

barefootWriter

**7 Proven and Profitable
Writing Opportunities
to Pursue in 2017**

**Lessons from the
Language of Kings
Best Practices for
Email Signature Lines**

Barefoot Writer Ann Jamieson tours Italy
on horseback, shown here at Villa Ferraia, a
luxurious Tuscan villa that dates back to 1204

**PLUS: The Simplest Productivity Secret Ever • The 5 Best Tips
for Writing Your First E-book • Transformative Advice for
Your Writing Career • Never Forget Your Next Great Idea •
One Word That Will Change Your Life • 3 Ways to Win \$100**

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Living the Writer's Life Interviewee Gary Mull shown here with the "other keyboard" in his life (he has a bachelor's degree in piano performance)

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..... what you'll learn in this issue

One Word That Will Change Your Life



As we kick off 2017, I'd like to continue the tradition of encouraging you to pick a guiding word for your year.

I do this every year in lieu of making New Year's resolutions. Before I discovered this approach, I was among the 80% of people who make and then quickly break their resolutions.

But there's something about the power of a single word that can transform just about any activity, mindset, or roadblock.

Our January issue and kickoff into the New Year is also about transformation. You'll find inspiration in our roundup of best quotes from interviewees, easy writer hacks for seizing great ideas and staying productive, and insight into getting started on some of the most rewarding writing opportunities out there (check out our Barefoot Writing Opportunity for proof!).

Then, as you think about which direction you want to take your writing career, spend some time pondering the word that best represents your inten-

tions, your goals, and the way you want your career and life to play out in 2017. Some of my favorite guiding words from fellow writers in years past were *gratitude*, *courage*, *persistence*, and *joy*.

My word for 2017? It's *enough*. Because my goal is to feel, for the first time really, that what I have to offer is enough. That my training as a persuasive writer is enough... that the time I spend with my kids is enough... that the relationships I have with my friends and loved ones is enough. That in a world of accumulation and discontent, *I am enough*. That doesn't mean there's not room for improvement. It just means that who and what I am, right now, is enough. (Which is a strangely terrifying and simultaneously energizing thought!)

What about you? What's your word for the year? Please write and share it with me at mindy@the-barefootwriter.com.

To your best writing year ever!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mindy". The script is cursive and fluid.

Mindy McHorse
Executive Editor, *Barefoot Writer*

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Challenge Question: Write yourself a letter detailing what you'll achieve by this time next year...



Sheldon Gladstein ("Adieus and Adon'ts: Best Practices for Email Signature Lines") is on a mission to prove that content does not have to be doze-worthy to be effective. Whether with articles, case studies, white papers, or more, he gets a real kick out of writing material that makes you think, enjoy, laugh, share, and take action. No dozing allowed!

"In 2017, I'll be opening a case studies business focusing on sustainable companies called GreenSuccessStories. I intend to make that flourish and bloom, to be a super green success story in itself."

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Former ESL instructor, **Lee Nourse** ("The Best Advice I Ever Got"), felt elated when a 2014 layoff was imminent at the college that employed her. It was an opportunity to pursue *the writer's life*. That was followed by a serendipitous moment, the AWAI promo "If you can write a letter like this...", which steered her into AWAI's arms. As her *writer's life* develops, Lee plans to resume screenwriting once her client base is strong.

"2017 is my target year for substantial growth, both economically and professionally. I hope that with my increased LinkedIn activity and a press release due to be published online in December, I'll start building momentum. I look forward to establishing authentic relationships with strong prospects, some of whom will become dedicated clients. Ideally, that will include three monthly retainers. Finally, with the establishment of a good income flow, I'd like to go to one or two awesome copywriting events in addition to Bootcamp '17."



Shawn Maus ("Strike Up the Band and Strike Up Some Glicken!") is a multifaceted and enthusiastic creative/strategic partner in the marketing and content creation fields. He has produced three short films (including indie film circuit favorite *Living Under Linda's Desk*), has written numerous theatrical plays, and is a freelance photographer. He is the cofounder and artistic director of the Cincinnati Radio Actors Theatre and is currently the VP of communications for The Children's Home of Cincinnati.

"My goal for this year is to complete the draft of my play about Ruth Rowland Nichols, The Flying Debutante."

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Barefoot Writers Come From All Walks Of Life ...

When Passion + Persistence = Solid Earning Skills

Mary Rose Maguire has done what many writers hope to do, but without getting sidetracked along the way. It started when she linked up with AWAI and saw how copywriting could marry her love for writing with her past work experience. From that, she's built a smart career that includes reaching out to others and getting noticed for her work. Find out how she did it, below.

Tell us about your background.

Like many other writers, my passion for words began years ago. I wrote for my high school newspaper, college newspaper, and college magazine. I contributed to company newsletters and church bulletins. Blogging became popular in the mid-90s, and I soon opened a Typepad account and filled it with posts.

In 2010, I discovered AWAI, devoured its online articles, and attended the AWAI Bootcamp and Job Fair in 2012. As part of the registration that year, AWAI offered training on landing clients through using online job boards. I signed up with oDesk (now Upworks) and learned to create proposals for potential clients.

What kind of writing do you do?

I started my professional copywriting business on the side in 2010 and went full-time in 2012. Information security was the easiest industry to



Mary and her husband, Mickey, enjoy the Renaissance period and dressed up for an event at Ravenwood castle (a "castle" in New Plymouth, Ohio)

break into since I was a marketing manager for an information security company prior to launching full-time as a copywriter.

I began with web copy projects. Then I expanded my client list to include other industries, such as insurance benefit brokers. I've written landing pages, squeeze pages, sell sheets, case studies, and brochures.

I've also written white papers, email marketing, and print ads. In addition, I have graphic design skills that have allowed me to add format and design to print marketing collateral.

Besides copywriting, what other work do you do for clients?

I offer other services such as web audits and brand message development. I'm also a digital marketing consultant and have created a program that introduces clients to email marketing.

I also speak at local networking groups about copywriting, email marketing, and developing a content marketing strategy that is in alignment with the sales process. I thoroughly enjoy introducing a business to the power of a strong story and showing them how to leverage online marketing tactics, such as email marketing — to increase customer engagement and sales.

FACT FILE

Mary Rose Maguire

Previous Job: Marketing Manager for an information security company

Current Writing Interest: Product catalog for a seasoning company

Best Part of Barefoot Living: Not having to deal with the horrendous rush hour traffic

Top Advice: Don't rely on online sites to get new business. Attend local networking groups. Also call people. It's nice to hear a voice when you work in relative isolation.

What works when it comes to marketing yourself?

Although I've tried direct mail and cold calling, the best marketing approach for me has been networking. I've attended professional group meetings, coworking days at local office buildings (where entrepreneurs gather for a day to work and network), and live events. I always ask people about their work first, and when they ask what I do, I tell them I write marketing material for businesses.

Can you pinpoint the place where your business took off?

In February 2013, I wrote a blog post about Elance. It was more of a rant than anything else. It's also one of the most popular blog posts on my site and has received 44,489 unique pageviews. For a while, it was in Google's top five search results if you typed in *Elance reviews*.

While doing research, an agency owner found my blog post. He contacted me to see if I'd be interested in working on some freelance writing projects. I ended up writing an e-book for his site, several ghostwritten blog posts, web copy, and did some proofreading.

In 2013, I increased the frequency of updating my blog and launched a bimonthly e-newsletter. That newsletter brought in \$10,821.34 in sales between Q2/13 to Q2/14.

One client from 2012 said he wouldn't have thought about me unless he had received the newsletter. As a result, he reached out to hire me for more projects. That was nice!

Any big success stories?

My biggest success story happened in 2014 when I was hired by an enterprise-level IT company that serves Fortune 500 and Fortune 100 companies. It was for a huge project: the redesign of its web-site. I was hired to work on the web copy for 77 web pages.

The project was worth five figures and was the

largest (and highest-paid) project I had worked on. I was part of a large team — six different product-marketing managers, a project manager, the creative director who hired me, and his boss, the V.P. of Marketing.

The secret behind that success was rather straightforward — I was introduced to the creative director by a mutual acquaintance. And the mutual acquaintance was someone I had just met on LinkedIn when he sent me a connection request.

What's one thing about you that others find surprising?

I've been told it's my "feisty Sicilian side!" I don't have a Sicilian background, but my mother's side of the family did come from Italy. I'm fairly even-keeled with my personality, so when the feistiness comes out, people are a little surprised.

I also love films made from Marvel comics (especially *Daredevil* and *Captain America*).

This Writer's Delayed Ambition Has Officially Come into Season

Gary Mull has lived the story many Barefoot Writers experience — where excitement to launch the writer's life gets put on hold by the realities of life in general. But that didn't keep Gary down, and now he's ready to tackle his copywriting dream with gusto and an admirable level of focus and organization. Find out what he's doing to move forward, fast.

How did you find your way to copywriting?

