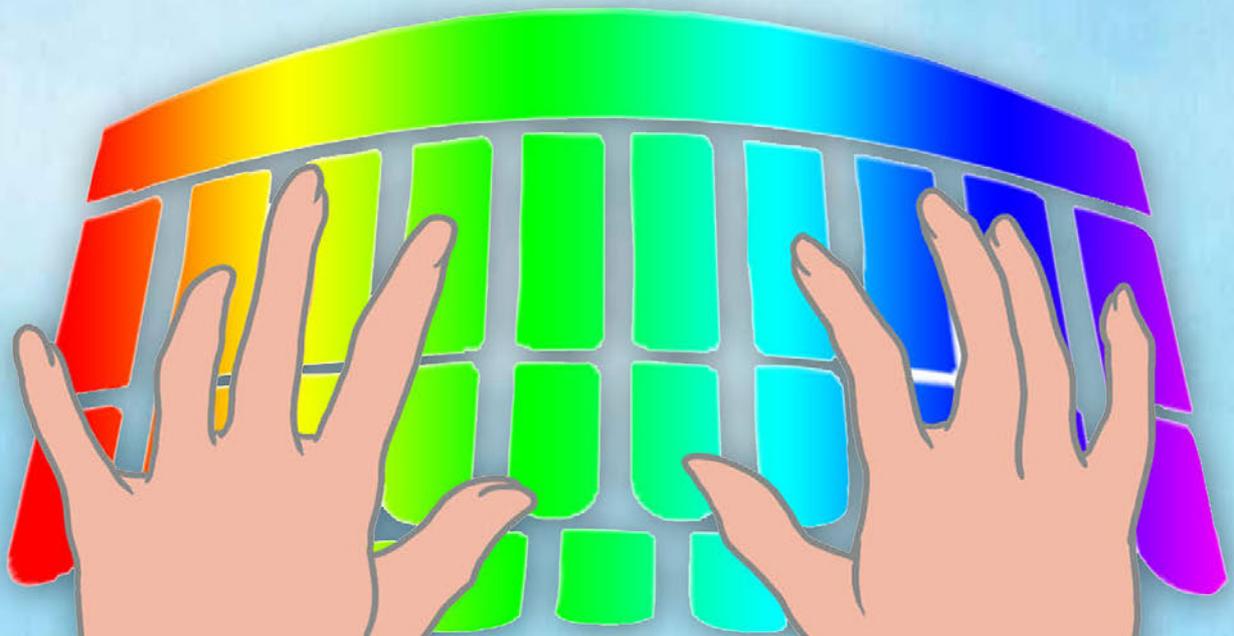


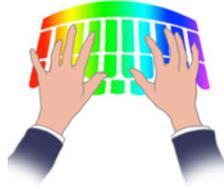
0-225

Your Guide to Writing Mastery



Ana Fatima Costa, RPR, CSR

0 - 225
Your Guide to Writing Mastery



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If

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster,
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken,
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son.

— Rudyard Kipling

To David Heranney, my mentor and teacher:

Thank you for your encouragement, brilliance and gentle spirit.

I will always remember your beautiful smile.

Rest in peace, my friend.

INTRODUCTION



“Few professions are as old and time-honored as shorthand reporting, for it is the act of writing which has provided to all civilizations the knowledge of earlier thoughts and utterances.”¹

*~ Dominick M. Tursi, Director
The Gallery of Shorthand*

Congratulations!

You have chosen an honorable profession with an illustrious past and an exciting future. Beginning in approximately [3500 B.C.](#), when Sumerians began capturing the spoken word in Mesopotamia [now Iraq], scribes have fulfilled the essential role of preserving the record at important events throughout history.¹

With the rapid advancement of technology in the past century, today’s global “scribes” are highly trained, tech-savvy guardians of the record who are able to stream realtime at a law firm, courtroom and over the web to attorneys in remote locations. Broadcast captioners or CART reporters provide instant visual displays of the spoken word at seminars, conferences, university classes, news, sports, and other events for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Imagine captioning Superbowl games; capturing the record in Congress, reporting depositions of celebrities like Elon Musk or working on complex litigation cases abroad!

Still, there are many hurdles to overcome on the path to becoming a Certified Shorthand Reporter, Registered Professional Reporter, CART reporter or broadcast captioner. The biggest challenge is getting through school, where court reporting students spend an average of five years, with an uncertain graduation date.

If you have been in school for a while and are wondering . . .

“Will I Ever Finish Court Reporting School?”

. . . you are not alone!

Most students ask themselves the same question, especially when they are stuck on a plateau or after failing yet another exam. Students who attend online programs may stay in school longer without the face-to-face support of teachers and fellow students.

You are not crazy. Court reporting school IS very hard!

You may not be able to grasp this right now, but later you will look back and appreciate how every challenge you overcame in school helped you develop the strength, courage and knowledge you needed to succeed.

Court reporting school is akin to a military boot camp. It provides the disciplined “basic training” you need to prepare you for the real-life unpredictable challenges and demands court reporters face every day. In school, you learn how to master your body, mind and emotions.

Mastering the steno language and your writer requires intense diligence, focus and repetition. Through diligent, focused, repetitive practice, you develop the physical, mental and emotional fortitude and stamina you will need as a working reporter.

Court reporting teaches you how to master your feelings, quiet any distractive thoughts, and control your body’s responses in order to be fully present in the moment to capture every word, no matter what is happening in the room or how you feel about it. It requires tremendous self-control, self-discipline and *self*-awareness, while simultaneously being outer-focused.

Let’s go even deeper.

Beyond the mechanics of reporting and writing words, there is something even more profound taking place.

The *art* and *power* of THE REPORTER is having the ability to detach from the emotion, energy, posturing, politics, drama and agenda of participants while simultaneously detaching from your own internal responses to all of that intensity.

The act of capturing the record calmly, without attachment to what is going on in the room, the cause of action, parties or outcome, is a sacred experience. As the neutral guardian of the record, you are, in essence, an impartial *sacred witness* to truth being revealed.

This e-book is a labor of love comprising forty years' experience in the court reporting field, beginning with school. It is a compilation of some of the best tools and resources I have used to help me on my path.

It is my deepest wish that you will find nuggets of wisdom here that will inspire, nurture and support you on *your* path.

From my heart to yours,

Ana Fatima Costa
Alameda, California
October 8, 2015

WHO AM I?

I am Ana Fatima Costa, RPR, CSR, a retired court, deposition and hearing reporter. Getting through school was the most difficult thing that I did in my life up to that point, despite an early traumatic upheaval.

My family and I left Portugal on a ship in the dead of night to escape the tyranny of dictator Antonio Salazar. After an 11-day journey across the Atlantic, followed by a three-day train trip across the United States, we settled in a rough area of Oakland, California just before the civil rights riots. I spoke no English. Growing up watching the original *Perry Mason* show, I fell in love with the drama and intensity of the court scenes.



After getting my Associate of Arts degree in 1975, I began taking night classes at Oakland College of Court Reporting [OCCR] in Oakland, California while working full time.

Back then, the California Certified Shorthand Reporter written knowledge test consisted of both the English and professional practices portions and was offered the same weekend as the dictation exam, twice a year - in San Francisco in May and in Los Angeles in November. Then, as now, the dictation portion of the CSR was 4-Voice at 200 words per minute, with a 97.5% degree of accuracy.

In May of 1979, I missed the qualifier by seven points. A week later, David Heranney, my mentor and favorite teacher at OCCR, posted a flyer about a Certificate of Merit class [now RMR] that he was offering for working CSRs, with dictation up to 300 words per minute.

