayerson, Berkeley, California



College application season was not a merry time at our house. It was time, finally, for my daughter to finish essays she'd started and stopped over the course of several months—but she just wasn't into it. The essays felt forced, Emma felt fake, and I felt frustrated. When the deadlines were perilously close, we decided to enlist Lesley's help. She totally got what Emma wanted to convey and worked gently and insightfully, making suggestions that allowed Emma to develop her story and convey both her experience and her personality without feeling as if she were losing her voice or her control—Emma's essays remained her own in every way. We'll never understand the mysterious application evaluation process but we feel that our daughter's essays conveyed to a room full of strangers a lot about who Emma is.

—Arlene Mayerson, Berkeley, California



Lesley did an extraordinary job working with my daughter to develop and polish her college essay. She read the essay with great care, extracting the principal threads and then working skillfully to help Emma narrow her focus and sharpen her ideas into a powerful piece of writing. My daughter enjoyed the editing and rewriting process, and learned a great deal both about writing and about herself. She emerged from her work with Lesley a stronger and more confident writer. And she got accepted to the colleges on the top of her list!

—Heidi Tarver, Berkeley, California



Working with Lesley on my personal statement for my college applications was incredibly helpful. She offered great insight, helped me refine my writing, and gave the essay focus and direction. The process of editing my essay with Lesley was very enjoyable, and i feel that she is in part responsible for my college acceptances.

—Emma Tarver, Berkeley, California



Lesley Quinn, Editor w/♥

Lesley Quinn is an editor with heart. She has an amazing ability, like a practiced midwife, to find the fluttering heart of your gestating baby. Somehow, she instantly knows what you're writing about, often before you know it yourself. The first time I worked with Lesley, she amazed me by zeroing in on a subtle, underlying theme I hadn't noticed. With Lesley's help, I was able to strengthen and deepen my piece by exploring that theme further. Every time I show her a work-in-progress, she helps me figure out *what it's really about*, and to revise accordingly. Now, none of my work progresses without first passing muster with Lesley Quinn, Editor w/♥.

Rosemary Graham is the author of My Not-So-Terrible Time at the Hippie Hotel (Viking, May 2003); Thou Shalt Not Dump the Skater Dude, and Other Commandments I Have Broken (Viking, 2005)



As a professional author and former syndicated newspaper columnist, I've worked with numerous editors over the past fifteen years. Recently I've had the good fortune to have Lesley Quinn edit my latest book. What a treat!

She's sensitive, brilliant at teasing out the subtle gaps in content I thought I could get away with. "I'd like to know more about how you FELT when you discovered your husband with another woman," she'll say. Or, "I think the reader would like just a teensy bit more detail here-when your mother climbed into that dumpster to find second-hand treasures."

Intermixed with these gentle prods Lesley encourages, commenting on my every original metaphor and beautiful phrase. "This is WONDERFUL," she enthuses, keeping my writing heart going another day.

She notices both detail and global issues: “This segment has energy—but what about your overall theme here?” After Lesley has been through a chapter, I know it’s been vetted by the most thorough, expert eye I could hope for. She’s truly one of the “greats” and I feel lucky to have found her.

Joan Steinau Lester is the author of four books, including TAKING CHARGE: Every Woman’s Action Guide and the biography, FIRE IN MY SOUL: ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (Simon and Schuster, 2003).



Lesley is the consummate professional. Her writing skills are extraordinary, probably because she enjoys the process so much. Hers is a cut-to-the-chase style of editing. She sorts through confusion and muddled thinking to produce works of exceptional clarity. Personally, she has an easy way about her and behaves with honesty and integrity in all things. Probably the best I can say is that I would hire Lesley again in a heartbeat. I can recommend her without a single reservation.

—Bill Marr, Founder of The Executive Group



Lesley is the reader I trust to tell me how other readers will experience my writing. In addition to sharpening my sentences, she lets me know when my message is on target and more importantly, when my words miss my intent. She has provided my work with more than the mechanics of editing, she has helped set the tone.

—Alan North, author of *The Urban Adventure Handbook* (Ten Speed Press, 1990)



Having a piece of writing edited by Lesley Quinn reminds me of the feeling I get when I relax into the chair at my hair salon of four years - I know I'm in sure hands and involved in a collaboration to help bring forth the best part of myself.

Heather Bloch is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in The San Francisco Chronicle Magazines, The Baltimore Sun, San Francisco, and The Bark, among other publications.



In my experience as a freelance writer, I have yet to meet anyone as skilled as Lesley in analyzing both detail and the general structure of my writing. Her elegant wording and flawless sentences make her stories easy to read. She understands language and how to make it work for her, resulting in a precise style that isn't pretentious or rambling.

In addition to writing well, Lesley's gifts include the ability to read or hear a piece for the first time and give a thorough-and diplomatic-assessment, ranging from word choices to overall structure. Most of all, I admire her skill in pinpointing a story's true theme and/or direction. She often sees where my story's headed before I do. She explains the reasons behind her remarks, allowing me to focus on the rewrite as a whole, as opposed to a list of unrelated suggestions.

I continue to thank the cosmos for dropping me into Lesley's orbit. Her talent is exceptional.

Catherine Shepard's work has been published on Salon.com, and in the San Francisco Chronicle, the San Jose Mercury-News, the Denver Post, the Pittsburgh News-Gazette, and Skirt! magazine.



Lesley Quinn is a superb editor -- skilled and creative. Her detailed thoughtful analysis and specific suggestions for improvement helped me to rewrite my current manuscript with much greater clarity and vividness. Her work is bringing my book to a new level of interest and immediacy. Lesley is professional, pleasant and a pleasure to work with.

