A close up of a piece of paper

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It’s crazy to think that it’s a new year already. Not just a new year, but a new decade! **What?!** 2019 was definitely a year of learning. Elle and I have been working hard on getting Arbuckle Publishing House ready for the upcoming year. This has always been our dream and by the grace of God, we are making it happen! Goodbye 2019; hello opportunities!

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Now, before we get into the upcoming highlights of January, I figured we could look at some helpful lessons from 2019 to take into the new year!

**Find Your Tribe**

I can’t stress enough how important this is. For so long I went through life with people I thought I was supposed to be around. Whether it was family, friends, or co-workers, I thought it was my duty to spend my time with them or have them in my life. The problem was, some of them weren’t as encouraging or uplifting as I needed them to be. For years, it caused me to live a life that didn’t feel was right for me. It wasn’t until I branched out and found the RIGHT group of people that I began to blossom. For you, it may be time to let go of a dying friendship that only drags you down or stop spending so much time with that cousin that always gets you in trouble. Whatever your ideal tribe is, go out and find it!

**Don’t Compare Your Path to Others**

Have you ever looked at someone who is where you want to be in life and thought, “They’re so lucky” or, “Must be nice…” or, “Why am I not at that place yet?” I know I have! The problem with this kind of mindset is that we are expecting to jump from point A to point Z without going over B through Y. The person who you are idolizing didn’t just wake up with a fully written novel or a super successful business. They worked hard every day to perfect it. No doubt they’ve failed a few times. They, too, have scars and bruises on their souls. It’s kind of like the picture of the iceberg. You see the beautiful mountain on top, but what you don’t see is the weight underneath it holding it down!

Photo credit: IDK but not mine.

The moral of the story here is, don’t look at your start point and get discouraged by someone else’s success point. It’s like comparing apples to oranges. In fact, don’t compare your journey to ANYONE’S! Use them as an example of what you WANT to achieve, not to put yourself down for where you are NOW.

**Boundaries Are Not Selfish, It’s Self Care**

So many people in life will try to distract you from your goal. It’s usually not deliberate, but it will happen. Having a significant other, kids, parents, animals, friends, or just a friendly neighbor always comes with some obligations. You have to call this person or go to that dinner. While those things aren’t bad on their own, when it comes time to do your work, they might have to take a back seat sometimes. Some people will say this is selfish, but it’s not! Boundaries come in many different forms and the only person who knows what’s best for you is…well, you! I’m not saying that you should ALWAYS blow off that dinner with your mom. I’m just saying, if you feel that you need that night to work on your dream because it’s the only allotted time you have to do so, explain that to her and reschedule. It’s okay to do what’s best for you and your dreams, even if it doesn’t coincide with other’s plans. There’s a balance to the scale of life that only you can steady, so don’t let anyone tell you how to balance it.

**Stress Less and Stay Blessed**

Well, if you’re like Elle and me, you’re a natural worrier! Thoughts flood in and sometimes take over in the worst way. In 2020, the goal is to remember how blessed you are. You’ve gotten this far, right? It’s only natural that you’re going to get to where you’re heading. It may take time and hard work, but if you break that down into small goals per day, the week flies by and you’ll find you’re even closer to the life you’re trying to live! Don’t always look at the big picture, especially if it’s too overwhelming. Take your big picture, break it down to monthly goals, then to weekly goals and then to daily goals! This will help keep your sanity and help you get the work done that is needed for your dreams to come true! You can do this!

**Be Your Own Cheerleader**

This one took me all of 2019 to finally grasp - not master, but grasp. A lot of people will tell you that you are changing or becoming someone else on this path to success. Whatever that path looks like for you, some people will not see it as a good thing. That’s okay! It’s not for THEM to think it’s good. It’s for YOU to think it’s good. Is this your dream? Yes? Then do what you need to in order to achieve it! Chances are, your dreams are not their dreams. That’s what’s so special about being human. We don’t all have to agree and be each other’s cheerleaders all the time. Yes, would you like your mom to be on board? Of course! **BUT,** there’s a type of power that comes from learning to encourage yourself. Your happiness doesn’t depend on your spouse, mother, kids, dog, etc. It depends on your ability to make a life that you want and are proud of living! Thank them for their input, but don’t let them discourage you. Every morning get out of bed and remind yourself **WHY** you are choosing to be an author, business owner, or whatever your vision is for yourself. No one will make that dream for you. So, cheer for your own self and be proud of it!

**UPDATES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

One of the most exciting things about this e-mail is the cover reveal of our author, Catherine Kopf’s, middle-grade novel, Breaking Order. She has worked so hard on revamping this story and it shows!

Here is the synopsis:

Ambert and Calista Knight live in a world where the arts, magic, dreams, and creativity are banned. They’re the son and daughter of the Regime’s head of Regulation Enforcement and they are no stranger to the rules that surround them.

An asthmatic girl with a curious mind, Calista braces herself for a new year at Fortress Military Academy. Facing challenging academics and constant bullying, Calista’s looking to make new friends and discover more about the arts and magic that her country’s banned.

No stranger to trouble, Ambert walks on a thin line. After putting others before himself and gaining a criminal record, he’s expected to follow the commander’s every order in his new job.

When both siblings come into contact with dreamers-those connected to the magic and creativity in their world- they have to decide between right and wrong. They question what family is and find meaning in helping others. Will they dare to speak up for their beliefs or go back to the bland, selfish world they’ve known all their lives?

How great does this story sound? Amazing, right? I can’t explain to you how excited we are at Arbuckle Publishing House about this novel and the people that will be touched by its words! Catherine is an amazing young author who continues to grow every day! Enough gushing, though! Here is the moment you have been waiting for! We present to you, Breaking Order by Catherine Kopf!

A picture containing indoor, stage, sitting, monitor

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The way that the colors dance in the sky with playful shapes and neon brightness, is just…amazing! I’m in love with the tones of blue and purple! Of course, Calista’s red hair pops out through the silhouette of her as well! The amount of detail is just incredible! The more you stare at it, the more you’ll agree.

This beauty will be available for purchase on April 14, 2020. Keep up to date with details of release giveaways, book signings, Facebook lives and more on our social media platforms and, of course, next month’s newsletter!

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Episode one of [The Writer’s Retreat Podcast](https://soundcloud.com/user-372674044) is already out, but don’t forget to tune in every Wednesday for a new topic on writing-related tips, tricks, and news! This is available on Soundcloud every week! While you’re there, don’t forget to like and subscribe as well!

That will wrap up this month’s letter. Thank you all so much for the love, support and positive vibes you’re sending to APH. Elle and I appreciate it so much more than we could ever express. This year is going to be AMAZING and this journey is going to be incredible! So **AR**-buckle up for the ride! Stay safe, stay inspired and stay blessed! Have a great month!

Happy writing and happy reading!

Kayla Scutti and Elle Albano