

WRITING YOUR STORY

8 Tips for Birthing Your Story



Tony Lamair Burks II, EdD

*Author of *Bought Wisdom: Tales of Living and Learning**

PRAISE FOR TONY LAMAIR BURKS II AND WRITING YOUR STORY

I crafted the broad concepts of my book in my head well before I put pen to paper or fingers to keys. Somehow [he] knew I had the *Eight Secrets* hidden within me, ready to escape. I appreciate him for introducing me to *Publishing at Sea*, hosting writing retreats, pushing my thinking, and giving me homework assignments.

MITCHELL L. JONES, *pastor and author, The Journey to Authenticity: 8 Secrets to Getting the Life You Desire*

Tony's writing is engaging, delightful, and thought-provoking.

RUBY K. PAYNE, PH.D., *author, A Framework for Understanding Poverty and Learning Structures*

You walk in his shoes, feeling the awakening pinch of failure and the joy of triumph.

KADHIR V. RAJAGOPAL, ED.D., *author, Create Success! Unlocking the Potential of Urban Students*

Dr. Burks thoughtfully builds confidence and helps remove real and perceived barriers to one's writing through reflection and practical writing exercises. He and *Writing Your Story* will help you get your story told!

RODNEY L. BOONE, ED.D., *K-12 culturally relevant pedagogy expert and adjunct professor University of North Carolina Greensboro*

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gerald. Photograph of a person leaping from one rock to another “Possible impossible opportunity”. (March 18, 2019).

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ALSO BY THE AUTHOR

The Tale of Imani the Bunny

The Journey to Authenticity:

8 Secrets to Getting the Life You Desire

by Mitchell L. Jones (with Tony Lamair Burks II)

*Leave with Love: A Spiritual Guide to Succession Planning
and Transitions for Charismatic Church Founders*

by Rev. Dr. Barbara Lewis King

(with Tony Lamair Burks II)

Bought Wisdom: Tales of Living and Learning

LIFEwork: Writing Your Untold Story [a workbook]

