Writing briefs that persuade and impress judges is no easy task. Most judges are overwhelmed with work and can’t afford to spend more time than needed with the filings that cross their desks. But a client’s litigation goals often depend on their attorney’s ability to get a judge’s attention and make concise, compelling arguments.

Reading legal documents should be painless. Upon opening a litigation brief, a judge should be able to immediately perceive its main arguments, then experience a sense of relief upon discovering that it includes a lucid, accurate, and easy-to-follow explanation of the relevant facts and law.

Three core principles underlie *Elegant Legal Writing*:

1. **Readability.** Judges and clients have limited time, attention span, and motivation to read legal documents. Attorneys should therefore cultivate a style that is concise and easy to read.

2. **Simplicity.** Legal writers should reduce complexity whenever possible, giving readers only the details they need.

3. **Aesthetics.** Attorneys should cultivate their ear for language and aim to write engaging and pleasant prose.
The word *elegance*, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “harmonious simplicity and tasteful appropriateness in the choice and arrangement of words,” captures these values.

This book collects insights and techniques that have resonated with me and my students. I’ve shared these lessons in continuing legal education seminars and writing courses at the UCLA School of Law and the LMU Loyola Law School, and I use them daily in my litigation practice. While mainly offering practical guidance for attorneys and law students—with chapters 7 through 9 relating specifically to litigation—*Elegant Legal Writing* can help anyone who writes for professional audiences.

Attorneys who write well project an image of expertise and win more cases. Studying prose techniques will make you a better advocate.