I received AWAI's mailing of "[Can You Write a Letter Like This One?](#)" in 2005. I'd never heard of copywriting before that. I dove in and went to AWAI's Bootcamp in 2006. I came home with ambitious plans... then got frighteningly sick a week later. I had to drop just about everything except my full-time job due to chronic fatigue that ended up lasting six months. I picked copywriting up again in 2010 and created my website. Then I dropped it again, probably because I was overwhelmed by everything I'd have to do and afraid I'd fail.

Then in January 2015, I received an email inviting me to join [B2B Writing Success](#). That email put copywriting in my face again, and I did some serious soul-searching with a now-or-never attitude. I decided "now" and haven't allowed myself to second-guess that decision.

My niche is B2B with a focus on the healthcare information technology (IT) industry. It matches my background.

So you work full-time at another job?

I do! I work on the Electronic Health Record (EHR) project team at the University of Michigan Health System. This is the seventh healthcare IT job I've had at three organizations over the past 29 years.

You've had a lot of success very quickly! What do you do to market yourself?

I took almost a year laying groundwork by developing my website, LinkedIn profile, elevator speech, rate sheet, and templates for quotes and creative briefs. I read several classic copywriting books and completed several AWAI programs,



Gary's three pugs are always happy when he takes a break from writing

including — after 10 years — the *Accelerated* course. 10 years! I also joined the local Chamber of Commerce.

But the trigger to launch my business was Steve Slaunwhite's "Secrets of Writing High Performance B2B Copy" companion series training. I knew I'd be ready to start promoting myself to my niche after I completed it.

I started in January 2016. I made a list of over 100 companies for whom I'd like to work, then picked one and used LinkedIn to find the marketing manager, and spent an hour on the company website. I wrote a self-promotion letter, customized for that company, and mailed it to the marketing manager. Then I repeated the process with other companies, mailing two letters per week starting in January. The very first letter brought me my first paying client in my niche. That was crazy. And a little scary, because I wasn't sure I was ready. But I'd already jumped.

Do you have any skills from your work or your past that help you with your writing?

Absolutely. Working in a professional setting for 29 years gave me confidence that I can interact with the managers and directors to whom I'm marketing myself. It also gives me confidence

that I can write for a smart and discerning audience. I wouldn't have tried this 20 years ago.

Also, I've played the piano for 44 years. The discipline required to master a musical instrument is similar to the discipline required to learn copywriting. I find it helpful to have been down a road like this before. I know what I'm up against, and I know it's doable.

With a full-time job and a growing freelance career, you have to make the most of your time. How do you stay organized?

Every Saturday night, I set goals for how many hours I want to spend on various copywriting activities the next week. My current clients get the biggest chunks of time. Study and self-promo come next. I typically schedule around 25 hours per week. Also, every night, I plan my next day as best I can. I schedule 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute blocks for everything I need to do outside of my day job. Whether it's writing for a client, listening to a podcast, sending new LinkedIn connection requests, mowing my lawn, or exercising — I schedule it. And I write or study for 90 minutes before going to work in the morning.

What are your plans for the future?

I have 22 years in at my full-time job. I'm hoping to build my copywriting business over the next three years so I can retire when I get to 25 years. Then I'll jump to copywriting full-time. The *real* writer's life!

If you could have any superpower, which one would you would want?

I loved Aquaman when I was a kid, so I always thought it'd be cool to be able to breathe underwater. But as I think about it, I've had an annoying deep-seated fear of deep water since seeing *Jaws* when I was 10 years old. I wouldn't be able to enjoy my underwater breathing powers. That said, I'd love to be able to run veryveryvery fast. I'd play softball all by myself. Catch bad guys. Taunt Indy 500 drivers. You know, stuff like that. ■

FACT FILE

Gary Mull

Current Job: Software Developer at the University of Michigan Health System

Current Writing Interest: B2B website for a guy who left a Healthcare IT consulting company to start his own.

Best Part of Barefoot Living: Being able to say no to jobs that aren't right for me

Top Advice: Decide what's the single most important thing you need to complete next to get your business going.

2017

70 Writing Experts and Counting... Who Will Be *Your* Game Changer?

By Mindy McHorse

Over the past five years, I've had the absolute privilege of interviewing dozens of extraordinary writers. From award-winning authors to marketing gurus to international travel writing buffs, the array of talent we've featured in this magazine is staggering.

Granted, that's what we're known for. What you may not realize is just how very *normal* these prominent experts really are. And I say that from my unique vantage point of having been able to speak with them directly. But here's a confession: In my early years as editor, I began each interview shaken with nerves, overwhelmed by the clout of the person I needed to interview. And every time, the writer on the other end of the line was humble, generous with advice, and forthright about the struggles he or she faced before finding success.

It's proof that if you're just starting out or working to expand your writing business, you very well could achieve whatever you put your mind to. *You* could become the go-to copywriter in your industry of choice, like white-paper expert Gordon Graham. *You* could write the next award-winning novel, like *New York Times* bestselling author J.F. Penn. *You* could launch a digital platform that enriches and changes others' lives, like Brian Clark of Copyblogger.

As 2017 kicks off, I urge you to let the following quotes inspire and move you toward action.

Remember — you write your own success. And, hopefully, some of the advice you're about to read will help you not only get started, but move forward throughout the year with profound achievement.



Bob Bly, Master Copywriter, Mentor, and Bestselling Author

If you were starting out as a copywriter today — unsure of where your true skill sets lie... what industry niche would you explore first?

Here's what I did, and maybe it's not a bad way to start today. I worked for a year without any specialty or niche, per se. And after a year, I piled all the copy I had written into categories. I looked at the stack that was the biggest and decided that was going to be my specialty. Obviously, I enjoy it... I have a lot of samples... and I have a client list.

There's another thing you can do. You want to do a self-evaluation — and I have a checklist for this in my book *How to Write and Sell Simple Information for Fun and Profit*. You want to ask yourself five things: What do I know... what do I like... what am I interested in... what do I have an aptitude for... and what excites me? And when you answer those questions, you're going to come up with a list of items.

Then you have to go through that list and find something people are willing to pay for. Aristotle said words to the effect, "Where your interests intersect with the needs of the public, therein lies your vocation." So you go through that list and you look for something you can use. Maybe there's *Peruvian poetry* on your list. You know nobody is going to pay you for that. But maybe *pet care* is on the list, too — someone will pay you for that.



Dianna Huff, B2B Writer and Marketing & Website Consultant

What's your secret to getting noticed above all the other bloggers and marketers out there?

I think it's just consistency. I've been writing ever since I got into business. I've always done an e-newsletter. I do my blog posts, I'm active on Twitter, I'm active on Facebook. I get out and meet people. I network. Now, I don't do as much as I used to because my son is older, so a lot of my free time is spent driving him all over the place.

But I think most of it is just getting out there and taking a genuine interest in people and talking to others and promoting the stuff they're doing. And as Bob Bly says, "just being a nice person."



John Forde, Internationally Based, Award-Winning Six-Figure Copywriter

For those brand new to the idea of writing for a living, what step do you recommend they take first?

Read. First, last, and middle. The quality of what you put out depends substantially on what you put in. It's also going to help lead you to the *kind* of writing you think you'd like to do most. But also, make sure that you get a project — one you'll be accountable for to somebody else, preferably the person who will pay you to do it — and *start writing*. A lot of writers forget the obvious: if you're not writing anything... you don't get to carry the title. Even a small project is OK. You've got to get out there.



Joanna Penn, *New York Times* and *USA Today* Bestselling Author, Speaker & Entrepreneur

What was the first step you took in getting your name out there and building recognition and a following?

I sold about 100 copies of my first nonfiction book before I understood that I needed to learn marketing! Seriously, it took a while for the penny to drop. So, first I tried traditional media. I did press releases and made it onto national TV, radio, and newspapers, but still no impact. So after eight months of that, I went online and learned about blogging because of the ability to have incoming links over time.

TheCreativePenn.com was my third blog; the other two fell by the wayside. I understood content marketing from the start, so I was happy to write and be useful and see what happened. I still recommend blogging as my #1 long-term marketing strategy, along with building an email list.

Then I started a podcast, mainly to learn from experts and share what I was learning with others. The next step was discovering Twitter and then video blogging. I think that the multimedia channels of audio and video probably have helped me stand out in a crowded text-based market. But each step had a few months in between as I learned and investigated. Tools change, but I've basically kept to the same principle — be useful, interesting, and consistent over time.



Chris Baty, Author and Founder of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)

What would you say to somebody starting a novel for the first time?

I would say that everybody has a novel in them. In fact, everybody has *dozens* of novels in them. And the secret is just having faith that you can pull this off because you *can*. Just knowing you can do it is the most important thing. I never would've thought that I had a novel in me, and now I've written 15 first drafts, and I've revised a bunch of them, and I love it. There's nothing I love more. And I never would have known I could do that if I hadn't tried this. So just know that you can do it and know that it's important.



Becky Masterman, Award-Winning Author

What's your top advice for someone who wants to get published someday, regardless of the type of book?