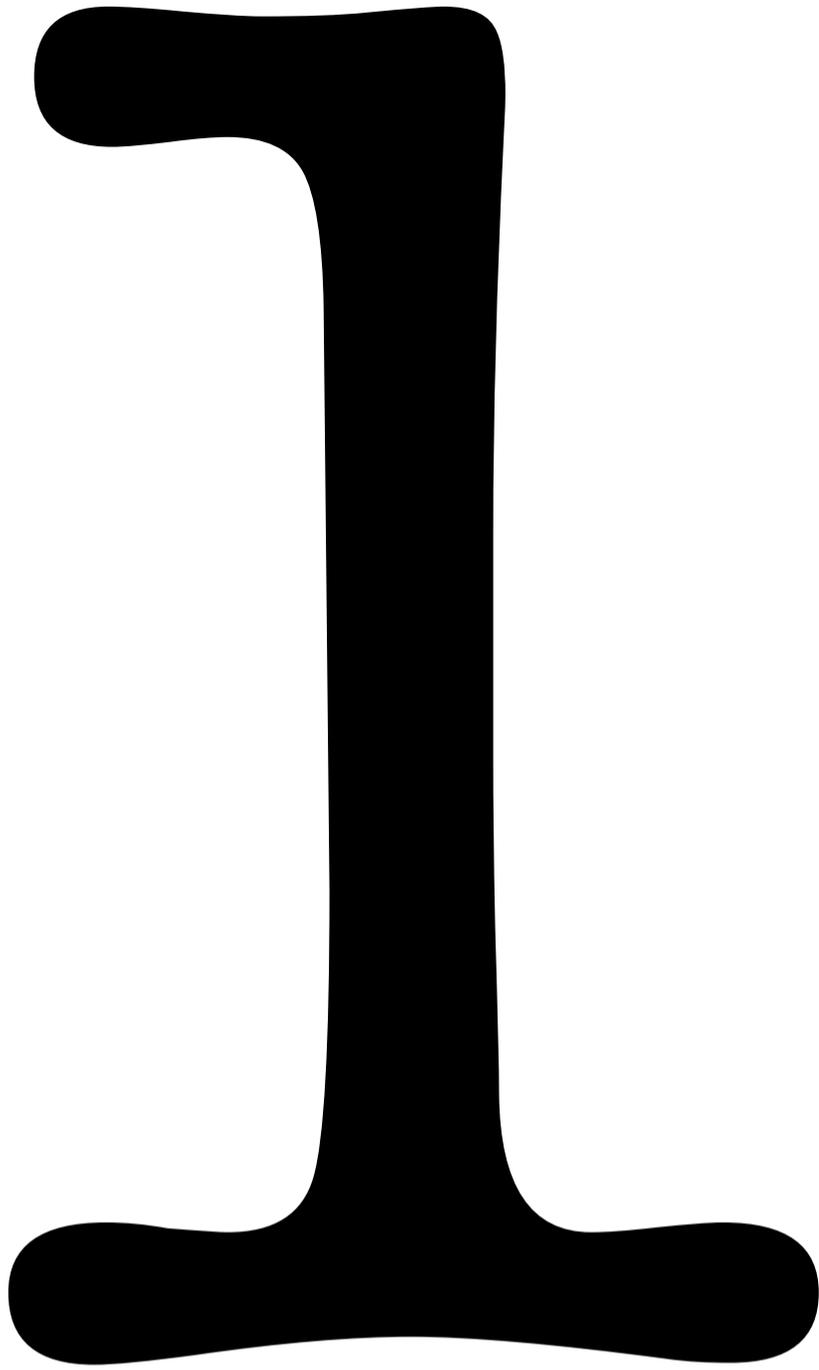
This e-Book is a learning component of LEADright. It is not intended to be sold and can only be obtained through the enrollment in “Writing Your Story: 8 Tips for Birthing Your Story,” a seminar presented by Dr. Tony Lamair Burks II.