As I read the notice, I had a flash of insight:

By writing 100 wpm above 200, I could blast through any mental blocks so that by November, I would be able to write at a minimum of 225 to create a cushion of at least 25 wpm in case I froze at the CSR. I wanted to pass by a wide margin, not hanging on by my fingertips, and David's class could help me achieve my goal.

When I told David about my idea, he hesitated at first, worried that I would get discouraged. But after hearing my plan, he allowed me to take his class.



After six months of diligence and hard work, I decided to take the RPR the weekend before the California CSR and passed all legs of both exams, the first time – on a manual Stenotype machine.

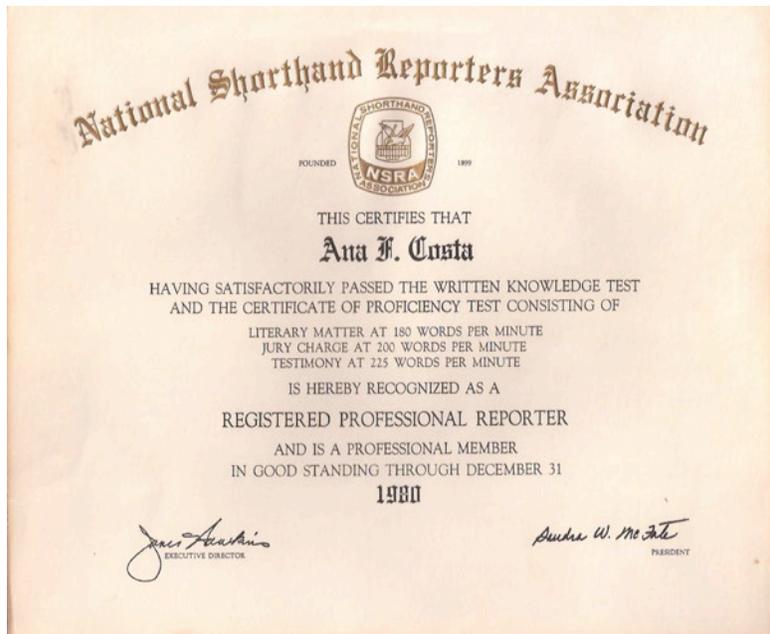
I am including both licenses here to demonstrate what is possible when you put in the time and effort.

As a freelance reporter, I accepted every job that I was

offered to gain experience and reported in all the courts [municipal, juvenile, superior and federal] in five counties in the greater Bay Area of California, as well as at depositions and public hearings.

Twenty years later, I managed the San Francisco office of a national court reporting firm for over five years, and transitioned into sales for ten years before launching AFC Consulting Services.

Now I live my passion educating court reporting students and reporters through my writing, coaching, internships and presentations, while enlightening the legal community about what we do.



I continue to integrate what I learn each day about our profession and the ever-changing landscape of litigation and legislation into my work as a coach, speaker and author. You can learn more at www.anafatimacosta.com.

WHY DID I WRITE THIS E-BOOK?

First, this is a way of “paying forward” the support I received from teachers, court reporting firm owners and CSRs while I was in school and during the first few years of my career.

Since 2008, I have provided dozens of internships at mock depositions and mock trials for court reporting students writing at 180 wpm and above. These experiences offer students the opportunity to be the *reporter of record* [as opposed to shadowing]: they speak up; mark exhibits; and produce rough or final transcripts.

Over the past year, I asked my interns and other reporting students a series of questions, including what their main challenges are in school. Below are their responses.



Court Reporting Students' Biggest Challenges	
Procrastination	Test anxiety
Fear of success and/or failure	Poor writing and read-back
Self-doubt and worry about finishing	Lack of support

Since most students' challenges are related to the painstaking process of developing good shorthand skills, this e-book is dedicated to the timeless writing practices I used that gave me the confidence to pass both the RPR and CSR, one week apart.

In the following pages, I share my [Five Golden Rules](#), the tools that helped me write exceptionally well, which led to a successful and rewarding court reporting career.

Before diving into those, let's discuss Five Common Stumbling Blocks that may impede your progress, followed by some tips to assist you in moving past them.

Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

PART 1: FIVE COMMON STUMBLING BLOCKS

Believe you can, and you're halfway there.

~ Theodore Roosevelt

1. Negative Self-Talk

Most of us walk around with negative thoughts circling our minds all day long, but they are buried so deeply, we are barely conscious of them. They whisper to us just beneath the surface of our awareness, making us question our abilities, the way we look, how others perceive us and whether we measure up.

In court reporting school, you are tested in ways you never anticipated. You learn the language of steno on an odd-looking machine without any letters on the keys and memorize shorthand words and phrases while simultaneously writing faster and faster. It is extremely difficult. Those negative thoughts or “voices” get louder when you experience setbacks.

Self-criticism, self-blame and self-doubt may surface when you do not advance as quickly as you think you should. Then when you see classmates moving on, it is normal to feel envious and compare yourself to them. Your mind may be filled with thoughts like these:

“This is way too hard!”

“What’s wrong with me?”

“I am not good (or smart) enough.”

“Maybe I don’t have what it takes.”

How do you stop the cycle of negativity?

In *Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life*, Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., describes the extreme violence that took place in his neighborhood during race riots in 1943, shortly after he and his family moved to Detroit, Michigan when he was a child. Forty people were killed in a few days, and two classmates beat him after they found out he was Jewish.

Mr. Rosenberg began studying how language affects our behavior, specifically how we talk to ourselves and one another. He discovered that violence takes root long before the physical act of doing harm. When we engage in negative thinking — judging, blaming and criticizing — we are being *passively* violent. Becoming aware of our thoughts, feelings and needs is an

important first step in changing negative thinking.

In 2009, I participated in a 40-hour workshop to learn about a process called [The Connection Practice](#) from Rita Marie Johnson, founder of Rasur Foundation International. Her life's work incorporates the scientific research of [The HeartMath Institute](#) and the processes taught by [The Center for Nonviolent Communication](#), which was founded by Mr. Rosenberg.

The Connection Practice experience transformed my life. I learned how to connect with my feelings and needs and how to be compassionate and forgiving toward myself and others.

Before the workshop, what I felt or needed was not in my vocabulary. Although I understood what feelings were intellectually, I had difficulty expressing my own. And needs? No idea. Through various soul-searching exercises at the workshop, I became aware of a continuous stream of negativity looping in my head, always putting myself down, judging myself and others. I had very high standards of behavior for myself, and mistakes were intolerable. I was my own worst enemy.

I learned that when we are stressed, the amygdala [aka the “reptilian” part of our brains] generates the “*fight or flight*” response faster than we can think. It reacts to perceived threats based on past information and events, keeping us trapped in negative thought patterns. I tended to overreact to situations and then feel guilty later.



In a moment of insight, I realized that our feelings are simply manifestations of met or unmet needs. When we acknowledge our feelings and needs, negative thoughts disappear.

For example:

“I’m nervous about the 180. I can’t sleep. I don’t think I’m going to pass.”

Feelings: Afraid, anxious, desperate, insecure, tense, worried

Needs: Achievement, comfort, confidence, peace of mind, progress, reassurance, success

Positive Self-Talk:

“Wow, I’m really anxious about this test. My heart’s racing and my palms are sweating. I’m feeling insecure about my writing and worried about what’s going to happen if I don’t pass. I need to take some deep breaths. [BREATHE] Wow, I feel better now. I need reassurance that even if I don’t pass, everything will be okay. [BREATHE] Wait a minute. I’m a good writer. I am confident I can do this!”

So how do you stop negative self-talk?

