

# Creative Writing & Songwriting 101

Begin to use these simple principles and techniques that will awaken your “Creative Writer & Songwriter” within...

*Les LaMotte*

Author & Songwriter  
Les LaMotte



Winner of the 2007  
Los Angeles Music Awards  
“Worship Artist of the Year”



Winner of Two  
2009 Honorable Mentions  
“Sonrise A New Tomorrow”  
“The Great Physician”



***“There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all times, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it.***

***It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable it is, nor how it compares with other expressions.***

***It is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep open and aware, directly to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open.***

***No artist is pleased. There is no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only queer, divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive than the others”***

*Martha Graham to Agnes de Mille*

*Given to me by my creative writing and script writing coach.*

***Elana Golden***

*www.thewritingstudio.biz*

*Hollywood, CA*

***“Creative Writing, Poetry, Artistry, & Music are a spontaneous movement of hands, heart, and soul captured, preserved and perfected by the writer / artist for others to enjoy and be inspired by again and again. Through the creative combination of creative elements using rhythm, harmony, lyric and voice stimulates the feelings within the listeners body, mind and soul and transports them to places or times syncing them with special life experiences, memories, and emotions”.***

*by multiple award winning Singer / Songwriter / Artist / Designer / Imagineer  
Les LaMotte*

## **Creative Writing and Songwriting 101**

Like all art, creative writing and songwriting are a process. The artist finds a source of inspiration, pulls it, pushes it and twists it into something to communicate an *“idea, mood, revelation, piece of life, or an emotion that is indescribable in any other way.”*

### **Capturing the “Seed” of the Song**

The artists captures it by hearing a chord progression or series of notes, audibly or mentally, then sketching it on paper or roughly breathing it out with a light vocal or whistle or strumming a few bars or notes on a piano or guitar. For many, like myself, it comes in the night, an *“Instant Download”* into your brain. You wake up suddenly and write it down or sing the melody into a digital recorder, or computer, quickly preserving the words or concept while the memory is present. Then you go back to bed. In the morning you can look at it from a new perspective. Sometimes you just toss it, or more often than not, you realize that you have a great song or wonderful message given to you from God. Now, you give it a second critical look, share it and finish it.

### **Loosening the Death Grip of the “Perfection Model”**

Some prefer creating by doing nothing until it is perfect in their mind or on paper. To me this is like trying to write with a 10,000 pound pencil; the result is it's hard to do, a heavy burden and most often sounds, looks and feels contrived and tasteless or lifeless. By allowing random or immediate thoughts to be mixed into your story. Finding the humor or lighter moments add reality and contrast to you're choice of words and writing adding a feeling of *“real life”* to what you are writing.

## Tips on Creative and Songwriting

**Write the words** in a bound volume to preserve your work. This can save you time and money later here is why.

### Getting Your “Legal” Done Before You Create

Usually, early in the creative process, artists or writers are not focused on the end result, as something they should protect; however, it is a good discipline for the artist to *always* assume he or she has produced a masterpiece and to take every measure to protect it, even before they believe it is necessary.

Should authorship later become an issue, it is the court’s job to discover “*first art*” and to determine whether or not you are the *originator* of a specific work of art. First art is dated, written proof or copy of your work or patentable idea. A common way to achieve irrefutable dating is to package your work and mail it to yourself, leaving the package unopened and secured in a safe place. A second precaution is to share your artistic work with a trusted friend and have that person read it and when the person understands the work is yours, uniquely designed or composed by you, then have them witness by signing and dating the work. Now you have a legal record of ownership and you have established a witness as to the time and date of the “*First Art*”.

*(I am not an attorney and I am not giving you legal advise. I am merely suggesting what can be done and what has worked for me in the past. To be absolutely certain you are operating within the laws of your state and all Federal copyright laws, please consult your copyright, entertainment or patent attorney.)*

### Create the “Write Atmosphere” for Writing

Before you begin, get away by yourself, sit down, pray and meditate on the subject; seek God’s wisdom (*or your higher power*) and guidance. Then allow words to flow from your heart through your hand. Do not attempt to interpret or refine them at this early point in the creative process. Begin by painting the picture of what you see or what has been revealed to you in your mind’s eye. Capture it’s most effective perspective, not like a simple, straight-on snapshot. Capture the *just right* perspective to give the reader or listener the benefit of your unique insight or revelation, what you desire is to transfer your experience to theirs and the one that tells your story in a most remarkable way.