Read, read, read. Did you know Stephen King reads about 80 books a year? And be grateful for criticism. Use it to become a better writer. Praise is useless.



Clayton Makepeace, Million-Dollar Direct-Response Copywriter

What's your tip for writers who are afraid of failure?

I've had to get over fear many times in my career. Getting over fear is easy and also difficult. It's easy in that the solution is simple: You just feel the fear, and you do the thing anyway. That's what courage is. Courage is not the absence of fear, it's the commitment to do what's required regardless of the fear.

If you want something badly enough in your life, if you have a vivid picture in your mind of what it is you want, and you use that picture every single day as the thing that motivates you and gets you to work and keeps you at your desk when other people would be quitting — that will help you get through because it's more important than any fear of failure you could have.

I had a person tell me once that nothing *tastes* as good as thin *feels*. They tell that to people who are trying to lose weight. So I say, nothing feels as good as working through failure, working through fear, and achieving your goals. If it was easy, there wouldn't be any satisfaction in that. It's the old thing, the "journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." You've just got to do it, you've just got to take that step.



Mary Jaksch, Writer and Owner of the Write to Done Blog

What kind of practice writing exercises do you recommend?

I think just to leave time each day — even if it's just 10 minutes of free-writing — is a good thing.

A good way to do that is to have a notebook — one that you like. I mean, I like notebooks, but I'm quite specific about which notebooks I want to use. I have to enjoy handling the notebook. And I open it. Then, for 10 minutes, I just free-write. I start with an empty page. And it really doesn't matter what you put in it. If you're feeling blocked, you might just repeat one word for a whole page — it doesn't matter. But at some stage during those 10 minutes that you write without stopping and without correcting, something will come out of you. You will start to associate, and your creativity will wake up. Suddenly, there will be words on the pages, and you will be surprised. It's a simple way to practice.



Gordon Graham, White Paper and B2B Communications Expert

What is one of the best things about a writing career?

There's no expiration date for writers. I've seen people who want to write make comments like, "I'm 60 and need more money," and I want them to know there's still hope. If they were 60 and wanted to become a landscape gardener or something more physical, that might be tougher. But not so with writing. Being a writer, I'll be able to write when I'm an old geezer. I'll be able to write as long as I have my faculties. I could be in a wheelchair, I could have one arm, I could have no arms and use voice recognition software. I'll be able to write as long as I can kind of draw a breath, so I think that's what's really cool about this profession.



Ann Handley, Best-Selling Author and Chief Content Officer for MarketingProfs

What tips can you give new writers for crafting a prospect-oriented message?

First, barf up your first draft. Write what you want to write — just barf up The Ugly First Draft (*TUFD*) with no regard to audience or reader (or readability or grammar). The important thing is to just put something up.

Second, reframe. Go back and edit what you've written. But this time, put your readers into it. Swap places with your readers — and read your piece from their point of view: Why does it matter to them?

Remember the advice of writing teacher Donald Murray: "No one turns the page because of a hunger to applaud."

To figure out why it matters to your reader, ask yourself "So what?" and then answer, "Because..." Repeat that "So what/Because" query-and-response string as many times as necessary — until you've exhausted any ability to come up with an answer. Then express your reframed idea as a clear message to your readers.

Third, write to one person. Imagine the one person you're helping with your piece of writing. And then write directly to that person.



Brian Clark, Writer and Founder/CEO of Rainmaker Digital (formerly Copyblogger Media)

What's one copywriting tip you can share that's improved your skills?

Just never ever close yourself off to learning from someone who's good at what they do. For example, what Clayton Makepeace does and what I do are very different in many ways. But I view it as fundamentally similar; it's just our contexts are different. He writes for different industries, and I've learned everything that man has been willing to throw at me, even though, in application, what I do looks very different. People don't see things as the same; they're always talking about how things are different, and I think that hurts people.

I've never closed off learning from anyone. Even people whose marketing tactics or ethics I don't necessarily admire, I still watch what they do. I'm like, "Well, I wouldn't apply it that way, but fundamentally there's nothing wrong with this approach if it's done in a different context."

So, my best advice is to learn from everyone, pay attention, and ask why things are working. Don't just grab, swipe files, and copy people. Understand why it's working, and then make it your own. And that's how you really learn to succeed.



Carol Tice, Six-Figure Freelance Writer, Journalist, Blogger, and Writing Mentor

What's your favorite way to market your services?

My favorite marketing tools are the ones that market for me, and I don't have to do anything. So, great passive marketing tools are my website and LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn landed me four different Fortune 500 clients — and *they* approached *me*.

If you update your writer website frequently and have keywords in it, it works. My key term is "Seattle freelance writer." I highly recommend everyone do their keyword search, see who's on there, and get to know those other people at the top of your city search or keyword term for whatever you're trying to rank for. You want to know who's up there and find out where they network because they know something.



Sean D'Souza, Copywriter and Author

What is the number one thing new writers do wrong when getting ready to launch a freelance career?

New writers give up too easily. They want success too quickly. Everyone promises that you will get this half million dollars and two million dollars and 100,000 subscribers, yet most people never give you the background of how that is supposed to happen. Maybe it's true; maybe you will earn X number of hundreds of thousands of dollars, but you also need the understanding of how to do it. For example, for a writer to be able to get subscribers, you have to network a lot. You have to do a lot of stuff in the background that has nothing to do with writing. The second thing is you definitely need to give yourself time to succeed. It's too easy to think that just because you showed up everyone's going to love your stuff.



Ilise Benun, Author and Marketing Mentor

What is an area where creative people lack business savvy?

Pricing is definitely one of them. Just the whole money part. It's not even a lack of business savvy; the problem starts before that. For some reason, creative people think they're bad at it, like they can't do it, they're incapable. I don't think that's true. It's just a belief. With training, you can learn. It's simple. *Marketing* is kind of the jargon for one of the other things I think people don't learn about, which is how to toot your own horn without bragging. I think those two things get confused a lot.

But there is a way to spread the word about what you do, and who you do it for, that you develop as your own style. That speaks to, and resonates with, the people who will hear it. Not everyone, but only the people who need it. That circles you back to taking responsibility and being in control of your business — and really enjoying life as a freelancer.



Nick Usborne, Online Copywriter, Author, and Speaker

What is the most common challenge of aspiring writers, and how can they overcome it?

This isn't true of all writers, but for many, the challenge lies in putting their foot on the gas and pushing the pedal to the metal. Freelancers, particularly when they are starting out, tend to be cautious. They dip their toes in the water. They are scared of making mistakes. Also, many feel they are not ready, or not "worthy." They worry that clients will ask them questions they can't answer or give them assignments they don't feel ready for.

My advice to them comes in two parts. First, I tell them they ARE ready. Their clients are not experts in writing, copywriting, designing, coding, or whatever other specialty skill the freelancer offers. Their clients have other responsibilities to worry about. So, almost any freelancer, even when starting out, has some real value to offer his or her own clients. Most are ready and worthy well before they finally recognize it.

Next, I encourage writers to push the pedal to the metal and really commit. Just do it! After all, what is the worst that can happen? A prospect might say no. Or, a job you do might not be the massive winner you hoped it would be. But, so what? You push past these things. You shrug off the times people say no, or when a project bombs. You just keep pushing forward. You cannot succeed unless you build up a powerful forward momentum. You can't make six figures by just dipping your toe in the water and being cautious.

the barefoot writing challenge



Congratulations to the Winner of the December Barefoot Writing Challenge!

Last month's Challenge was to write an essay that answered this question:

You have the chance to go back in time and give advice to yourself when you were just beginning as a writer. What will you tell yourself?

Hindsight is golden, and most of you shared terrific (not to mention humorous!) advice to your younger selves on what *not* to do when launching a writing career.

But there was one submission that stood out thanks to an important lesson the writer learned about moving forward despite a stinging setback.

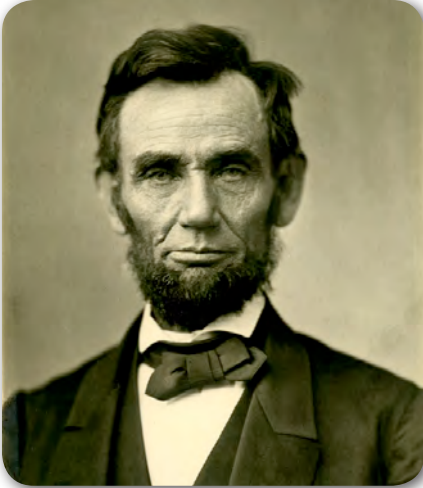
Go to our [Barefoot Writing Challenge Winners Page](#) to see who won!

Win \$100 if Your Essay is Chosen in Our January 2017 Challenge:

Write yourself a letter detailing what you'll achieve by this time next year.

Send your entries to Contest@TheBarefootWriter.com by midnight ET on **January 18th**.

