



## Author Spotlight: Karen Tyrrell



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### Karen Tyrrell: Author

#### ***Karen, when did you know you wanted to be a writer?***

I became extremely ill when I was a bullied teacher. I wrote my personal story to help me heal. Now I write stories to help kids live strong.

#### ***Where do you write? Do you like to be by yourself in the quiet, or do you like to write in a noisy space?***

Hiking outside in the bush helps inspire fresh story ideas. Then I like a quiet place to write it all down.

#### ***What do you use to write – pencil and paper or computer?***

Pen and pencil to kick start a new story then I type up the words on the computer.

#### ***When do you write?***

Soon as I wake up and then after I return from a brisk walk. Anytime during the day when I feel inspired.

#### ***When do you get your ideas?***

When I least expect them. Story ideas come anywhere, everywhere, when I'm relaxed. I like my mind to wander, to see where a story idea leads. I always take a notebook along with me.

#### ***Do you think of the story in your head before you write it?***

YES! I visualize the ending first and then work the story backwards. The story idea develops in my head for weeks before I write it down.

#### ***What gave you the idea for Song Bird?***

My girl readers requested I create a book with a girl superhero.

[Song Bird Superhero](#) is based on my bullying experiences at school. Bullies ate away my self-confidence and self-esteem. Singing in the school choir inspired me to think positive and believe in myself.

***What do you like best about Song Bird?***

Song Bird is a FUN action-packed adventure that kids love. Rosie can't do anything right. She shatters windows when she sings. Her flying machines crash. Kids can't wait to find out how Rosie overcomes her problems.

***Do you like the illustrations?***

I love the cover illustrated by cartoonist and illustrator Trevor Salter. Inside I created FUN posters, signs and letters for kids to enjoy.

***How did your feel when you wrote Song Bird?***

I felt empowered, that I could write a story that allows a child to be anything, do anything, be anything.

***How do you hope readers will feel?***

Empowered and connected with the main character Rosella Ava Bird, her brainy side-kick Amy with a disability, or brave Ben with a stutter. I want to show even heroes have weaknesses.

***How would you like teachers to present Song Bird to children?***

Teachers read 2-3 chapters per day as an entertaining and proactive read-aloud book.

***Are there any messages you would like them to discuss?***

Bullied girl, Rosella Ava Bird, rises up to discover she can empower herself through singing, science, and believing in herself. She and two misfit friends, Ben and Amy, not only empower themselves but save their school. Song Bird has positive messages about believing in yourself, bully prevention, overcoming disabilities, smashing stereotypes, and girls can do anything especially science, engineering and maths.

***Do you have any advice for teachers in their role as writing guides?***

1. Ask class to predict what Song Bird is about.
2. Read 2 chapters to the class each day, following up with discussion on one of the theme topics; i.e. bullying, disability, self-belief, science fiction, STEM science.
3. Guide children to complete activities [downloadable](#) from my website.

***Do you have any advice for children as writers?***

1. Write every day.
2. Scribble down ideas in your notebook.
3. Day dream about your story: asking yourself what your main character would do next.

***What is your favourite picture book?***

I'm very proud of [Harry Help Grandpa Remember](#) with messages of hope for Alzheimer's. I think the pictures by Aaron Pocock are gorgeous.

***Who is your favourite author? What do you like about his or her work?***

I love Roald Dahl, whose books are entertaining page turners, jam-packed with positive messages, humour, and a vivid imagination.

To find out more about Karen, visit her website: [Karen Tyrrell Author](#)