1. **Self-awareness.** Without awareness, nothing can change. As soon as you feel or think something that does not feel good in your body, breathe into it.
2. **Connect with how you are feeling and what your underlying needs are.** See my Inspirational Resources page for a link to feelings and needs charts and information.
3. **Positive affirmations.** See the samples in the box below reframing the statements at the beginning of this chapter.

Write the positive affirmations down and tape them to your mirror, laptop, refrigerator and dashboard so that they are visible. When you need a boost of self-esteem, say each one out loud with as much feeling and sincerity as you can muster.

NEGATIVE SELF-TALK	POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS
<i>“This is way too hard!”</i>	I can master this. I trust and believe in myself. I get better with each passing day.
<i>“What’s wrong with me?”</i>	I love and appreciate myself just the way I am. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn something that challenges me. I <i>know</i> that I will succeed.
<i>“I am not good enough.”</i>	I am an amazing person with unlimited potential. I have the intelligence and ability to get through this.
<i>“Maybe I don’t have what it takes.”</i>	I can solve any challenge that arises. I refuse to give up. I follow my dreams no matter what.

Action Steps:

1. Be mindful of what you think and say about yourself and others.
2. Ask for support from your family and friends.
3. If you are experiencing emotional pain, find a good therapist.
4. When you stumble, be kind to yourself. It *will* get easier.



*“Failures, repeated failures, are finger posts on the road to achievement.
One fails forward toward success.”*

~ C.S. Lewis

2. Inconsistent Progress

Some days you progress quickly. Then there are days when it seems as if your fingers and brain are not communicating and you cannot hit a single stroke correctly. If you are stuck on a plateau or have failed qualifiers, the RPR or CSR more than once, it is hard to stay motivated. You feel disappointed, frustrated, discouraged and may spiral down into depression.

How can you stay motivated after repeated disappointment?



My son Alex is an [American Ninja Warrior](#) competitor on the NBC television series based on the Japanese sports competition show, [Sasuke](#). Competitors from all walks of life, age and ability try to complete a series of obstacle courses of increasing difficulty called "stages." Brave men and women train hard all year to overcome physical, mental and emotional hurdles for the pure love of the sport and possible financial reward, now \$1,000,000. After six seasons without a winner, two competitors made it through all four stages of the 2015 ANW national

finals course in Las Vegas last summer to become the first *and* second American Ninja Warrior.

Seven months after Alex began training, he made his first ANW appearance in Venice Beach, California. I witnessed firsthand the tremendous strength, agility, fortitude and courage exhibited by my son and his fellow Ninja Warrior colleagues. In spite of the media coverage, these athletes are humble and genuinely supportive of one another.

In August 2015, Alex posted "[So I tried out for American Ninja Warrior...](#)" on Imgur, where he describes his journey to become a competitor. Two weeks later, he informed me humbly that his post had gone viral, with over 330,000 views, and Imgur featured it on its front page. This excerpt perfectly addresses the struggles of a reporting student:

"I think a lot of us are too scared of sucking at stuff. Sure, first time we try something new, we might not see success. But sucking at something is the first step to being sorta good at something! When I started I couldn't even do ONE pull up. After the first couple of sessions, I started to wonder if I really have what it takes. I wanted to quit. But I kept showing up, and I started to suck less. Now when I look back it's hard to imagine how I was ever worried. Get out there and start failing!"²

Mastering the art of writing on a steno machine is the most difficult aspect of court reporting school for the majority of students. The inability to write at 200 to 225 words per minute consistently and to pass exams are the main reasons that many students drop out of school.

The truth is even experienced reporters have some days when they write better than others, so you are in good company!

Action Steps:

The key to success is perseverance.

1. Keep showing up and doing your best.
2. Keep practicing. Consistently.
3. Keep trying and "*failing forward.*"



“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

3. Personal Challenges

Many students balance school, a job, children, marriage and other obligations, each of which is challenging alone. An unexpected traumatic event can disrupt your goals: loss of a job, divorce, prolonged or sudden illness, bankruptcy, major car accident, or the death of a loved one. A positive event can also throw a wrench into your plans: planning a wedding, having a baby, celebrating your parents’ 50th anniversary, or moving to another city or state.

If you are experiencing a personal challenge that requires your undivided attention, it is understandable if your commitment to your studies drops down on your list of priorities, especially if the situation involves a loved one. It is difficult to stay focused, and your progress may be delayed.

How do you regain momentum after a disturbance?



Halfway through court reporting school, I became pregnant. My boyfriend at the time didn’t want the baby and suggested an abortion. That was out of the question for me. Since I was making minimum wage at work, my options were limited: Keep the baby and quit school, or

give the baby up for adoption and have a career. I was too ashamed to ask anyone for advice. Deciding what to do resulted in many sleepless nights. Finally, I chose the latter.

Once my “baby bump” became visible, I isolated myself from my family to dodge their questions. Besides my boss at work, the only people I confided in were the directors of my school. To my great relief, they were all kind and supportive. They told me to go easy, take as much time off as I needed, and not to worry.

Over the next six months, I continued working full time during the day and attending reporting classes at night, until the day before I went into labor. After the baby was born, I took a week off before resuming my schedule.

It was hard to focus at first after returning to school, but I threw myself into my studies, more committed than ever to finish. I used the intense concentration required to write shorthand as therapy to ease the pain of not having a baby to care for. The ability to master my emotions during this time became useful later, when I was a CSR.

Below are some ways that may help you recover from your personal challenges, either positive or negative.

Action Steps:

1. Go easy on yourself. It’s normal to feel torn up and overwhelmed during crises. Recovering from personal challenges may take months or years. Some you may never completely recover from; they are a part of you. But don’t let them consume you.
2. Get support from your school, trusted family members and friends, classmates, a therapist, mentor or coach. Weed out any advice that doesn’t feel right and use what does.
3. Sometimes it’s best to take a break from school. Return when things calm down and you’re ready to continue. Don’t beat yourself up if you’re not progressing as quickly as you want, or if you lost some forward momentum. Take it one day at a time.
4. No matter what you’re going through, have faith that things will get better. Just keep showing up and doing your best, and everything will fall into place.



*“I visualized where I wanted to be, what kind of player I wanted to become.
I knew exactly where I wanted to go, and I focused on getting there.”*

~ Michael Jordan

4. Lack of Motivation

Let’s face it: School and practicing can be tedious. If you are stuck at a speed, it’s the same thing day after day, week after week, month after month, with no end in sight. When you are not in school, you can get easily distracted by any number of things: laundry, cleaning, shopping, family obligations or your favorite TV shows. Doing homework or practicing has very little interest, and you may find any excuse not to work on your machine.

How do you revive your commitment and passion?



For six months, I could not move past 120 wpm. I kept attending school, taking dictation and practicing at night, but nothing worked. My frustration grew by the day.

Oakland College of Court Reporting had a rule that students were allowed to listen to an audio tape only once. Against the school director’s advice, I began listening to the same audio tapes over and over to develop accuracy and to stop making mistakes. My intent was to write perfectly, with perfect punctuation. I was hoping that would help me get over the 120 hump.

One night at school, I listened to the same tape three times and kept finding little errors; i.e., writing *this* instead of *that*. Slapping my headset down on the desk, I glared at my machine and felt the heat rising up the back of my neck. In a flash, I “saw” myself throwing my machine out a window of our second story building and jumping out after it!

Thankfully, that moment passed. A friend recommended hypnosis. I went to see a hypnotherapist, and he gave me a meditation tape with guided visualizations that I could listen to at night. In a short time, I was able to move out of 120 and never looked back.

Q. What do Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Tony Robbins, Oprah Winfrey, Jim Carrey, athletes, chess masters and thousands of successful entrepreneurs and leaders have in common?