It is important to achieve a direct “*mind to heart transfer of thought*” to write creatively and efficiently from your heart. To accomplish this I find it best to handwrite my thoughts or revelations as they occur. Today there are many new tools to enable you to do this with great efficiency. The easiest is using your smartphone and when you remember something “*Record it*” with many easy apps, I use *QuickVoice Pro* on my iPhone. Next, use other voice apps to directly convert what you said to written text. Now all you have to do is sit down and organize and clean up the grammar.

Recently I have been using the “Pulse Pen” by Live scribe (*PC or Mac*) to speed my handwriting process. It is an electronic pen only slightly larger around than a normal pen. It captures sound in 3D from within a room or a speaker up to 30 feet away and synchronizes the recorded sounds with each pen stroke. Great for recording lectures and school note taking. Later you can put it into its USB cradle and it automatically downloads, catalogs, free OCR converters “PDF OCR X - Community Edition - 2.024,” and stores both parts separately. You can then upload them, even email them instantly. Specific microdot printed paper is used to provide the exact location of the writing in relationship to the recording. The books are available in several sizes of bound volume notebooks, is required to record your written notes. It is perfect to provide your “*First Art*” requirement for copyrighting your material. To review or listen to what you have just written and recorded, simply tap the point of the pen on the written note and it plays back what you wrote and what you heard at that point and it gives it to you in perfect synchronization.

In addition, when you download the data you can see the exact words being written with the sounds you recorded. By installing inexpensive add-on OCR handwriting conversion software you can take it a step further and automatically convert your handwritten words to editable text in seconds. This is truly a revolutionary way to put writing and recording together in one easily accessible package. Best of all it is completely portable; you do not need your computer. So next time you want to write an article in a coffee shop, write a song while sing or humming the tune, and record it in one easy to use and edit package. The Pulse Pen is available online, or at Target stores or Best Buy for around \$170 for the 2 GB model. Thirty hours can be recorded without downloading. The pen is rechargeable on its USB cradle. Rugged and durable, this is an excellent tool for all forms of creative writing or meeting notes with groups and those with profound learning or hearing disabilities.

## Avoiding “*Mines and Mind Traps*”

Writing our thoughts and revelations as they flow allows us to “by-pass” our subconscious “Gate Keeper,” that portion of our mind that helps us do repetitive tasks well without thinking about them, like driving. However, this gate keeping can hinder true creative writing or songwriting. When we do creative writing we don’t want our subconscious to veto our creative ideas before we can identify and allow our heart to further develop them.

Furthermore, typing and spelling operate on a subconscious level and therefore can hold you captive in your creative thinking. In this critical creative stage of writing we do not want to engage these filters and the automatic denial process of our subconscious. Rather, we want to drill down and in without interference into our cognitive thinking, where our true core passion\* dwells.

## Setting the “Creative Process” into Motion

1. Begin with prayer and meditation. Releasing this activity to God, or your higher power allowing you greater freedom to tap their heart and power connecting you with your eventual audience on a level that you could not otherwise reach on your own. This will allow God or your higher power to minister first to you and then through your song or writings to thousands of others with authentic and genuine a “*Heartfelt message*”.
2. Allow the writing to FLOW, don’t try to interpret; save that for later.
3. Write for 45 minutes, stop, read what you have written or share it with someone. This kind of “*Mirroring*” affords you one more layer of critical thinking, and sharing your work, helps bring focus and clarity to your thoughts.
4. Now reset your meditative mind in prayer once more and continue writing.
5. Start again for another 45 minutes of brisk writing.
6. Remember, you are not a “*Truth Machine*,” allow yourself some creative license and latitude. To write creatively, the delicate nuances of thought do not need to be based on actual real-life experiences or fact, but what most effectively tells the story and allows the points you seek to make, to flow together. Set the camera of your mind in the best position to capture the “*moment*” in your head and then simply put it on paper.
7. Repeat the process of writing and pausing to review or share what you have written and to collect your thoughts until you have exhausted your inspiration. It is now time to edit and rewrite your composition.
8. As you begin re-writing you want to add depth to your thoughts, using artistic elements as though you were a film director directing a film camera, finding the right angle of shot to reflect the most striking impact on your audience to see what you see. Keep in mind the specific camera location and position, subject voice, color, temperature, description, depth, weight and clarity and lens focal point. “*Remember it’s your movie*”. You are in control of the emotions, thoughts and your listener’s focus, communication on a deep or light level... You choose it and sell it to them.
9. Now type your written words into a word processor *or speak them into a device like your Smart Phone or Dragon writer*. Correct the grammar and

spelling. Try not to edit important feelings and add things here and don't detail the concepts just yet, allow additional detail to come when you read it again and allow it like wine to breathe in the room of your creative mind so you don't discount your creative thoughts before they are fully developed. Refined it at a later time, let it soak in first.