*There is no greater
agony than bearing
an untold story
inside you.*

Zora Neale Hurston

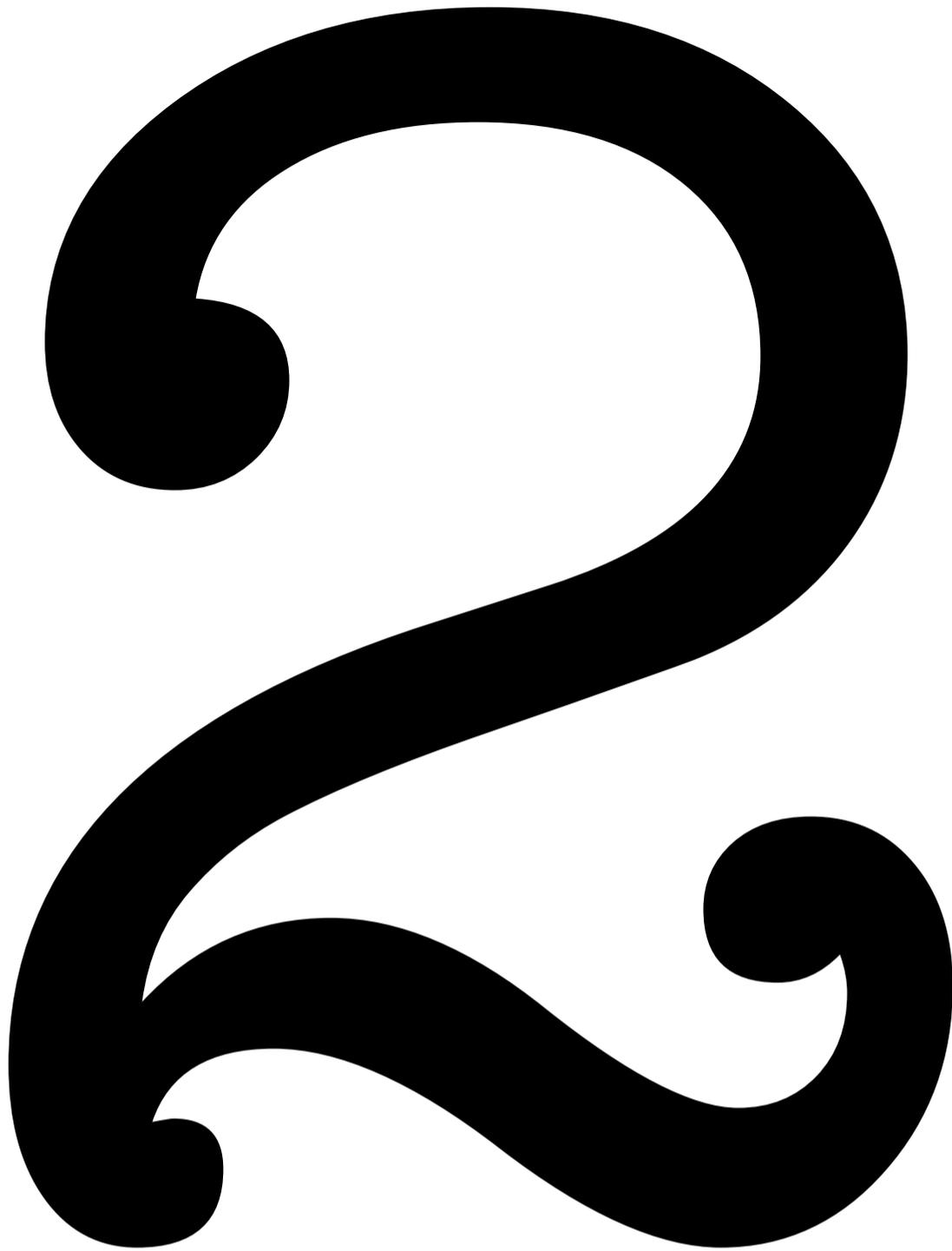
LAUNCHING





KNOW YOUR WHY

Ask yourself why you want to tell your story. Noted comedian Michael Jr. put it this way, “When you know your why, your what has more impact because you’re walking in or towards your purpose.” I wrote *Bought Wisdom: Tales of Living and Learning* for three reasons: (1) to heal from my past and create hope for my future; (2) to gain a deeper understanding of myself and my life; and (3) to share my unique experiences. What’s your why?



DETERMINE YOUR WRITING FOCUS

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, known by his pen name Lewis Carroll, wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* among other works. He once said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." What interests you? Do you want to write a biography of a family elder? What about your autobiography? Perhaps, you want to fictionalize parts of your life to make a children's book. Whatever the case, take a moment to think about your writing focus.