A. They all use visualization techniques to achieve success.

Actor Jim Carrey wrote a check to himself in 1987 for 10 million dollars. He dated it “Thanksgiving 1995” and added the notation, “For acting services rendered.” He visualized it for years. In 1994, he received \$10M for his role in *Dumb and Dumber*.

Visualization is a powerful tool similar to daydreaming, but it requires more detail and consistent, frequent practice. Unlike practicing on your steno writer, however, visualization is a form of joyful “mental rehearsal.” The amazing thing about visualization is that this form of practice can help you pass exams and get through school while possibly cutting down the number of hours you are actually writing on your machine.

In other words, if you **visualize** writing on your machine, you can experience the same results as if you were actually doing it.

Sound crazy?

In her *Psychology Today* blog, [Seeing Is Believing: the Power of Visualization](#), author Angie LeVan writes:

“Mental practice can get you closer to where you want to be in life, and it can prepare you for success! For instance, Natan Sharansky, a computer specialist who spent 9 years in prison in the USSR after being accused of spying for the U.S., has a lot of experience with mental practices. While in solitary confinement, he played himself in mental chess, saying: “I might as well use the opportunity to become the world champion.” Remarkably, in 1996, Sharansky beat world champion chess player Garry Kasparov ...

Seasoned athletes use vivid, highly detailed internal images and run-throughs of the entire performance, engaging all their senses in their mental rehearsal. World champion golfer Jack Nicklaus has said: 'I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp in-focus picture of it in my head ...'

Engage as many of the five senses as you can in your visualization. Who are you with? Which emotions are you feeling right now? What are you wearing? Is there a smell in the air? What do you hear? What is your environment?"³

By using this powerful technique, you are in essence “rewiring” your neural pathways to create a new vision of yourself, thus overriding negative, self-limiting beliefs.

Try this visualization:

Sit with a straight spine in a quiet place, without distractions. Close your eyes. Take several slow, deep breaths. Visualize taking the RPR – in the present tense, as if you were actually living it right now, as opposed to watching a movie of yourself.

Imagine your fingers touching every key. The air is just the right temperature. Your chair is comfortable. There is a subtle scent of roses in the room. As the test begins, the readers appear to be speaking way below your ability. You are getting every stroke easily, including punctuation. You hear every sound and write perfectly. Transcribing goes smoothly. You get zero errors. You jump for joy when you get the envelope confirming that you passed all legs of the RPR.

Give it a try! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Go BIG. Allow your imagination to soar.

Action Steps:

1. As with practicing on your steno writer, the best results are achieved from consistent, daily practice.
2. The best times to practice visualization are as soon as you awaken and just before going to sleep, for a minimum of 10 – 15 minutes, morning and night.



“Instruction does much, but encouragement everything.”

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

5. Lack of Support and Understanding

Court reporting school challenges you in ways you could not fathom before becoming a student. You push yourself far beyond what you expected and need ongoing encouragement.

Most college or university students graduate in four years and law students in three years, but there is no definite graduation date for court reporting students or any guarantee that you will pass the certification exams. This lack of certainty is unsettling. You are constantly worried about money, how much longer it’s going to take and your lack of achievement.

It may feel like no one understands what you’re going through. Out of ignorance, those closest to you may even unconsciously undermine or sabotage your efforts and progress. It hurts that the very people whose support you need the most aren’t there for you in the way you need them to be. This makes getting through school even more difficult.

If you’ve been in a reporting program for a few years, you have likely heard people say things like this:

“What’s the problem? Why can’t you pass that test?”

“Your twin sister got her B.A. three years ago. Why is it taking YOU so long?”

“Maybe you’d be better suited for another profession.”

“I can’t support you any more. You’ll have to quit school and get a job.”

Ouch.

People react to situations they don’t understand because of their beliefs, which are based on their life experience. Your spouse, partner, family or friends might try to push you into doing what worked in *their* lives as a way of wanting to protect you from future disappointment. Or they may criticize you out of frustration when they don’t see enough progress, especially if they are supporting you financially.

Emotions can wreak havoc in our lives if we don’t have a positive way of communicating them. Deep down, you may be worried that you’re disappointing those who mean the most to you. You may have even stopped talking to family because you’re tired of explaining why you

haven't graduated yet. You feel guilty, embarrassed and ashamed. One criticism, a raised eyebrow or a certain look may push you over the edge.

You may have an overwhelming urge to scream:

“You don't understand what I'm doing/feeling/going through!!!”

I'd like to see how far YOU get writing on this machine!!!”

Yet trying to *make* others understand what it takes to get through court reporting school is futile. It can escalate into a cycle of conflict, resulting in strained relationships and possibly breakups. You can end up stressed *and* depressed. The reality is we cannot change anyone's mind.

How can you get the support and understanding you want and need?



[Dr. Brené Brown](#), a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, has become famous by writing and speaking about the power of vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame.

In one of Dr. Brown's inspirational quotes, she writes: *“If we can share our story with someone who responds with empathy and understanding, shame can't survive.*

In other words, get support from someone who can understand. If you ask for support from people who are incapable of giving it because of their own ignorance, limitations or beliefs, you will keep feeling disappointed.

Yet unless you are planning to go live on a mountaintop, you still need to communicate with your family and friends. As I discussed in my chapter on Negative Self-Talk, the language we use is important. The most effective thing you can do before responding to anyone's questions about school is to acknowledge what you are feeling.

Let's explore how to respond to one of the statements at the beginning of this chapter:

Mom: *Maybe you'd be better suited for another profession.*

You: *I need to go for a walk to clear my head.*

Feelings: Angry, disappointed, discouraged, dismayed, exasperated, hopeless, insecure, sad, shocked, stressed, upset, vulnerable

Needs: Acceptance, acknowledgment, comfort, confidence, connection, consideration, emotional safety, empathy, progress, reassurance, respect, self-expression, shared reality, support, success, to be heard, to have my intentions understood, to matter, to be seen for who I am, understanding

Self-Talk:

[Outside] *That hurt! My belly aches and my heart is pounding. I am furious! I've been working so hard all these years. Why can't she see it? What does she think I've been doing all this time? Twiddling my thumbs? I need to take some deep breaths.*

[BREATHE] *The truth is that I've thought about the same thing. Maybe I should look for another career. [BREATHE] But I love court reporting! I have worked too hard to give up now. I'm just scared because I have no idea when I'm going to graduate. Maybe she's scared, too. She loves me, and she only wants what's best for me. I just need to tell her what I'm really feeling.*

Response:

Mom, I get why you said that, but it made me feel hurt and angry, I have to admit. But mostly sad. I need your support and understanding. Court reporting is HARD! But I really want to do this, and I really need your support. I love you, Mom, and I'm so grateful for all you've done for me. It will help if you don't say things like that, okay? I'm trying really hard, and I need to feel that you're behind me.

The truth is when we have an immediate emotional gut reaction to something someone says or does, generally it's because there is a nugget of truth in it.

Beyond the support you want and need, the reality is that you are responsible for your own success. If you are serious and passionate about embarking on a court reporting career, why give someone else the power to keep you from achieving your goals?

In other words, lack of support and understanding should not stop you from following your heart and dreams.

In his bestselling book, [*The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*](#), author Gary Keller writes,

“Accountable people achieve results others can only dream of. When life happens, you can be either the author of your life or the victim of it. Those are your only two choices – accountable or unaccountable. Some people are great at blaming others but terrible at taking ownership of their lives. When you take responsibility for your outcome, you put yourself in control of your life.”

Remember: Nothing changes without awareness. Acknowledge your feelings and needs in a positive way, and your life will transform.