The Barefoot Writer team will award the winning entry \$100! Please submit entries as a **Microsoft Word attachment** and limit your essay to **500 words or less**.



Lessons from the Language of Kings: What **Abe Lincoln, JFK,** **Reagan, Obama,** and **MLK** Can Teach You about Writing Copy

By John Forde

"Look wise, say nothing, and grunt."

— Sir William Osler

One August day, a guy went to Washington and gave a speech. It lasted only 16 minutes. Yet it was so powerful, we're still talking about it today.

This, of course, was Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, which helped change the course of nearly two centuries of American history.

A few years before, and with snow on the ground, a "kid" from Boston got up to accept his four-year hall pass for the White House.

"Ask not what your country can do for you," he said, "but what you can do for your country." This was JFK in what was the fourth shortest inaugural address, and among the most memorable.

Even further back, you've got Lincoln giving a

two-minute speech that was so good we carved it into a giant stone memorial.

With words, they all made history.

Of course, they also made people do things. Not unlike, by the way, you hope to do with the words in your sales copy.

So it begs the question: is there anything great speakers know that we could "steal" to use in print?

The answer, of course, yes there is.

Recently, rhetoric expert Max Atkinson wrote about some of these great secrets in an article for the BBC.

Let's take a look at what he found...

JFK and the Power of Contrasts

No doubt you've heard bits of the "Ask not... "

inaugural speech I mentioned earlier. What you might not know, however, is how much the success of that speech depended on a couple of 2,000-year-old rhetorical insights.



The first is a no-brainer: *alliteration*.

This is where you use the same letter sounds to start off closely connected words. Used well, this can make words flow. But be careful. Too much, and your writing will start to sound like a tongue twister or a nursery rhyme.

It might be better for us to borrow Kennedy's other trick, the *Power of Contrasts*.

With this one, you're pitting two contrasting ideas against each other. It's like trying to force together magnets. The way one idea pushes against the other, it increases emphasis.

The "Ask not" line is one good example. Another is, "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate." Or, "Signifying renewal as well as change."

In fact, in this one 14-minute speech, Kennedy averaged a contrast every 39 seconds. And you can bet not one of those contrasts was an accident.

How to use this concept in copy? Try lines that take readers from the problem they don't want to

the solution they do want, all in one phrase; e.g., "Imagine not just getting by on Social Security, but socking away retirement income faster than you spend it." Or, "No more stiff knuckles, just pain-free mornings."

Mark Antony and Audience Targeting

We'll credit this next trick — as Atkinson does — to Shakespeare's version of Mark Antony, who asked his "Friends, Romans, [and his] Countrymen" to lend him their ears.

But you could look to Kennedy for this one, too, since he was a master at using audience-targeting phrases. And, remember, Kennedy was doing this just as television was giving leaders access to living rooms worldwide.

How to use in copy? Talk to your prospects like you understand who they are. What do you know about them?

One thing you know, or hope you do, is what kinds of solutions and products your readers are interested in. And maybe what problems they'd like to solve. So use that as identifying information, even at the start of your letter.

As in, "Dear Worried Investor," "Dear Future Homeowner," or an odd twist that might fit, like "Dear Lucky Parent" or "Dear Animal Lover" at the top of a fundraising letter.

And then try to continue showing how you understand where your audience is right now, throughout the sales letter.

Ron and the Rhetorical Anecdote

Maybe it was his acting background, but Ronald Reagan leaned hard on his storytelling skills at the podium.

Whatever the occasion, the "Great Communicator" seemed to have a folksy tale in his kit bag.

Like all great storytellers, he kept the language

colorful but simple. And held off just long enough on the big finish.

It's worth mentioning, by the way, that Reagan spent a lot of time polishing his persuasive speaking style... as a traveling pitchman for General Electric.



It's also worth mentioning, the actor in Reagan understood the value of plainspoken passion, even when others didn't.

For instance, his own speech-writing team didn't like a line he'd written into his famous Brandenburg Gate speech in 1987. But he used it anyway: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

How to use in copy? This couldn't be easier. When you can, tell good stories. By "good," I mean relatable, relevant tales — tightly told — that both draw your readers' attention and relate something about your sales message, usually in an easy, even subtle, way.

Obama and the Triple Whammy

Love him or hate him, there's no doubt Obama has delivered some landmark speeches. And like Reagan, he also uses the storytelling secret. More often, though, Obama likes to rely on the "Power of Three."

You've probably heard about this before, and it's a simple idea. In short, when you offer lists of anything, list them in threes.



Why? Because there's something that just feels complete about that number. For instance, in Obama's election victory speech in Chicago, he spoke for 10 minutes and gave three-part lists 29 times.

How to use in copy? This one is pretty simple, too.

When you make a key point, try to give three very good and different kinds of proof in its support.

When you break away for testimonials, try giving three of those in a row, too.

Or when you give a list of examples — like this one — also see how the rhythm feels when you limit it to threes.

America's Version of "The King's Speech"

Of course, no list of rhetorical razzle-dazzle would be complete without looking at the speech we used to open up this conversation, the "I Have a Dream" speech delivered by Martin Luther King.

What made it such a landmark hit?

After all, King was only 34 years old when he

delivered it. In addition, he was black at a time when that wasn't so easy in America. Of course, on the plus side, King was also a preacher. So when it came to banging pulpits and saying big things, he was already a seasoned pontificator.

What you might not know, however, was that the most quoted part of the speech wasn't supposed to be included.

King's aides and advisors even told him to cut the "I Have a Dream" section, because he'd already used it in 25 other speeches and sermons.

But King decided otherwise. He added it back into his speech as his killer finish. And he did it on the fly.

The speaking device we now remember him using is called an *anaphora*, which is what you get when you repeat words in phrases, in a deliberate pattern.

King used the "I Have a Dream" phrase to re-emphasize a point. All told, he used that and other anaphora patterns eight times in the same speech.

In fact, King loved writing with repetition to make his point. Consider, one of the most common words in his speech was *freedom*. He repeated it 20 times.

The next most frequently used words were *our* (used 17 times), *nation* (used 10 times), followed by *justice* (used eight times).

To top it off, King used lots of vivid imagery, strong contrasts, and allusions, just like so many other famous speakers.

How to use in copy? You probably already know

that it can pay to find different ways to repeat your biggest promise throughout a message.



You even can set up a rhythm like King did with his simple repeated "I Have a Dream." That is, instead of writing bulleted lists, try using phrase repetition at the start of subsequent paragraphs.

For example, "If you travel a lot, this membership is certainly for you, because..." and "If your children travel with you, this membership is also for you," and "Even if you just like to save money, this membership might be for you, because..."

You get the point.

In short, there's a reason speeches can change things. Simply put, it's because — like the sales copy you write — they're purposefully engineered for persuasion. As long as they're stealing from us to achieve their goals, why not borrow back a little bit ourselves? Am I right? ■

Whenever I have doubts or get discouraged, all I have to do is read an issue of *Barefoot Writer*, and suddenly I feel like anything's possible again. It's like an Optimism Vitamin. Your enthusiasm and good cheer are infectious, and that's especially important to newbies like me. So thank you to everyone at *Barefoot Writer* for putting out such great content month after month. — Renee Gamache

reader poll



Here are your December Poll Results! We asked:

Which word or phrase below BEST describes your writing efforts for 2016?

30%

Still have a lot to learn

24%

Life-changing

20%

Motivating

11%

**Frustrating;
Challenging**

3%

Profitable

1%

Satisfying

Additional Responses:

- Progress.
- Determined. More determined than ever to use my writing skills to accomplish where I want to be in life.
- Shot from a cannon into glorious writer's space.
- Eye-opening. With how much I thought I knew and how far I have to go. Also, I can do this if I keep pressing forward and never give up.

CONGRATULATIONS to Ed Daniele, winner of the December drawing for a \$100 Amazon.com Gift Card!



Answer this month's Reader Poll question for your chance to win a \$100 Amazon.com Gift Card!

Instead of making a New Year's Resolution, what one word would you choose to guide your personal and/or professional writing pursuits for the coming year?

Click here to let us know your choice.

Vote Today

Click here for an EXCLUSIVE Member Bonus:

Get further insight into how and why you should choose a guiding word for your writing aspirations in the New Year.



7 **Proven** and **Profitable** Writing Opportunities to Pursue in 2017



By Rebecca Matter

Welcome to 2017! If you're looking to kick your writing career into high gear, it's time to make a plan. Where will you focus your efforts? What kinds of projects would you like to take on?

To help you get started, I've compiled a list of seven writing opportunities I would recommend you consider this year...

A few are oldies but goodies. And some of them might be completely new to you. But your fellow Barefoot Writers have proven that all of them are lucrative ways to earn a great living through writing.

Remember, there are LOTS of ways to make money as a writer. But the long, long list of options can sometimes cause you to freeze. So I've narrowed down the choices to seven opportunities that are all terrific, low-pressure places to start.

I've also included links to relevant AWAI training programs in case you want to learn even more. Each of our sales letters offers a great in-depth

look at an opportunity... we've done all the research for you!