CREATING





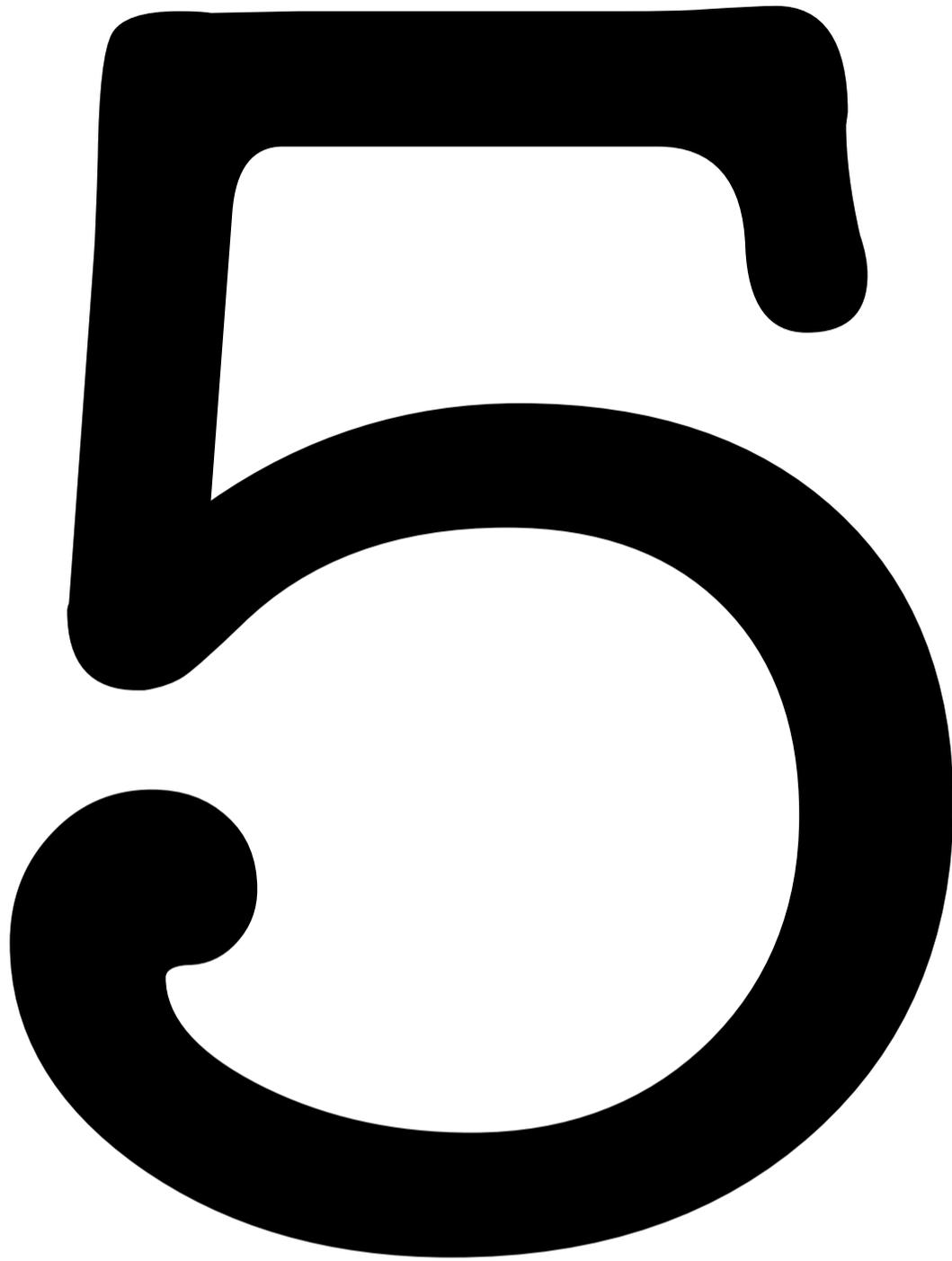
LISTEN TO LIFE FOR STORY IDEAS

“I don’t know what to write about” is an often uttered phrase. Such writers feel they must search for a story. Stop that. Now. Instead of hunting stories, slow down and listen to life. Griffith Jerome Davis, accomplished photographer and diplomat once noted, “I’m just an observer of life. An observer of how people act and how people work.” If you listen to life, life will give you enough to write about...trust me.