Action Steps:

1. Explore your feelings through journaling, art or music.
2. Move your body – take walks; dance; do yoga; hit the gym; go for a hike.
3. Develop a trusted support network of teachers, friends, CSRs and students.
4. Find a supportive classmate or reporting buddy and practice together.
5. Watch Dr. Brené Brown's TED Talks to learn more about effective communication.
6. If you are in emotional pain, ask someone you trust for a referral to a good therapist.



PART 2: FIVE GOLDEN RULES TO WRITING MASTERY

These “rules” are “golden” because they are as good as gold: They **work**.

I recommend that you add the tools in the following pages to your daily work in order, beginning with **Golden Rule #1**, before moving on to the next one. If you feel highly motivated, feel free to begin incorporating all of them into your school assignments. You can follow the minimum recommended practice time and frequency detailed in each rule, and increase them as your skill progresses.

If you commit to doing the practices detailed in this e-book, you will strengthen your finger dexterity, write accurately, build speed steadily, gain confidence, pass tests and achieve success as a reporter. You may even be able to trim a few months or more from school.

The self-discipline you are developing in school is crucial to your success as a reporter. Assign yourself regular hours to practice. If procrastination is a problem, *just start*. That’s the hardest part.

Whether you are in theory, qualifiers or beyond, these techniques will help you become a better writer.

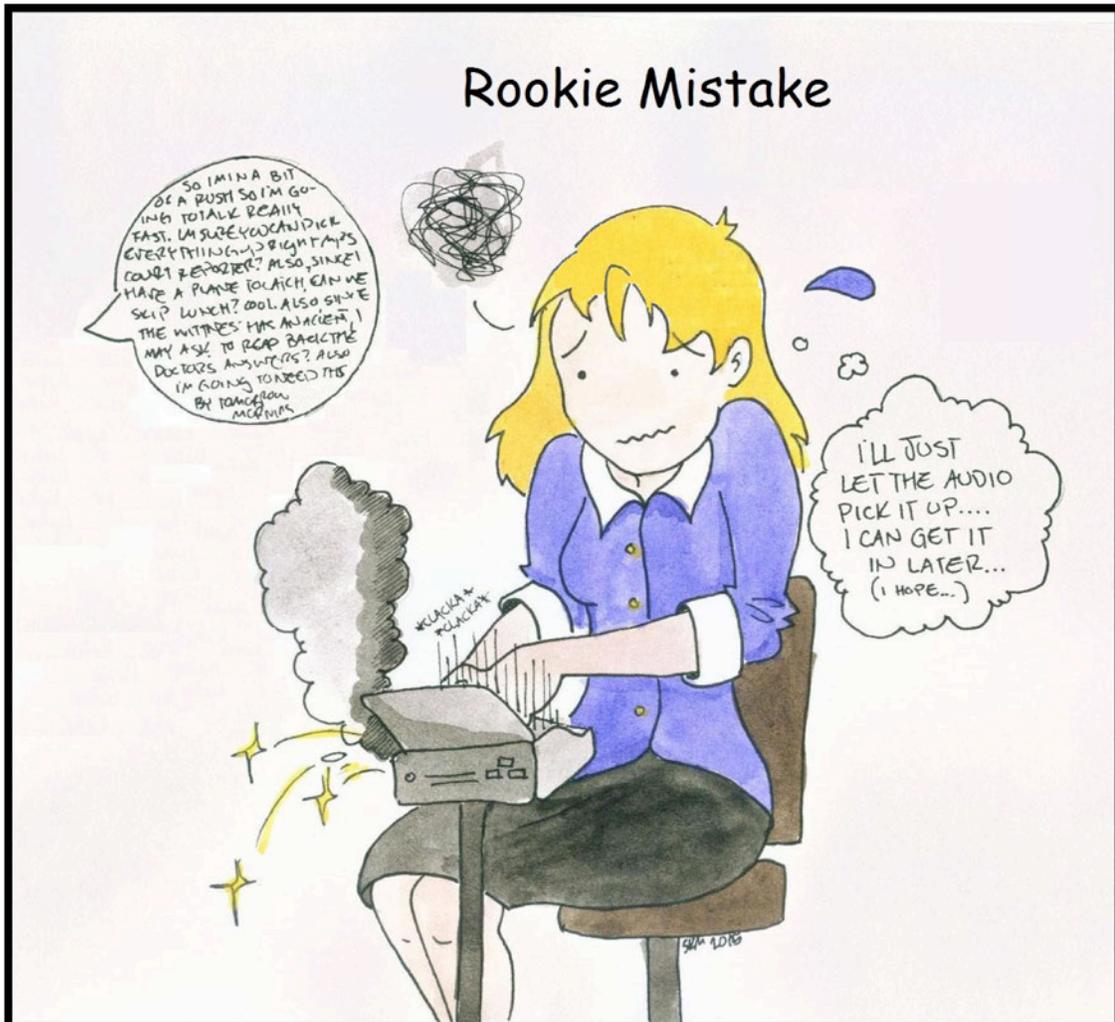
To achieve the best results, it is important that you practice with conscious awareness. In other words, give each of these methods your complete, undivided attention.

Action Steps:

1. Be consistent. It is best to practice at the same time each day or evening.
2. Find a quiet place where you can be alone.
3. Turn off the TV, radio, iPod, iTunes and any other device that will be a distraction.
4. Close your eyes, listen deeply and feel your fingers in every stroke.
5. Enjoy the process!



1. Write Cleanly, Drop, Repeat



Are you able to read back easily?

No? Read on.

Frank Hutchinson, co-owner of my school, had this advice for advanced students in high-speed dictation classes:

“Bite the bullet, sweat blood, slap something down.”

I adored Frank and his good-natured, helpful attitude, but my notes were a hot mess. I could barely read what I wrote, which frustrated me no end. I stumbled during read-back, red-faced, and it took a long time to transcribe my notes.

On the other hand, my favorite teacher, David Heranney, advised:

“Avoid shattering your notes. Write cleanly. Drop when you can’t write cleanly anymore. Pick it up as quickly as you can. Write cleanly. Repeat.”

None of us *wants* to drop. But David’s advice was practical and logical.

What was the point of “slapping” something down that I could not read later? When I wrote cleanly and dropped, my writing improved. And being able to read back without hesitation was exhilarating! Most importantly, I felt more confident.

It has been said by many that the key to writing well is practice, practice, practice. There is no way around it. Becoming a court reporter requires thousands of hours of practice on your steno writer.

But **how** you practice is important.

*If you ignore your mistakes when you practice,
you are actually practicing your mistakes!
Of course that sounds ridiculous. Who would want to practice their mistakes?
But that's exactly what many people do. You will perform exactly like you practice.
If you ignore mistakes in your practice sessions and think
that you can make it up later, think again.
Ignoring mistakes is actually practicing mistakes.⁴*

In other words, if you cannot easily read what you write during practice or in class, what do you think will happen during an exam, when you feel nervous and insecure?

Under the strict transcription deadlines of qualifiers, the CSR, RPR or any other exam, your ability to read your writing can mean the difference between passing and failing. Transcribing and editing will take *a very long time* and create additional stress when you cannot read your notes during an exam or as a working reporter. You do not want to spend hours deciphering or “cleaning up” your transcripts.

SLOPPY NOTES =
INCREASED EDITING TIME =
LOST TIME, MONEY & OPPORTUNITIES

One of my court reporting student interns wrote this after working with me at a mock trial:

“From the very beginning of my court reporting school, I was taught to write something for every word, which frustrated me during read-back because I couldn't read my sloppy notes. After interning with Ana, I have learned to write cleanly and drop, and I have seen a huge improvement. Now reading back and transcribing are a breeze.”