Let's dive in...

1. Selling Without Selling

Content Marketing is the foundation of good business: providing useful information to customers. Businesses use Content Marketing to establish themselves as an authority in their market, and to build trust with their readers. So while this isn't a new concept — many companies are just now beginning to see that they *need* content to maintain relationships with customers. And how big of a role content can play in a sale... even though the content itself won't do any selling of its own.

In Content Marketing, you'll write e-letters, free reports, articles, blogs, web pages, even social media posts. You'll have a lot of variety in your work, because there's no one-size-fits-all solution for every company.

Because of the wide range of projects that make up Content Marketing, your potential income depends on what you do. Here are a few examples: Writing content runs \$100 to \$500 for an article, a short video script, or an infographic. Planning a content calendar for your client could bring anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on how much content you plan. Special reports can net you \$500 to \$3,000 each.



You can learn more about Content Marketing and how to become an expert level content writer and strategist with [*Content Mastery: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a Highly Paid Content Marketing Strategist*](#). This program, by content leader Brian Clark, covers everything you need to know to get started, and how you can use those skills to help your clients — or in your own business.

2. Using the Storyteller in You

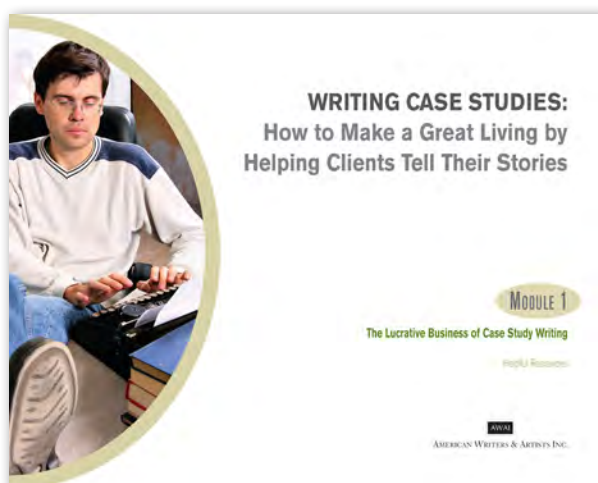
Case Studies are short stories about a company's product or service and how it solved a customer's problem. They tap into our natural love of stories and build trust with readers, so they'll be more likely to buy.

When you write a Case Study, you'll first interview the subject of the study, your client's customer. After you get their story, you'll follow one of

several simple formulas to write the Case Study. Written Case Studies are usually two pages long, and may be dressed up by a graphic designer to create an attractive package.

Case Studies are simple to write because they follow proven formulas. And you'll get faster with practice. Plus, you'll rarely be hired to write just one. Companies will usually want several at a time. That's great news for writers! (Last year, I personally hired a case study writer to create 52 of them. She's on number 37 right now! [Check out her work here.](#))

But along with the demand, the fees are exciting too. A new writer can expect to make \$1,000 or more per study. Experienced Case Study writers can charge as much as \$2,000 each, for about eight hours or so of work. And you can expand your fees even more by offering add-on services such as pulling out quotes for social media posts, or writing press releases.



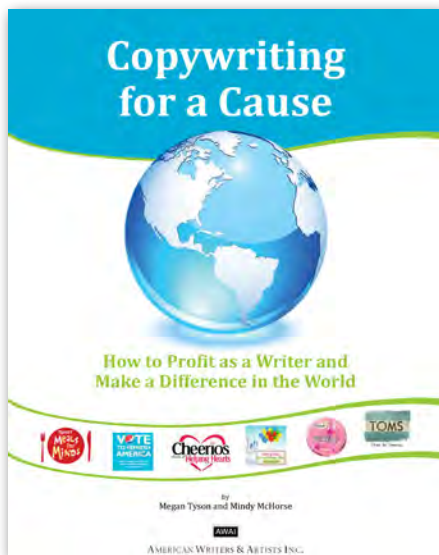
Learn more about writing Case Studies with AWAI's program [*Writing Case Studies: How to Make a Great Living Helping Clients Tell Their Stories*](#). This program, by B2B and case study expert Ed Gandia, tells you everything you need to know, including how to conduct interviews, a step-by-step process for writing a Case Study, and how to bring in all the Case Study clients you want.

3. Write, Earn, and Change the World

Cause Marketing lets you earn a good living while you raise money for a good cause. This is a booming writing opportunity that brings in over \$2 billion annually and continues to grow year after year. That's because people want to do business with companies who give back, not companies who are only interested in chasing profits.

In Cause Marketing, you'll do the same type of writing projects as you would for any company, only you're writing to bring in donations for the cause, instead of profits. You could be writing email newsletters, sales letters, autoresponders, blog posts, articles, social media posts, web pages, brochures, and more.

Your potential income is about on par with other copywriting projects. If you're writing for larger, more established organizations, expect the same project fees as you would from any other company. Or, you can write for a for-profit industry, then "donate" some of your time to help smaller groups in need, or for any cause near and dear to your heart.

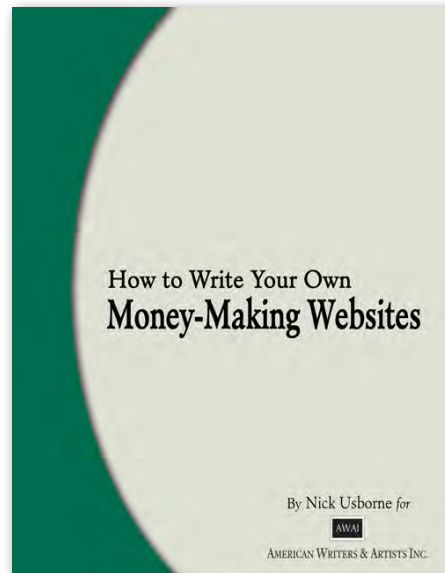


Find out more about this opportunity with [*Copywriting for a Cause: How to Profit as a Writer and Make a Difference in the World*](#), by Mindy McHorse

and Megan Tyson King. You'll learn secrets such as the most powerful words and emotions to use, the psychological factors to focus on, and what elements you need to run a successful cause campaign.

4. Write About Your Interests and Create a Passive Income Stream

A Money-Making Website is an informational website written on a topic you're interested in. This is a way to make money without ever writing for clients. All you need to get started is a computer and a topic to write about. Then it's a matter of setting up a simple website, writing content to attract visitors, and monetizing it.



Writing a Money-Making Website isn't complex. You can literally have your website up and running in just a few minutes, then start writing content. This is something you can do entirely by yourself, without outside help.

The thing to remember is that a Money-Making Website is not a "get rich quick" project. Rather, it's a slow income generator that can grow massive over time and will continue to pay out month after month.

It's impossible to say for sure what your income

from a Money-Making Website will be, but one thing is certain: how much you profit depends on how much effort you put in. Your income will increase as you add more content to your website — and as you create more Money-Making Websites.

One example of a Money-Making Website, Nick Osborne's coffee site at CoffeeDetective.com, makes somewhere between \$2,500 and \$6,500 a month, depending on the season.

Nick Osborne's [*How to Write Your Own Money-Making Websites*](#) gives you step-by-step instructions on how to turn your interest into a website that could generate hundreds, even thousands of dollars in passive income each month.

5. Become a Published Author this Year

Most people think Self-Publishing is publishing their own book instead of going through a traditional publisher. But really, it's a much bigger opportunity...

The real money in self-publishing is writing and publishing information pieces that are of interest to an audience willing to pay for them. And since it's a process you can repeat over and over, money comes in year after year.

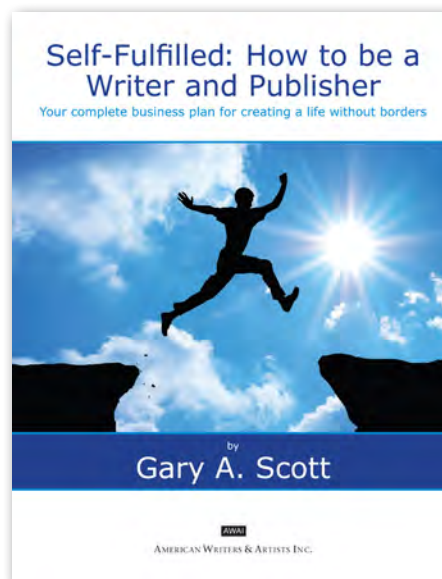
You can self-publish any number of formats, including newsletters, calendars, e-books, reports, cookbooks, DVDs, training programs, pamphlets, and how-to programs. Basically, if you can dream it up and write it, you can publish and sell it.

Self-Publishing can also build your own credibility as an expert on a particular topic, help build your speaking career, or help you become the go-to copywriter or consultant on a particular topic.

Success in self-publishing comes from following four basic steps: find a profitable niche; start marketing your product even before you write it; create your product; and sell your product.