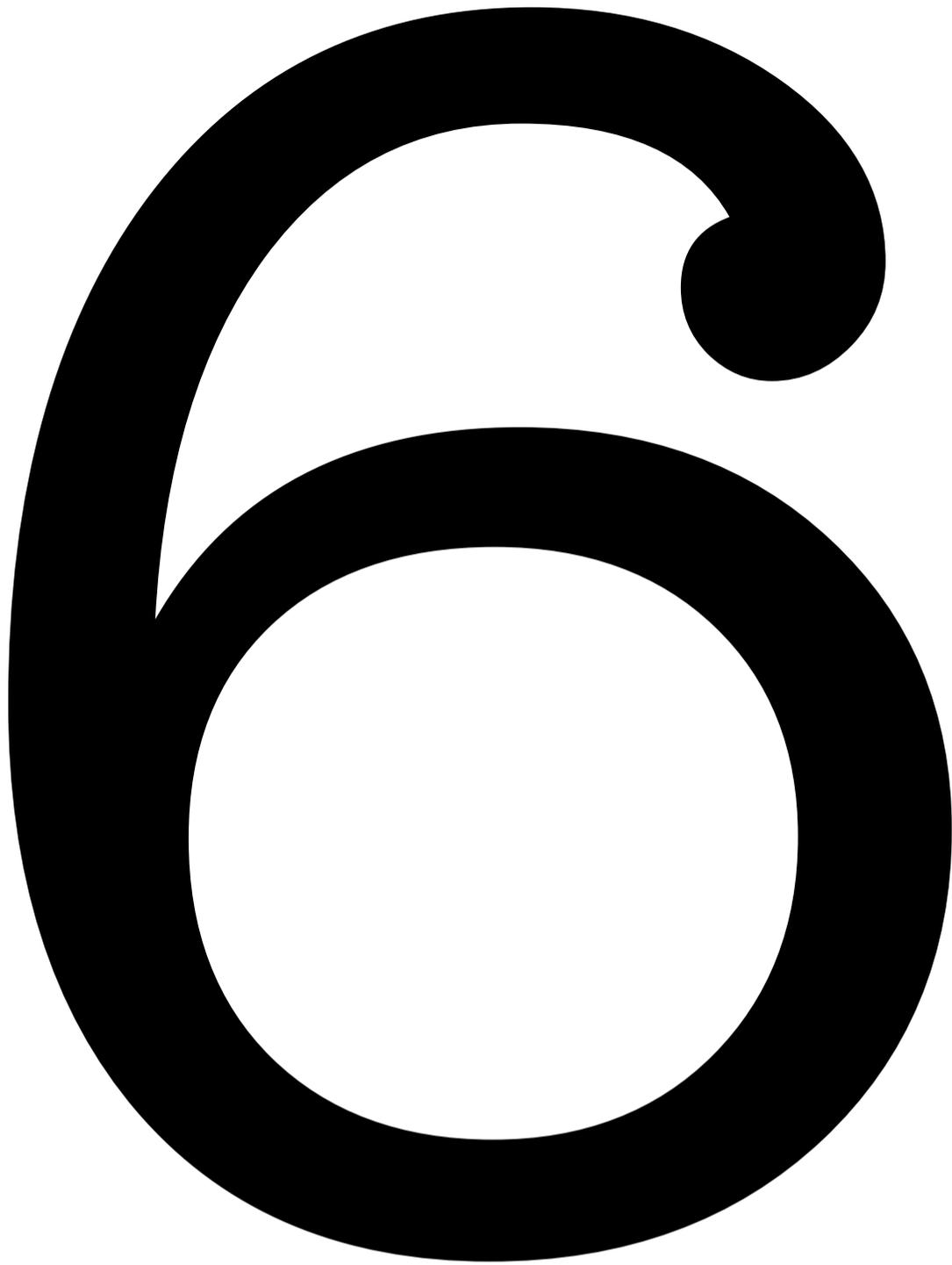
WRITE SOMETHING EACH DAY

Two teacher friends of mine—“The Bookends”—taught me about the importance of daily practice. They called this work “drops in a bucket”. Listen, books don’t write themselves. Figure out what works best for you. Maybe you write best each morning, or each night. Perhaps your writing consists of blog posts. Maybe you use a journal. I use Facebook to write and post most days. Whatever the case, create a Writing Plan of Action; but, don’t get frustrated if your actual writing doesn’t mirror your Writing Plan of Action.