~ Tobiya Abhaya
Court Reporting Student

As a CSR, writing cleanly is especially important when working with scopists. You want to be able to turn a transcript in as quickly as you can, particularly if the client wants it expedited. The cleaner you write, the faster you and your scopist(s) will finish the job. The faster you turn in work, the more jobs you can take.

As a broadcast captioner, CART reporter or realtime deposition reporter, the instantaneous English translation will be indecipherable to clients and viewers if your shorthand is sloppy, especially when you write at speeds beyond your ability or if you are feeling stressed.

This bears repeating:

**Write cleanly until you cannot hang on anymore. Drop.
Start writing again as soon as you can. Repeat.**

Trusting your writing is essential to feeling confident and doing well on exams and as a working reporter. If you are not writing cleanly now and decide to commit to doing so, it will slow you down at first, but when you experience the benefits – reading back and transcribing easily – you will reap the rewards of your diligence.

If you only follow one of my [Five Golden Rules](#), this one is the most important! It is never too early or too late to start writing cleanly. Start TODAY.



2. Punctuate As You Write



Do you hesitate as you read back or transcribe because you cannot figure out where a sentence begins or ends?

If you are already punctuating as you write, congratulations! If you are not punctuating now, start doing it.

Whether you decided early on in school that using punctuation is unnecessary and writing words is what matters, or someone told you punctuating is not important, it's time to change your belief. *Not* punctuating will bite you later.

As a CSR, you or your scopist may spend hours editing a transcript, trying to figure out where to add periods, for example, in run-on sentences for a witness who does not appear to know when to take a breath. The more time you spend on a transcript, the fewer jobs you can take and the less money you will make.

Think about it: Do you want to hand over responsibility for your writing to someone else? And pay her/him?

Points to Ponder:

1. Punctuation creates a buffer before you drop. If you punctuate as you write, when you write above your ability, the first thing that you will drop is punctuation. This is a warning sign that you are about to drop words, followed by phrases and sentences.
2. If you are planning to write realtime or be a broadcast or CART captioner, punctuation is crucial.
3. It is easier to punctuate as you are listening to a speaker because you can hear the change in inflection. Eliminate frustration and uncertainty when you can't remember exactly how something was said later by punctuating as you write.
4. If you do not have good punctuation skills, ask a teacher, tutor, mentor or coach for assistance.

NOTE: In California, court reporting school directors and students report that the Court Reporters Board is clamping down on punctuation errors for the CSR dictation exam more now than ever before. Save yourself the frustration, time, energy and cost of re-taking the CSR by punctuating as you write TODAY.



3. Finger Drills and Exercises

Do you have a lot of misstrokes?

My little fingers on both hands are nearly two inches shorter than my ring fingers. That caused my ring fingers to drag, resulting in misstrokes and shadowing. After theory, writing cleanly helped, but I needed consistent, specific practice to strengthen my ring and pinky fingers and develop better coordination.

Then I learned about finger drills and exercises and bought a manual. After a few weeks of practice, I was hitting the right keys with fewer misstrokes.



To develop accuracy, do the drills every day: while warming up before class; between classes; and especially during practice at night before bed.

Diligent practice prevents or stops shadowing, finger drags and misstrokes.

These exercises can be boring, but if you dedicate 30 minutes each day focused entirely on this practice, without distraction, within a short time you will experience improvement in your writing ability. Almost miraculously, those strokes you could not get before will become easier.

If you play the piano or other instrument, fantastic! Learning how to play an instrument requires discipline,

and your coordination and muscle memory development will help you master your steno writer. Have fun playing music while you exercise your fingers. AND do finger drills.



4. Slow Down to Speed Up

“Hold on,” you may say. *“Isn’t that an oxymoron?”*

Yes and no. Speed is not the focus here. Accuracy is what matters.



The key reason for slowing down is that when you write perfectly at speeds much lower than your current level, you will feel more confident about your writing. When you write perfectly at lower speeds, you will write better at higher speeds.

For advanced level students, write at 50 to 100 wpm or more below your current speed for a minimum of 30 minutes, three times a week.

Keep lowering the number of words per minute until you are able to write every word accurately the entire time, with perfect punctuation. Don't move up to a higher speed until you achieve perfection.

No drops. No shadows. No finger drags. Zero errors.



Close your eyes to eliminate distractions and FEEL your fingers reaching for each key as you listen to dictation or an audio file. Stay focused on every stroke.

Listen carefully for the small words that may easily get missed - *to, the, in, on, and, at, or, of, for, nor, from, that, this, their, they're* and *there, etc.*

Writing at slower speeds may feel strange at first, but do it anyway, even if teachers or other students wonder why you are sitting in lower level dictation classes. If they ask, smile and tell them that you are perfecting your writing.

Recently, one of my interns reached out to me after passing an exam:

“Ana~

I just passed my 180 lit test, and I KNOW that the number one reason is because of your advice to slow down in order to speed up. I've been doing just that, practicing at slower speeds, and it's helped tons to improve my accuracy and confidence! I'd heard that advice since I started court reporting school, but it was only when I read it alongside your other advice that it finally made me think, maybe this actually works. And it does! Thank you for finally getting it through my head!”

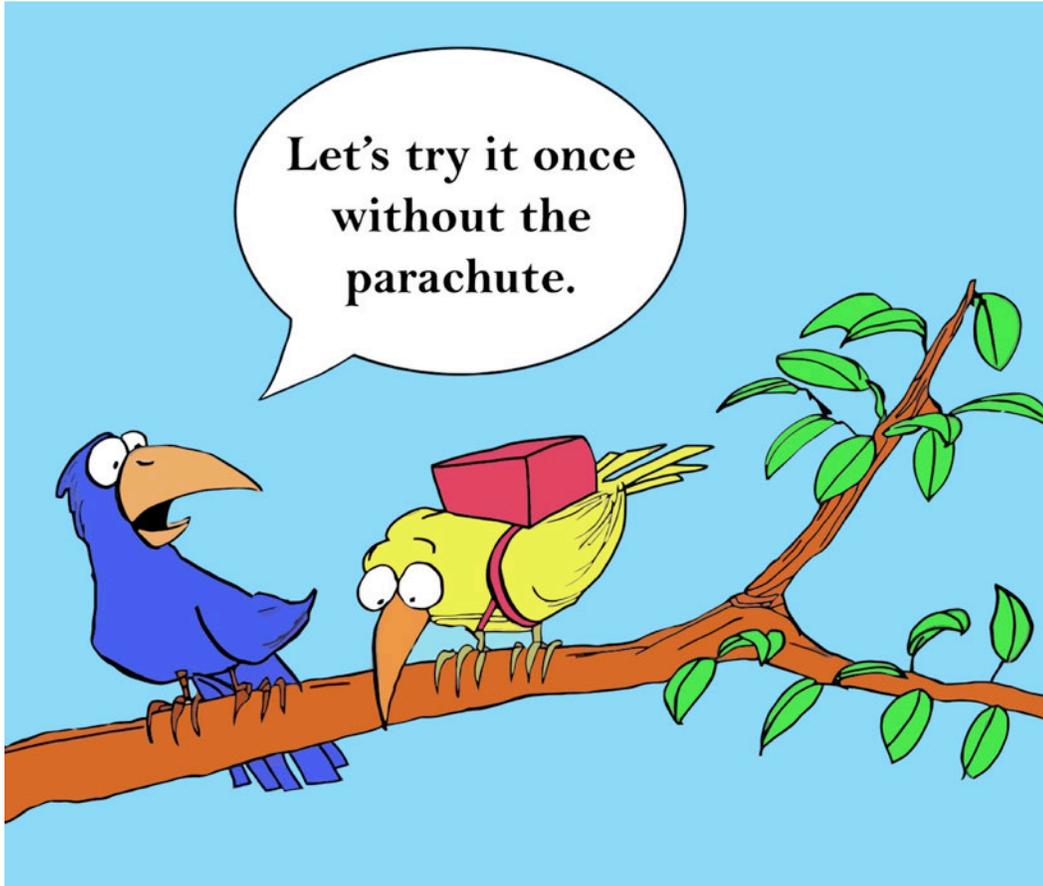
~ Katherine Schilling
Court Reporting Student



5. Write 50+ WPM Above Your Current Speed

“Wait,” you may ask. *“Isn’t Golden Rule #5 a contradiction of Golden Rule #4?”*

No. Both are important.