All-in-all, you are in total control of your income

as a self-publisher, based on how much information you publish, and how much you sell. And by concentrating on publishing digital products, instead of printed materials, you can enjoy quick turnarounds and huge profit margins.



Information publishers Gary and Merri Scott have made well over six-figures consistently for over 20 years, and have even broken the million-dollar mark a few times. They share their story, and how you can follow in their footsteps through the program [*Self-Fulfilled: How to Be a Writer and Publisher*](#).

6. Put on Your Screenwriting Hat

Video Sales Letters, or VSLs, are more popular than ever, and for a good reason: they work really well in online marketing. VSLs are a powerful sales tool for businesses because they dramatically boost response over traditional direct mail or online sales letters. So VSLs are here to stay.

As a VSL writer, you will write a script that is used to narrate the video presentation, though you might not be involved in producing the video.

It's important to remember that good writing is the key to good VSLs. That's because without a good script, the video is nothing. And it doesn't take a lot of work to learn how to write a good

Video Sales Letter. VSLs can seem complicated, but you just need to know the basics of persuasive writing.

As far as potential income, according to Clayton Makepeace, "Writing Video Sales Letters is the surest way I know to get from zero up to one million dollars in no time flat." The lowest fees for writing a 10-minute VSL script start at \$1,000, or \$100 per minute of video, and go up from there. An hour-long VSL script can command thousands of dollars.



You can learn more about what it takes to write Video Sales Letters with [The Makepeace Method for Making a Fortune Writing Video Sales Letters](#). This program, written by VSL pioneer and America's highest-paid copywriter, Clayton Makepeace, will walk you through everything you need to know to be a success.

7. The Cornerstone of All Well-Paid Writing Opportunities

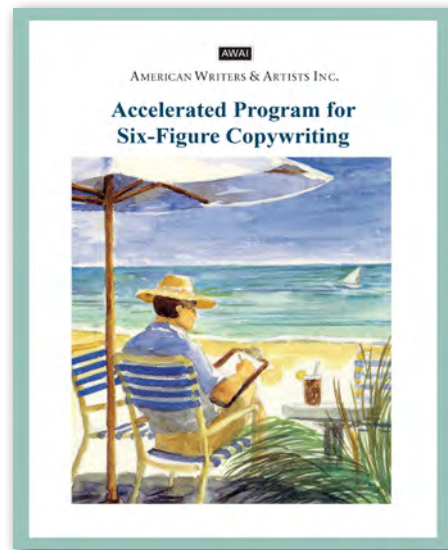
Finally, there's Copywriting. Copywriting is the gateway to all other possibilities in paid writing. As you've seen in the opportunities I've outlined here, copywriting skills allow you to take on any

type of project. With flexibility like that, you can write your own ticket to freedom.

Your copywriting skills will allow you to write sales letters, blogs, articles, web content, emails and autoresponders, email newsletters, fundraising appeals, social media posts, content marketing, case studies, white papers, and more.

Copywriting is one of the surest paths to freedom for a writer — and one of the simplest. If you can write a letter or an email to a friend, you already have most of the skills you need. After that, it's just a matter of learning some basic skills of persuasive writing. Armed with this knowledge, you can create any type of career you want.

Copywriting is a career where you can truly choose your own income. You can expect to earn \$50,000, \$70,000, \$100,000, or even more from your writing.



Get started on this path with AWAI's [Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting](#). This program is how thousands of copywriters have launched their successful copywriting careers.

There you have it, seven writing opportunities for you to consider in 2017! Which one will be your ticket to freedom? ■

did you know?



Should **Old Acquaintance** Be Forgotten?

By Katie Yeakle

It happens every New Year's Eve. The ball drops, you pop the champagne, and in a merry, perhaps slightly inebriated voice, join in singing the same old song, "Auld Lang Syne."

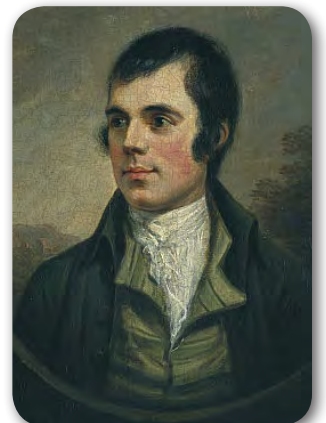
Although few people actually know all the words, or even the meaning of this Scottish tune, they've been singing it for decades — and not just here in the United States. "Auld Lang Syne" is recognized around the globe and has been translated into more than 40 languages.

Because it's a reminder to remember and cherish old friends, people play "Auld Lang Syne" at funerals and celebrations. Throughout Japan, department stores even play it to alert shoppers that the store is about to close. And, until 1937, South Koreans sang their national anthem to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."

Several meanings for the phrase *auld lang syne* have surfaced: *times/days gone by*, *old time's sake*, *long long times/ago*, and even *once upon a time*. But the most common, and probably most accurate interpretation is *for (the sake of) old times*.

Some say the Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote it, but Burns denies it. According to Burns, "I took it down from an old man."

Deeply connected with rural life, Burns often traveled the Scottish countryside, collecting traditional songs for posterity. He also remade songs, or "mended" them, as he described it.



Literary historian Murray Pittock declares, "Burns denied he wrote it because he didn't. He edited it, though how much we don't know."

There's no evidence Burns ever intended for the poem to be a holiday song. So how did this Scottish folk tune come to be associated with New Year's Eve?

For that, bandleader Guy Lombardo gets the credit. In 1929, Lombardo and his band played "Auld Lang Syne" as a segue between two radio programs during a live New Year's Eve broadcast from New York City's Roosevelt Hotel.

It so happened that the band played "Auld Lang Syne" just after the clock struck midnight. At that moment, a New Year's Eve tradition was born.

"Auld Lang Syne" has since even made it into multiple movies. Who can forget the tear-jerker ending of the Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life* with Jimmy Stewart? As the townsfolk praised Stewart, they sang "Auld Lang Syne."

In *The Poseidon Adventure*, a huge tidal wave capsized the luxury ship S.S. Poseidon. As the ship sinks, you can hear the tune eerily ringing out.

There's also the scene in *When Harry Met Sally*,

where Harry (Billy Crystal) ponders, "What does this song mean? My whole life, I don't know what this song means. I mean, 'Should old acquaintance be forgot'? Does that mean that we should forget old acquaintances, or does it mean if we happened to forget them, we should remember them, which is not possible because we already forgot?"

In case you forgot, here are the song's English lyrics:

*Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne!*

Chorus:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne.
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.
And surely you'll buy your pint cup
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*



Happy New Year, everyone! ■

Get Involved with Barefoot Writer!

4 Ways to Make the Most of Your Membership:

1. Want to call yourself a published writer?

Then write an essay for this month's Barefoot Writing Challenge contest. *Plus*, you could win \$100 ... and if your writing style impresses us, you might even be asked to write for *The Barefoot Writer*!

2. Are you living the writer's life?

Show us! Submit a photo of your life as a Barefoot Writer. You could win a \$100 Amazon gift card for snapping a

simple photo. And, you'll get to call yourself a cover model.

3. Care to help other writers?

Chime in on our Reader Poll. Each month's poll results help you understand your fellow writers. They also help us better tailor our content to your needs.

4. Have something to share?

Submit any thoughts, questions, opinions, or stories about your own *writer's life* to info@thebarefootwriter.com.

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Do you have what it takes to become a travel writer?

Would you like to get paid to travel the world and tell others about your experiences?

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Adieus and Adon'ts: **Best Practices for Email Signature Lines**

By Sheldon Gladstein

As we embark on a new year filled with launching client relationships and starting exciting writing projects...

Let's talk about exits.

Specifically, let's talk about the way you exit the email interaction you've just had with your reader or an email you've exchanged with a client.

But first, if someone's reading an email you sent, consider the success you've had breaking through the clutter to get that person to open and read your email.

But now it's time to say good-bye. What should you do?

Getting Ready for Good-bye

Prepare for your exit by asking yourself a few relevant questions:

What was the nature of your visit? Was it suit-and-tie formal, super-professional? A little more casual? A friendly neighborly chat? Or perhaps a

chance to really surprise and wow the reader with something unknown and unbelievable, yet true?

Who is this target reader? Corporate business decision maker? Casual reader at home who is checking out a few emails during commercials in the game? A prospect you'd love to work with?

Further, as this person prepares to leave your email, what exactly do you want them to do?

How to Say Ciao

Your email signature typically will reflect the responses to the questions you've asked. If you're looking for formality, your email signature will likely be restricted to something cordial, even a polite "sincerely" bow, with your name, company, title, and possibly a web link.

Along those lines, here are some examples from ConnectYourCare.com, the health care administrator. After politely informing that coverage has been denied, they conclude:

If you have any questions regarding your account or this claim, please call Customer Service at 855-687-2128.

Sincerely,

ConnectYourCare Customer Service

Stiff and buttoned down? Yes. Helpful? Well, you have a number you can call to be told why they can't help you. Formally and sincerely.