10. Review, correct and refine to fit the words and music together... Voila - a new song may have emerged...

***“Before I recorded my first album ‘Sonrise A New Tomorrow’, I invested 10 years leading worship music and sharing the Word of God with prisoners all over Minnesota, Texas and Arizona. I worked with Prison Fellowship international ministry created by the late Chuck Colson. It was these experiences that inspired me to write and refine my first nine original songs... and in the last 3 years I have received many international awards, recognition and major awards.”***

*by Award winning Singer/Songwriter, Les LaMotte*

## **Growing your Story or Music With “Seed” Recordings**

It is interesting that often our most creative ideas come at the most inopportune times. I learned in college from my friend and composer, now retired Navy Commander William Fosseen, who often spoke of waking with inspired ideas while sleeping and wake up to record musical melodies and words to songs and go back to bed. Since then, I have learned that many writers experience similar “nocturnal inspiration” as entire songs and melodies come together in a “download” moment. In order to capture that inspiration immediately, you can quickly express it on a recording on your smartphone or with digital dictation. Then go back to bed and sleep soundly until morning when you can then review the idea and make notations to savor the moment and capture it in its fullness.

To put this into practice myself, I have purchased a good quality stereo digital recorder, inexpensive and portable. (\$69 Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS-300M 2"x4"x .25"). I simply plug it into my USB port and instantly store my recording with lyrics in a file to work on anytime in the future with complete access to the original idea or melody that I was given in one “magical moment”.

## The “Creative & Songwriting” Process

1. Record your voice and instrument in real time on your iPhone, Smart Phone app or digital recorder. Using your voice recorder or computer--with your eyes closed--allow yourself to be “in the moment.” Mentally tune in to hear your voice, your instruments and the melody. Start by singing the words as they come. If you are stuck with how to find the right words, try humming. Stop and restart as often as you need to, nothing is perfect the first time out of the box. Relax, use the “happy mistakes” and keep moving forward, weaving your song into one beautiful work of art.
2. Next - produce a rough edit on your computer using Wave-pad (Mac) or other low-priced editing software or Garage Band to take out any “rough areas” or unnecessary repetition or simple quickly rearrange segments or verses. Remember, it’s NOT perfection you are trying for here. The objective is to “Capture” the concept and preserve it for future termed “Wood Chopping”.
3. Next, when you think you have created some great ideas and they appear to be flowing together, develop them further with more sophisticated recording and orchestration software, like GarageBand or Protools. If, are like me, you are not a techie, remember; just do your best to get the main ingredients into the song. You do not need to become a virtuoso on guitar or lead or drums. What is important at this juncture is that you find and capture the flow of melody and lyric so they come together in one cohesive musical work.
4. Continue massaging the arrangement of the song to find the right balance of words and instrumentation. Here it is about getting the perfect chord progressions, beat, instruments and voices working together to complement the sound and genre, which the song is suggesting or that you wish to produce to bring the song to life.

## Going for the “Gold” ...

Record Your Songs into a Themed Genre Album along with others and release it to see who responds to what song... giving you a feel for your potential audience and what they want to hear... giving you constructive feed back before making your final album.

When you believe your song or group of songs are as good as they can be, then it is time to consider recording them. Now there are two popular scenarios you could investigate to do this and you should decide which one is the right one for you *before* you move any further; it will save you time and a boat load of money... trust me on this.

**Scenario 1: Buy the equipment you need and test it on your own computer for a while and realistically consider your abilities in arranging and producing before you commit to expensive equipment and software.**

While recording your own music sounds it is very easy and tempting these days because of low prices and internet access of great, light weight portable, robust capabilities. However temping to do-it-yourself can be more of a learning curve for you and you will still end up with only the expertise that you have which at the beginning without see the professional process could sell your album very short. Ok, you still need to be on a minimum budget, and that is good, find a friend that has a few years producing and not just some fancy gear, as an alternative? If you are like me, you probably know just enough about the actual recording process and equipment and how to professionally use all of the latest technologies to be dangerous. You may know the basics, but, it is not the basics that enable you to soar above the roaring crowd in the real world of music competition.