When I began sitting in David Heranney’s Certificate of Merit class after failing to pass the qualifier, he and the other readers were talking so fast, the words flew over my head like bullets. At first, I was only able to write a few words at a time before needing to drop. Two weeks later, I wrote furiously for about 30 seconds before dropping. David asked me to read that portion, and I got it! His grin and praise was all the inspiration I needed.

Stepping out of your comfort zone is crucial for your growth and for developing self-confidence. Take risks, make mistakes, and your writing will improve.

For advanced students, or if you are stuck on a plateau, practice at 50+ wpm above your current speed. Writing beyond your ability will train your ears to listen for — and your mind to get accustomed to hearing — words at higher speeds.

Disregard the screaming of your brain:

“Are you CRAZY??? You can’t take that down!”

Close your eyes, BREATHE and listen for the next word. And the next word. And the next.

This is one task where you do not need to focus on punctuation initially. Follow [Golden Rule #1: Write Cleanly, Drop, Repeat](#). As your mind and body adjust to writing at speeds beyond your ability, start adding punctuation.

When you return to your current speed level, you will be amazed at the progress you have made and how much easier it is.

Four court reporting students recently experienced the benefits of writing 100+ words per minute above their speed level:

Sixteen law students participated in four mock trials over a weekend at a local law school. Two law students each represented the state and the defense. Actual assistant public defenders acted as witnesses or the judge. In one of the trials, there was a newly elected real-life judge. Since there was no designated court reporter area in the moot court, my interns sat up on the podium, next to the judge.

No transcript was being requested. As the “official” reporters of record, I emphasized to my interns that their main task was to speak up as often as needed to get the best record they could. They were both excited and nervous in the beginning.

The law students were allowed limited amounts of time for their opening statements, direct and cross-examinations, and closing arguments. As a result of the time pressure, several spoke in spurts of 300 wpm and above. The reporting students needed to speak up dozens of times.

During the trials, each reporting intern was asked to read back several times and a couple of them felt embarrassed when the judge leaned over to look at her realtime. After the trials were over, the law professor with whom I coordinated this event asked for rough drafts of one witness’ testimony for each trial.

All of the reporting students learned a great deal during and after the experience.

One student’s *aha* was that she realized her notes were “a hot mess.” Another student said her notes were shattered and she wrote poorly for a couple of days,

but she and a third student passed the 200 wpm jury charge that week. After writing at 300+ wpm, 200 felt easy.

One of those interns wrote this testimonial after her mock trial experience:

“I have been in a court reporting program for approximately five years. I was reluctant to intern until I met Ana. I heard about her mock trial opportunities while attending the College of Marin. I decided to go for it, and I found her to be an amazing coach. She guided me through the entire process with one-on-one coaching on how to prepare rough drafts, breathing techniques, and the art of interrupting. Also, the process helped me to build speed. But it was due to Ana’s training that I gained the confidence to interrupt, as needed, with no hesitation. It was during a mock trial at Berkeley Law where I practiced all of these techniques. Two days later, I passed my 200 word-per-minute jury charge speed test that I had been attempting to pass for months.

I am very thankful for the opportunity I had to intern with Ana. I believe that all court reporting students could benefit from her training because she is professional, knowledgeable, and persistent. She is a dream to work with, and it will give students the confidence they will need for the real world of court reporting.”

~ Michelle Brassel
Court Reporting Student

Was it scary? Yes.

Was it worth it? YES.

Any experience that doesn’t kill you *will* make you stronger!!

If you practice writing above your current speed in combination with the other four golden rules and incorporate these practices into your school regimen, you will feel more confident in your writing ability, which will lead you to success.



CONCLUSION

Now you know the top five “secrets” to my success. I hope you’re feeling inspired and excited about using these tools. If you are dedicated to becoming a reporter and commit to practicing these [Five Golden Rules](#), you can achieve writing mastery. Below is summary of the rules.

If you would like to learn more about my court reporting coaching programs and internships, see [SERVICES](#) below.

GOLDEN RULES REVIEW ~ PRACTICE TIME & FREQUENCY

1. Write Cleanly, Drop, Repeat

- Always, at every dictation class and while writing from an audio file or during practice.

2. Punctuate As You Write

- Daily, whenever you write on your machine.

3. Finger Drills and Exercises

- Before class, during breaks and 30 minutes each evening without distractions.

4. Slow Down to Speed Up

- Write at speeds 50 – 100 wpm lower than your current speed three or more times per week for a minimum of 30 – 60 minutes.

5. Write 50+ WPM Above Your Current Speed

- Participate in high-speed dictation at least once a week to build stamina.



BONUS TIP: READ AHEAD

David Heranney offered this piece of advice during a class, and it saved me during the RPR.

I sat in the front row at the 2-Voice, doing my finger drills to warm up, feeling confident and ready. We began. I wrote well, until a particularly fast Q&A exchange halfway through the test that lasted about two minutes. I hung on for dear life.

When I reached that spot during transcription, I could not make heads or tails of my paper notes due to several misstrokes.

Since this was 1979 and we were using typewriters, I couldn't just skip that part and go back to it later. I began to perspire as I read and re-read my notes. I could barely breathe.

Panicking, I looked at the clock and saw that I had 30 minutes left and was only halfway through! I bent forward over my notes and buried my face in my hands.

After all of my hard work, was this how it would end?

Taking some deep breaths, I willed myself to calm down. Then I "heard" David's soft voice say:

"If you get stuck during an exam, read ahead. They frequently repeat words or phrases."

Sitting up, I wiped my tears hurriedly before anyone saw them and read several folds ahead. With a huge sigh of relief, I was able to figure out what I had written.

When I received the letter from the NCRA notifying me that I had passed, I felt a tremendous sense of achievement.



AFTERWORD(S)

Some general tips:

- Brief common phrases and words to your dictionary, not those you rarely hear.
- Act as if you are writing realtime for clients and work on eliminating conflicts.

About providing CART services while in school . . .

The money may be tempting, as well as the satisfaction you feel offering a much-needed service to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, but CART is extremely difficult and may crush your self-confidence if you are writing below 200 - 225. Also, writing verbatim when you take qualifiers and licensing exams will be challenging because you are accustomed to editing as you go in reporter-of-record experiences.

Better job choices are to work in a related field where managers are willing to mentor you:

- *A reputable court reporting firm:* You may learn how to calendar jobs; provide customer service for myriad clients; format and produce transcripts; copy exhibits; deliver transcripts; work with a team, including court reporters; meet deadlines; possibly handle billing; and many other tasks. If you do a good job, you have the opportunity for immediate placement as soon as you graduate, pass the CSR and/or RPR.
- *A reputable transcription firm:* As a transcriptionist, you will also learn how to meet deadlines; work with different formats, depending on client needs; and improve your grammar, punctuation and spelling.

And, a final word . . .

You deserve a Medal of Courage for following your heart and passion and embarking on a court reporting career. It takes courage to continue despite setbacks, plateaus and failed exams. You are not a failure because you fail exams; that is par for the course on the journey to becoming a CART, broadcast captioner, freelance or court reporter. You are a winner for showing up and doing your best.