If your interaction is more casual, your exit line can be, as well. It might include some farewell wishing that makes sense in context. You might include a signature tag line — "to your health," "to your success," "to life."

Dave Dee, with GKIC Marketing, finishes his emails with a similar, casual, yet playful tag line:

"Kick Butt and Make Mucho DEE-nero!"

(signature)

Dave Dee, GKIC

If you have a specific goal in mind for the reader to take that is beyond the explicit aim of the email, you can use your email signature to get that across:

To a skinnier you,

Joe Skinero

www.SkiniU.com

Read [50 Ways to Lose Your Blubber](#)

Further, you can adjust your signature to further push the email's call to action. Like Joshua Boswell's signature for the AWAI [Secrets of Writing for the Christian Market](#) program. Note the salutation followed by the credibility-enhancing ordination and six-figure exultation. The signup link just beckons to be clicked. Amen.

To your success,

Joshua Boswell

Ordained Minister and Six-Figure Copywriter

<http://www.awaionline.com/signup/christian-writing>

Don't Trip as You Leave the Email Door

While you keep these general guidelines in mind, be sure not to fall flat on your face as you make your own email exit.



- Don't be the guest who never lets go of the door handle. Don't list every possible way of contacting you, your landline, mobile number, fax number, mother's phone number, aunt's physical address, every social media platform under the sun, your dog's Facebook page. Limit your calling card to the most important stuff: Name, phone number, website, key social media.
- Don't say, hi, nice to meet you on your way out. That's what you do when you add your email address as part of your signature. They know your address, they're reading your email, and they can click reply. Say bye, not hi.
- Don't leave someone else's calling card. Quotes you like might be inspiring, but won't encourage readers to look you up again. Instead, they'll be off to follow that quotee rather than thee.
- Don't bow low and rip your pants. When you've got a super-sophisticated, graphic-intensive HD video of your thumbs-up salute, it's not likely to show up well on your readers' screen. In fact any formatting-intensive component is subject to the whims of the technology gods, even more so on mobile devices. Don't show the readers the rip in your technology seam. Bow gracefully.

From Adieu to Au Revoir with Your Email Signature Lines

Your email signature has a lot to do with whether your readers will take the action you want. You'll want them to look you up again as the authority on the subject you wrote about, the person to call on for expert services, or the destination for getting exactly the product or service they were hoping to find.

To make your exit a temporary one, have a signature line that matches the tone and the readers.

Be formal when appropriate, lively, spunky, or funny when that makes sense, too. Include (but don't overwhelm with) contact information. Add personality when suitable (yours, not someone else's quote). Keep the formatting simple and readable on any device. Enhance your credibility with relevant titles and information. Link to an irresistible call to action.

Say good-bye the right way in your emails. When you do, you'll go from *adieu* to *au revoir*, from good-bye to we'll definitely be seeing each other soon. ■

grammar check

Should You Type Two Spaces After a Period, or One?



For anyone who learned to type on a typewriter, this seems like an easy question to answer. We all learned to type two spaces after the end of a sentence.

There was a pretty good reason for that rule — at the time. With most typewriter fonts, two spaces in between sentences looked better than one.

Typewriters used what's called a **monotype font**, which means every letter takes up the same amount of space, whether it's a wide letter like a *w*, or a skinny letter like an *i*. Two spaces just looked better.

But today, computers use **proportional fonts**. Each letter takes up just the amount of space it needs (for example, a *w* takes up more room than an *i*). Because of this, one space at the end of the sentence looks better than two.

So, which one is correct?

Most style guides, including the *Associated Press Stylebook* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*, say to use one space. The *Barefoot Writer* style guide also specifies just one space after a period or other punctuation marks.

You should always check to be sure, but odds are your editor or style guide will tell you to use just one space after the period.

What if you're in the habit of typing two spaces? Is it still okay to submit your piece with two spaces between sentences?

Sorry, but the answer is no. Your editors likely won't be happy with that. Because when you think about it, you're just making more work for them because then they have to spend time fixing your document by taking out the extra spaces.

As a general rule, it's a good idea to aim to make your editors' life easy. Don't be the writer they have to remind each time to use just one space... or worse, the writer that can't follow directions.

Get in the habit of typing just one space at the end of each sentence. Your clients — now and in the future — will thank you!





The Easiest Way to **Never** Forget Your Next Great Idea

By John Wood

It's happened to most, if not all, of us. You have a great dream. You wake up. And then you can't remember what you were dreaming about.

No real consequences if you forget a dream.

But have you ever done that with a great idea?

It hits you. You love it. Two minutes later, you can't remember it.

Not only is it frustrating wracking your brain trying to remember it, it's a waste of time.

Fortunately, there's a solution...

A Stellar Tool to Instantly Record Ideas

Today, I'm going to look at one of the simplest, yet most powerful (and free), "note apps" available today.

It's a way for you to record your great ideas and, with one downward (or upward) finger movement on your screen, send it to multiple locations.

It's called *Squarespace Note* (for the purpose of this article I simply will refer to it as *Note*).

If you're not familiar with Squarespace, it provides its clients with a bundled offering comprised of a website builder, a blogging platform, and web host that all are integrated with a content management system. Founded in 2004, Squarespace has millions of users in 190 countries. In October 2012, the company released *Note*.

The approach when developing *Note* was to "keep it simple."

When you open up *Note*, a completely blank screen confronts you, save for a camera icon on the bottom right-hand corner.

A left swish from the right of your screen brings up a list of services that Note connects with, such as email providers (as many as you'd like), Dropbox, Google Drive, Evernote, and Squarespace. With each service, you have options, such as whether to include your location or the date with your note.

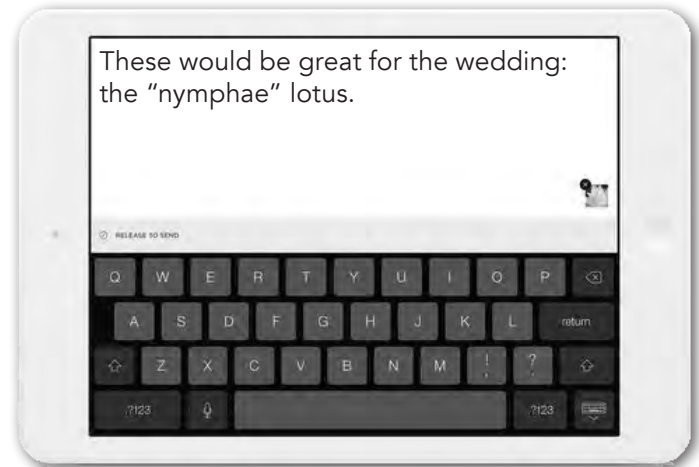
(A couple of asides: 1. When Note first was released, it allowed you to post to Facebook and Twitter instantly, but that option has been removed; 2. I used my iPad to test out Note and could not get it to connect with Evernote. When I contacted Squarespace customer service, they told me that it was a known bug, and their engineers are working to fix it.)

Once you've signed up for the services you want Note to interface with, you can have your notes sent to every location, or you can left swish on the right side of your page (from the blank screen) and select only certain locations.

A right swoosh on the left side of your screen brings up your note history (stored locally on your device) for quick review.

If you're sending to an email address, it gives you the option of putting an excerpt from the note in the subject line, the entire note in the subject line, or you can add a custom prefix to each subject line.

If you'd like to attach a picture to your note, simply click on the camera icon, snap your picture, and it's automatically included as



an attachment. Which means you could take a picture and, within ten seconds, have it stored safely in multiple places accessible to you on the internet. (You can attach only one picture per note, and you cannot attach a video clip.)

What makes Note stand out from other note apps is how easy it is to send each note. You simply pull down or up on the screen and then release your finger. If you change your mind, you can avoid your note being sent by slowly moving the screen back into position.

With other note apps, you generally have to tap on the send button and then scroll through icons and select the send destination. Note not only simplifies the procedure, it allows you to send to multiple locations quickly.

So, if you're looking for a simple, yet powerful, note application that boils sharing your notes down to just one finger movement, you can't go wrong with Note. It's the ideal tool to help you remember every great idea and to-do item, plus it's a terrific tool to archive and share your photos quickly. ■





The Five Best Tips for Writing Your First E-book

By Christy Ingkavet

Writing an e-book is the easiest way to get started as an author. Self-publishing an e-book allows you to write and produce your own digital work, with little cost to you except for your time. You can publish your work instantly on any number of e-book sites — including giants like Amazon Kindle, Apple iBooks, and B&N Nook.

It can be overwhelming to even think about committing the time and energy to produce a work of extensive length. The key is in breaking your book project down into small pieces and taking it one step at a time.

First: Decide Your “Why” for Writing Your Book

Selling e-books likely won’t make you a fortune. However, you can use them to help increase your earnings if you know your reason for writing them:

To become a leader — Sharing your knowledge in a well-written nonfiction book can give you instant expert status. The author credential

can open the door to speaking gigs, teaching positions, radio and TV interviews, and more.