HARNESS TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE

I cannot tell you how many people complain they don't have time to write. Yes you do. Work smarter, not harder. Revisit how you use the available snippets of time. Use technology for all it's worth. For example, if you have a smartphone, why not use the notes feature to jot down your ideas? Most smartphones have a voice-to-text feature. I use my smartphone for writing and editing about 50% of the time. You can use the voice feature to speak your words into a Notes application or into a Cloud-based application like Google Docs. I made the transition to the Google suite of applications shortly after someone stole my backpack containing my computer and my hardcopy draft of *Bought Wisdom* with all my handwritten edits.



USE A VARIETY OF STORY SHAPES

Critically-acclaimed writer Kurt Vonnegut rhetorically asks, “What has been my prettiest contribution to the culture?” His answer? His master’s thesis.

Vonnegut says his master’s thesis in anthropology for the University of Chicago was “rejected because it was so simple and looked like too much fun. The fundamental idea is that stories have shapes which can be drawn on graph paper, and that the shape of a given society’s stories is at least as interesting as the shape of its pots or spearheads.” These are among the classic story shapes Vonnegut explores: Man in a Hole, Boy Meets Girl, Creation, Old Testament, Cinderella, New Testament, and From Bad to Worse.

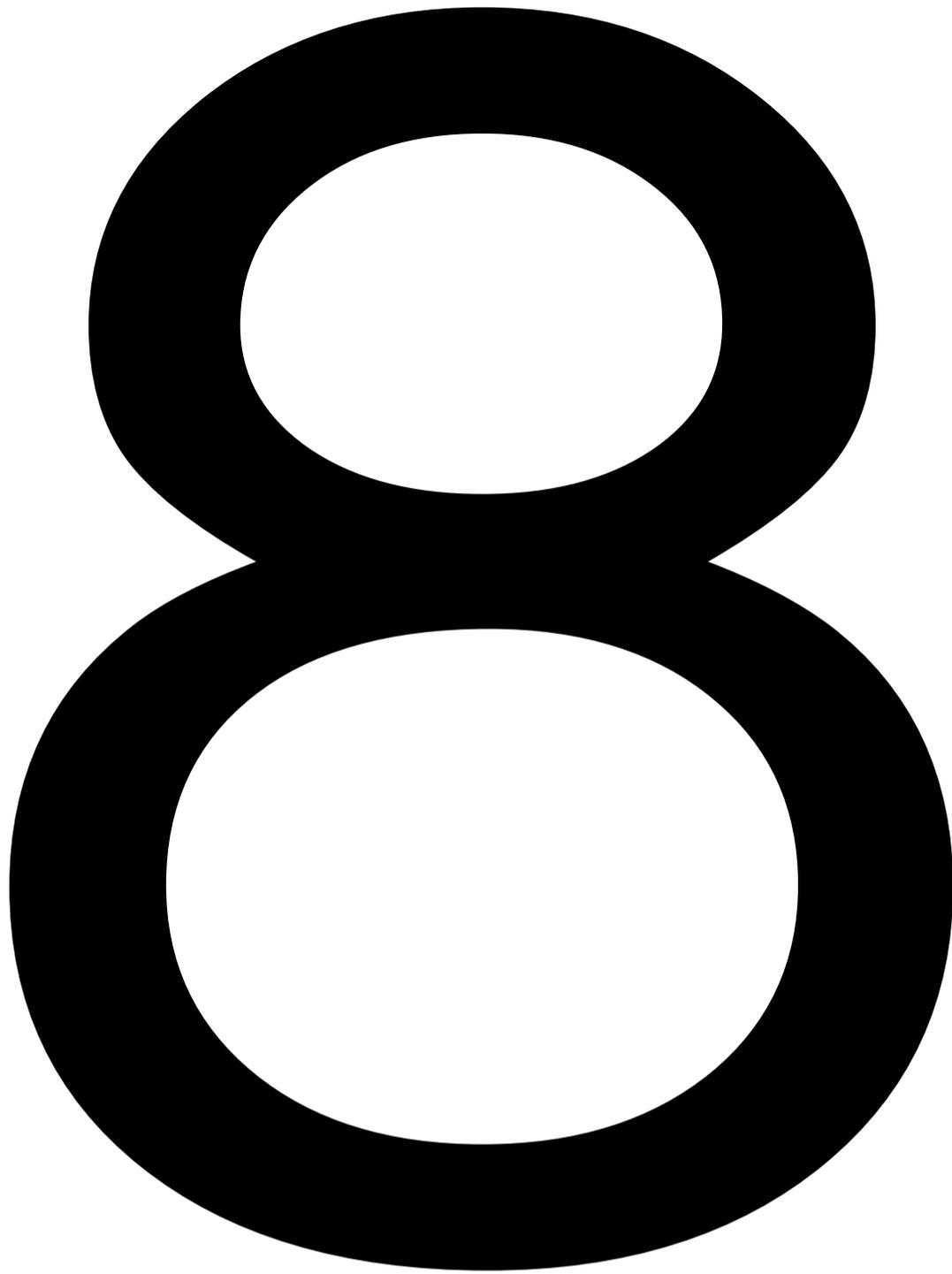
RELEASING





WORK WITH WRITING PARTNERS

With “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main,” John Donne communicated the notion that we don’t fare well when we are isolated—or otherwise separated—from others. We thrive when we are a part of a community. We are social people—even those among us who are introverts. So, go on and get you a writing coach, an accountability partner, or a book writing boothang (or bae). Working with someone else—even if it’s for a monthly check-in—will support you in writing your book.



EXPLORE PUBLISHING OPTIONS

It's never too early to think about your publishing options. Traditional trade publishing gives us the books we see in local booksellers and national chain bookstores. Their writers don't pay to get published. Boutique press publishing focuses on a niche market and is usually done by small publishing houses. Their writers may or may not pay to get published. Independent publishing is also known as self-publishing. These writers pay for everything related to publishing their books.