Even if you were to decide at some point that reporting is not for you, all of your hard work and training will help you tremendously both in life and in whatever field you choose to pursue. And you still deserve recognition, respect and a huge pat on the back for hanging in there as long as you did.

Wherever you are on your path, CONGRATULATIONS!

ADDENDUM

On September 24, 2015, an historic event took place: Pope Francis became the first pope in the history of the Catholic Church to address the Congress of the United States.

Why is this relevant?



The person within reach of Pope Francis was the court reporter.

Can you imagine reporting an historic, worldwide event, knowing that millions of people are watching?

Can you imagine sitting just a few feet from a beloved human being who is transforming minds and hearts around the world because of his humanity and compassion?

Can you imagine the *profundity* of that experience?

Members of Congress, judges and savvy litigators understand that no electronic device can ever replace a highly skilled court reporter. This event was a powerful testament to the fact that court reporters are still very much needed in the world, and I want to help you graduate and start working! And tell your family and friends!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the following dear friends and colleagues for proofreading several versions of this e-book and providing insightful feedback:

- Court reporting students Katherine Schilling, Nancy Dasovich, Michelle Brassel, and Sarah Maksim (new CSR!)
- Judy Wolf, Alan Bryner, Katie Kanowsky, Kristen Craig-Reed, Kim Strandberg and Lisa Nichols

I am grateful for the tremendous support and encouragement that I have received over the years from my intuitive business coach, Stephanie Marie Beeby. She “saw” me and my talents long before I believed I had any to share and continues to be a source of strength and encouragement.

My appreciation to mastermind coach Bret Gregory, who inspired, cajoled and encouraged me to write this book, something that I have wanted to do for decades.

My spiritual and human family and friends for having my back throughout this process.

My “wow” gratitude to ...

- Katherine Schilling for the striking art work that graces the cover of this book; and for her patience, time, and energy creating several versions of it until I was satisfied.
- Sarah Maksim for her beautiful hand-drawn graphic, *Rookie Mistake (Golden Rule #1, Write Cleanly, Drop, Repeat)*.

Lastly, to former Oakland College of Court Reporting owners Frank and MaryAnn Hutchinson for their huge hearts, compassion and encouragement; OCCR teacher extraordinaire David Heranney; former Alameda County Municipal Court lead reporter Eugene Troy, who gave me my first job before I got my CSR (and retired from the profession at 82 years young); and all the reporters and reporting firms who offered me opportunities and inspired me throughout my court reporting career ~ thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Dominick M. Tursi, [The Gallery of Shorthand](#).
- ² Alex Krumland, [So I tried out for American Ninja Warrior..](#) (Imgur, August 7, 2015).
- ³ Angie LeVan, [Seeing Is Believing; the Power of Visualization](#) (Psychology Today, December 3, 2009).
- ⁴ David Sprunger, [Top 10 Piano Practice Mistakes and How to Fix Them, #2](#) (Practicing Mistakes Instead of Practicing Music). Permission granted to modify the quote.

IMAGES AND GRAPHICS

- Front cover: Katherine Schilling, Court Reporting Student
- Photo collage, page 6
 - 1 *Sumerian Scribe*: Dominick M. Tursi, Director, The Gallery of Shorthand
 - 2 *Reporter captioning a Minnesota Gophers game*: Jan Ballman, RPR, CMRS, DSA, President of Paradigm Reporting
- Photo collage, page 17: [Court Reporting Students on the Job](#)

Clockwise from center, reporting students Nancy Dasovich, Casey Hoffman, Katherine Schilling, Alyssa Ghirarduzzi Marcum and reporter Sarah Maksim.
- *Rookie Mistake* image, page 20, [Golden Rule #1](#): Sarah Maksim, CSR No. 14035
- Photo of blindfolded Japanese students, page 23, [Golden Rule #4](#)

Judy Wolf, Stenograph Corporation

Inspirational Resources:

1. Amazon offers two free audiobooks when you sign up for their Audible trial. I highly recommend downloading these:
 - [*Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life: How to Unlock Your Full Potential for Success and Achievement*](#) by Brian Tracy, a classic bestseller.
 - [*The War of Art, Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles*](#) by Steven Pressfield. Don't let the title fool you. This book is a powerful source to help you break through resistance of all kinds, including practicing on your steno writer. Court reporting is an art!
2. [Kristine Madera](#), MA, CCHT is a friend and soul-centered business coach who helps entrepreneurs turn their genius into 6-figure incomes. Most reporters are independent contractors; therefore, you are entrepreneurs.

Kristine offers powerful complimentary weekly 30-minute guided visualizations Monday mornings at 9:00 a.m. Eastern that will help you to release stress and resistance and connect with your soul's purpose.

Listen to her free audio [How to Let Go of Resistance](#) and feel your life transform from the inside out:

3. [Dr. Brené Brown's](#) TED Talks and books contain tremendously helpful information that will help you live your life with authenticity, vulnerability and wholeheartedness. Check out her videos, books and blogs and be inspired.
4. [HeartMath Institute's](#) scientific research over the span of 30 years has resulted in the creation of powerful tools that connect us with our intuitive insight and heart intelligence, which override our brain's fear-based responses. Check out their website to access profoundly helpful tools.
5. [The Center for Nonviolent Communication's](#) videos will help you learn *the language of life*: how to communicate compassionately with yourself and everyone else. Find lists of feelings and feeds to download and print.
6. [Rasur Foundation International](#) – the organization by which I became a Certified Connection Practice Coach and Trainer. This practice has transformed over 50,000 children and families in Costa Rica, the United States, Japan and other countries. Now founder Rita Marie Johnson is creating a program in Sacramento, California.

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Educating the Legal Community Through Social Media

CCRA On-Line e-newsletter (California Court Reporters Association, September 2015), Volume 15, Issue 6, pages 6 and 7.

The Court Reporter's Dilemma: Interrupt or Drop

The BASF Bulletin (Bar Association of San Francisco, August 2015).

Reduce Stress and Anxiety at Work by Engaging Your Heart - Breathe Your Way to Peace in Four Quick Steps

The Legal Secretary (LSI, Inc. February 2015) pages 12 and 13.

Release Stress and Get In The Zone By Breathing Into Your Heart

CCRA On-Line e-newsletter (California Court Reporters Association, January 2015), Volume 14, Issue 11, pages 7 and 8.

WANTED: Court and Deposition Reporters; California Facing a Shortage of 2,320 by 2018

The Legal Secretary (LSI, Inc., November 2014), pages 19 and 20.

The Power of Networking: Overcoming Fear and Making Friends

The Legal Secretary (LSI, Inc., May 2012,) pages 24 and 25.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ANA FATIMA COSTA, RPR, CSR is a consultant, author, coach and speaker. Her passion is to inspire and support court reporting students and court reporters through the knowledge she gained over 36 years in the reporting field, as well as to educate the legal community about the crucial role reporters have as impartial guardians of the record. Ana coordinates internship opportunities for court reporting students in reporter-of-record mock deposition and trial events at law schools, law firms, courthouses and private venues. As a certified coach and trainer, she uses powerful scientifically-proven processes that allow court reporting students and working reporters to release obstacles to their happiness and success.

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AFC CONSULTING SERVICES

I offer private and group coaching services and programs that have effectively helped reporting students overcome obstacles, progress through school and pass exams. Click here to schedule your complimentary [15-minute Strategy Session](#).

If you live in the San Francisco Bay Area and would like to participate in internships under my supervision, click here to schedule an [Introductory Internship Call](#) to discuss possible future opportunities. Nationwide internship opportunities are in development.