**Scenario 2: Find and work with a seasoned producer who has successfully completed numerous projects and is highly recommended by those you respect in the industry.**

It's true what they say, that business is 10% inspiration and 90% business. Therefore, with this in mind, it is wise to NOT run off and invest in gear, just because it is available. The fact is that if this is your first time recording, and you decide to do it yourself, you will brake 80% of the rules basic to producing a good musical recording. Also, you will miss out on valuable input and the lessons that a seasoned producer or songwriter could share with you in the process. In fact, beginning the all important and valuable relationships that you need to grow fast early on in your career that could ultimately lead to where you want to be. Also,

the professional will see potential challenge coming long before you run headlong into it. Chances are they will deal with it so you can avoid the extra and needlessly time that quickly burning up precious budgets.

### Scenario 3: Work with a Recording Label, Indie or Hybrid

In the last few year this has become less interesting of an option because of the label's control over the artist. As an alternative, many of today's songwriters opt for producing their songs through what has become a new wave in self publishing. These are lesser known labels but not to be overlooked, like Tate Music Group (TateMusicGroup.com), where you are afforded the opportunity to own your songs while they take only a reasonable percentage. This is a big difference from most labels of the past who reputedly wrap the artist up with complicated legal contracts and costly litigation over ownership and rights, leaving the artist broke, discouraged or just starting over. This scenario is for sure to be avoided at all cost. It never hurts to have a good attorney at your side whenever you try to large deals, it is very normal and important because you may be a new songwriter and don't know any of your options. Remember the label write the contract so their advantage and you have to be able to counter with what you can accept without trashing the entire contractual situation. Not all attorney's are familiar with Music rights and contracts. So, go and interview a few until you fine one that you have chemistry with and you feel comfortable with. Also, beside to understand how and when you pay them and make the arrangements upfront before you go into the deal. I usually like to take an attorney to lunch even if it costs \$25-\$100 it is well worth it because their hourly rate starts at about \$150 - \$450 per hour. Make sure you do all you can to figure it out and then seek their specific advice doing it this way will save you tons of money.





## Who is Les LaMotte?

Les's talent as a songwriter and musician can be experienced on his latest album "**Sonrise**", available on **iTunes** or **www.LesLaMotteMusic.com**. He achieved his celebrity status in **2007** at the **Los Angeles Music Awards** when he was presented with "**Worship Artist of the Year**". He is also a two-time nominee for the **Hollywood Music in Media Awards** and winner of many other international awards.

Les's music was featured as the closing song on a DVD film titled: "**The Land of Goshen - Jordan's River**" written and directed by: Kacee DeMasi, starring actors from Nickelodeon, Disney, Lifetime, USA, NBC & many others!

### **Les's Music Awards include:**

- 2018 Best Christian / Gospel Album • Akademia • Los Angeles, CA
- 2015 Best Christian / Acoustic "*The Great Physician*" • Akademia • Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 Song of the Year - Honorable Mention writing and producing of "*Without A Voice*"
- 2010 UK Songwriting - Semi-Finalist writing and producing of "*Without A Voice*"
- 2009 Hollywood Music in Media Awards Nominee - Contemporary Christian "*In His Rest*"
- 2009 Billboard World Song Contest - Honorable Mention for both - "*Sonrise A New Tomorrow*" and "*The Great Physician*"
- 2008 UK Songwriters Contest - Semi-Finalist - "*In His Rest*"
- 2009 Hollywood Music Awards Nominee Contemporary Christian - "*In His Rest*"
- 2008 Hollywood Music Awards Nominee Contemporary Christian - "*The Great Physician*"
- 2007 Los Angeles Music Awards "*Worship Artist of the Year*"

**Need a Creative Writing coach? Would you like your writing song(s) reviewed and receive personal guidance or a written assessment of your work?**

Call or email me and we can set up a customized personal "*Live Coaching*" opportunity via phone or Google Hangout or Skype. I accept all credit cards on PayPal. My rates are \$45 per hour or \$25 per 30 min. sessions.

***I hope to hear from you soon so you can gain some steady progress towards your goals!***



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