*Arlene Blum is the author of **Annapurna, A Woman's Place** (Sierra Club Books, 1998)*



What I find magical about Lesley's observations, corrections, suggestions and comments is that my responses have been: *Of course! Why didn't I see that?* It is hard to delete/add/correct another writer's work and she does this with grace. I 'get' in her notes to me that she is a whole person, and I see it clearly, too, in her own superb writing.

Sara L. Orem, Ph.D., Lotus Coaching, Oakland, CA 94611



I stand in awe of Lesley Quinn's ability to give broad suggestions for sweeping changes to a piece of writing, when necessary. Most writers are too close to their own work to be able to stand at a distance and deal with structural issues. That's when it's time to call Lesley.

In addition, Lesley has a micro-surgeon's eye for the small details that make a piece sing with individuality. She can, with equal aplomb and kindness, point out the clunkers and praise the successes.

And best of all, I always leave Lesley Quinn's presence feeling better about myself and my writing. She has a rare talent.

Peggy Vincent, author of BABY CATCHER: Chronicles of a Modern Midwife (Scribner 2002)



I feel delighted. I know I have given myself an excellent chance. Your input, work and lovely personality made a big difference for me. Your graciousness is contagious!! And a treat.

Thank you.

—Andrea B., Oakland, California



Thank you again for all your help. It made a huge difference! This was a very tough year to apply and I believe your coaching gave Sam the boost he needed.

K.W., Albany, CA



Thank you for all of your wonderful essay writing help. You were truly a blessing to Z., and to her relationship with us parents. She got a lovely admission and aid package to Wesleyan, and we are waiting for the last 10 to come in. But she is happy and a whole lot less scared.

—Mother of Vassar Student, Class of 2013



MY SON JUST CALLED ME TO LET ME KNOW HE GOT ACCEPTED TO STANFORD. WE REALLY APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU DID FOR [HIM] ON HIS APPLICATIONS. WE WILL DEFINITELY COME BACK TO YOU WHEN OUR DAUGHTER APPLIES TO COLLEGE IN A COUPLE OF YEARS.

—PLEASED PARENT, SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



Thanks so much for the help/guidance you gave on [my son's] essays. I still get emotional reading them because of how well they describe [him].

—Peter Fong, Alameda, CA



Just wanted to let you know that I have been accepted to Cornell early decision! Thanks you for all of your help as it was very valuable.

A.J., New York



I can highly recommend Lesley's services. My daughter has a learning disability and she needed to convey that in her personal statement. From start to finish everything was in her own words but in the end there was a big difference in clarity and effective expression of her thoughts. I know colleges are putting emphasis on personal statements and this was an opportunity for them to see beyond Chelsea's grades and test scores. She has been accepted to several colleges so far, but no matter where she ends up in, I honestly feel she did her best work with help from Lesley. I believe this is such a small investment for something that will affect a person for a lifetime.

—Sonya Hollenbeck, Oakland, CA



I'd like to thank you so very much for all your effort and help in the [essay writing] process. ...I've learned a bit about myself and I've grown...some things that I didn't think were possible at the beginning of our work, have come to life...and I think the writing process was a big part of my mental evolution...working with you was wonderful.
—Henry F., Berkeley, California



DEAR MS. QUINN,

I FOUND OUT THAT I WAS ACCEPTED EARLY DECISION TO UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA TODAY! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND CONTINUAL HELP WITH MY ESSAYS. MY COMMON APP ESSAY TOOK MONTHS TO BRAINSTORM, WRITE, EDIT, AND CUT, BUT YOU REALLY HELPED ME DURING THE PROCESS AND I'M VERY GRATEFUL. I REALLY APPRECIATE THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU PUT IN TO POLISH MY ESSAY WHILE STILL PRESERVING MY VOICE, THOUGHTS, AND MESSAGE. THANK YOU!

B.H., ALBANY, CA



***THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR HELP IN FORMULATING [MY DAUGHTER'S] EXPERIENCE INTO TOUCHING WORDS. IT IS SUCH A RELIEF! OUR DAUGHTER CAN BREATHE AND ENJOY SOME OF HER TEEN LIFE NOW.
Y.H., CALIFORNIA***



Wow! Amazingly concise for something so emotionally rich. Or do I feel this way just because he's mine?
—Proud Mom



Thank you so much for all your help! I never imagined my essays could be improved so much. I really appreciate you honoring my voice and timeline. It was a wonderful experience.

—S., California



...thank you for your excellent work with Gabi really enjoyed working with you and we were all very pleased with the outcome. We're quite confident she will get into the program but, beyond that, I think you helped her gain some insight into the writing process, which hopefully will help her throughout the year. We will most likely circle back to you next year for help with her college essays.

—Ivan R., Oakland, CA



Thank you for bringing the stress down to zero and giving me your expertise and wonderful editing.
Matia Simovich, London, England



I would like to thank you very much for helping me through this stressful process. It has been great working with you!

— Paul S., Oakland, California



I personally appreciate your responsiveness and quick turnaround time. It's a huge help to M. (and me) as we get through this process.

Thanks.

Patty D., California



I got accepted to Tufts, Brandeis, U. Mich., UC Berkeley, UCSC, UCSD, Tulane, and NYU, waitlisted at Northwestern and Barnard. Your essay edits definitely had a major role in my acceptances. Thanks again!
L.L., Berkeley, California