*The journey of a
thousand miles begins
with a single step.*

Lao Tzu

So “what you gonna do, boo?” Will you write or not? You can jumpstart your writing by using my book, *Bought Wisdom: Tales of Living and Learning*, as a guide. My book is an interactive memoir, leadership story, and reflective journal. As a bonus feature, if you write responses to the journal prompts, you will have written a memoir when you finish reading the book.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Tony Lamair Burks II first learned the art and craft of public speaking and storytelling from his four grandparents in LA . . . Lower Alabama.

After graduating from Morehouse College with a philosophy degree, he began a career in education and reconnected with his passion for words. His stories—blending childhood experiences and educational issues—have appeared in newspapers in North Carolina and Tennessee and in books nationally.

A graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University and The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, he has been a featured StoryWeaver, workshop facilitator, and graduation speaker at dozens of public, private, and independent schools, public school districts, and universities in the United States and abroad. He is a Fulbrighter, a fellow of the British-American Project, and a New Thought School of Ministry student.

He is an award-winning education expert who helps individuals and organizations as a thought partner and executive coach. He was recognized by *NUTMtribe Magazine* as one of *Six HBCU Grads You Should Know* and was honored with the *Phaedra Parks S.O.S. Save Our Sons Award for Empowerment and Service*.

An avid reader and master whistler, he plans to open a holistic “bed and brunch” renewal center for artists, veterans, the formerly incarcerated, executives, and educators.

WRITING, SPEAKING, AND CONSULTING

Dr. Tony Lamair Burks II facilitates writing retreats, hosts storyWeaving concerts, and leads workshops on various topics from relationships to succession planning to Vision Boards to book publishing. He is available for ghostwriting and co-writing books, speaking engagements, executive coaching, training, and corporate storytelling. For more information contact:

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**NEVER
STOP
CREATING**

Make Art