To build a fan base — Share your love of storytelling by creating your own series of fiction in fantasy, horror, mystery, romance, or other genres. As you build your fan base and publish more books, your earnings also will increase.

To create an empire — You can write some books and commission others on popular topics. The publishing empire model works best if you’re interested in nonfiction and how-to books.

Once you know why you’re writing, you can start the prewriting work.

Second: Research Your Idea

What type of book will be popular with your audience? It’s easier than ever to find out what likely will sell — whether you decide to write fiction or nonfiction.

If you’re an aspiring fiction writer, browse your

category on Amazon. In a few clicks, you'll get the top 100 books in romance, science fiction, fantasy, mystery, historical fiction, and more.

In nonfiction, you can dig to more granular levels — for example, if your category is marketing, you can look in subcategories like psychology, economics, marketing and sales, and leadership.

What topics or themes come up again and again? What's popular right now? Which topic could you take on and add your own unique perspective or creative spin?

Third: Mind Map Your Ideas for Your Book

Whether you're writing fiction or nonfiction, a quick creative brainstorm can help you get your ideas together. You can mind map your fiction story's plot points, or use a mind map to plot out the key points for your nonfiction book.

To mind map, take a piece of paper and write your main concept in the middle of your page; from it, draw branches out to related concepts or ideas for your story. After a while, it might start to look



like a sun or a collection of branches. Let all your ideas flow without self-criticism.

Fourth: Write Your Table of Contents before You Start Writing

Staring at the blank page can be discouraging for even the most disciplined writers. But if you start your book by writing the table of contents, you can automatically eliminate the blank page blues. Plotting out the order and topic for each chapter gives you a clear idea of what needs to be filled in for each section or chapter, so there's no room for writer's block.

For your nonfiction book, think about each chapter heading as its own title. Keep your audience in mind and think about what they want to know.

For a fiction book, look at your mind map and see what parts of your story need to be told in which particular order. Will each chapter's story follow sequentially, or will there be any flashbacks or flash forwards?

Fifth: Prioritize Your Book-Writing Time

You don't have to spend years writing your book if you stick with a writing schedule.

For example, National Novel Writing Month (or *NaNoWriMo*) is an annual writing challenge held in November, where participants write a 50,000-word novel in 30 days. Hundreds of people have met this challenge successfully by breaking down the work into daily word quotas.

If you're writing every day, this means 1,667 words. If you know you can write that amount in two hours per day, you then can schedule a two-hour, uninterrupted writing block in the morning or the evening.

When you finish the draft, celebrate your victory... by taking a break! Put it away for a few days before editing. By then, you'll see clearly to edit with precision. Before you know it, you'll be an official e-book author. ■



The Simplest Productivity Secret Ever

By Christina Gillick

I've recently rediscovered my public library, and it's a gold mine for writers of every kind. A while back, as I was browsing the shelves, I came across *Insanely Simple: The Obsession That Drives Apple's Success* by Ken Segall.

I'm a big fan of Apple, so I yanked it off the shelf and flipped to the first page. It said:

"Simplify, simplify." — Henry David Thoreau

"Simplify." — Apple

I love how the author made his point in such a simple way.

The rest of Segall's book is just as clever, and I encourage you to read it if you're looking to make your life or business simpler.

It's one of the resources I used to hit last year's resolutions of making my life easier and boosting my productivity.

So, let's talk about why you might want simplicity in your life...

1. You Can Be More Creative

I've found this to be true both in business and life. I've recently started getting rid of unnecessary stuff around my house. The lack of clutter really makes me feel more creative. The more of my desktop I can see, the more creative I feel.

I think it's because I'm not distracted by thoughts like, "I really should get more organized," or "Don't forget to take that plate to the sink when you get up."

The same is true for the way you do business and the processes you use. Later this week, we'll talk more about how to apply simplicity to your business to make you more creative.

2. You Can Be More Focused and Profitable

When your business is simple, it's easier to focus. Rather than running in 10 different directions, you have a path and a plan to follow. This makes every task and every decision easier.

This is the logic behind choosing a niche or a specialty. Focus on one thing, and you'll see results faster.

3. You'll Succeed Faster

When things are simple, you'll make progress faster. You won't be weighed down by decisions or planning.

But beware; simplicity isn't as simple as it sounds. As Segall points out, "Simplicity has its own kryptonite in the equal and opposite force of complexity."

You probably experience this often.

Here's one example: you're writing something, and the words just won't come. You're trying to explain what you mean, but things are getting complicated, and the more you explain, the more you worry that you're confusing the reader.



Why not stop and take a small break? What are you trying to say? Why not just say that? You don't have to be clever or earth shattering. People prefer it when a message is simple.

Some people believe the more complex an idea is, the more genius it is. But when you think about it, isn't it better to achieve your goal in the simplest way possible? Isn't it better to achieve your goal with less frustration?

I think so. And I encourage you to give it a try and see for yourself. ■

cover photo contest – Win \$100!

You Could Be On The Cover Of The Next Issue Of *Barefoot Writer Magazine*... PLUS Win \$100!

What does *your* Barefoot Writer lifestyle look like? We want to know!

Send us a photo of you living your dream as a Barefoot Writer. It just might be chosen as the cover shot of an upcoming issue. If it is... we'll send you a check for \$100.

Here are some tips for submitting a winning photo:

- Please make sure your shot is vertical, not horizontal.
- Make sure your camera is set to its highest resolution setting.
- Be sure the subject of your photo does not fill the whole frame so there is room for copy on all sides. We need room at the top for the name of the magazine and along the sides for the cover blurbs.

Just email your submission here: Contest@thebarefootwriter.com.





Transformative and Life-Changing Advice for Your Writing Career

By Lee Nourse

Have you ever felt like you *know* there's more to life, but you can't see a different path? I have. It sucks the life out of you.

Thanks to Mog, the instructor of a Career Change course I took in late 2008, I found the exciting path I'm on now. But that's not all. The gains I've made since embracing Mog's advice and pursuing writing are changing my life.

It started when she showed me how to tap into my deepest source of happiness. Then she showed me how to go straight to the source and figure out how to make a living. Here's how you can, too.

Here's Her Life-Changing Advice...

I'd taken Mog's Career Change course during one of my periods of unemployment — a time when I was looking for new direction. But change takes time, and I fell back into my comfort zone for another several years after the course.

It was seven years after I'd met Mog when I read AWAI's "[Can You Write a Letter Like This One?](#)" That letter was the fuel I needed to finally put Mog's teachings into action. The incubation period for her advice was finally over.

And just what was that key advice? "Dig deep down and find what makes you profoundly happy. Then incorporate that into your new line of work."

This was not only the best advice I ever got — it was transformative!

Why There Was Significant Impact on My Life...

My life before hearing Mog's advice wasn't bad. The primary problem was that work in my industry was sporadic, and I perpetually faced unemployment. I had to get off that merry-go-round.

Another problem was a lack of stimulation at work. I'd been working as a language instructor for too long and seldom felt challenged.

Fortunately, these problems disappeared from my life when I started this new chapter of figuring out what makes me profoundly happy. I'd bet it will work for you, too.

From Happiness to Bliss

Mog based her philosophy on Joseph Campbell's work. I'd even venture to guess his wisdom inspired the curriculum for her Changing Careers course.

Joseph Campbell, American mythologist, writer and lecturer, is the best resource to get a profound understanding of how to attain happiness and bliss. He said,

The way to find out about happiness is to keep your mind on those moments when you feel most happy, when you are really happy — not excited, not just thrilled, but deeply happy. This requires a little bit of self-analysis. What is it that makes you happy? Stay with it, no matter what people tell you. This is what is called following your bliss.

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell tells us what happens when we follow our bliss.

Follow your bliss. If you do follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has

been there all the while waiting for you, and the life you ought to be living is the one you are living. When you can see that, you begin to meet people who are in the field of your bliss, and they open the doors to you. I say, follow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be. If you follow your bliss, doors will open for you that wouldn't have opened for anyone else.

With this wisdom, you can create your own tour of self-discovery. I encourage you to follow Joseph Campbell and Mog's lead and discover your source of happiness. If it's writing, begin exploring the options. I chose copywriting because of the earning potential.

My first milestone in this journey was to complete AWAI's [The Accelerated Program for Six Figure Copywriting](#). I learned the basics of Direct Response copywriting and began putting my new skills to work. Although I continued to study, I was ready to work. I created a website and started to market myself.

My first assignment was to write weekly articles for an online community publication. It was a good starting point to get my feet wet. I found that client on Craigslist. What about you? What jumping-off point would you like to test?

Why the Future Looks Bright

Without the wisdom of Joseph Campbell and Mog, I might not have had the courage to start learning about copywriting from AWAI, join *Circle of Success*, and market myself as a freelance B2B copywriter.

For the first time, I'm in full control of my life. The income potential allows me to create my version of *the writer's life*. Remember: You, too, can create the lifestyle you want.

Start finding your bliss! ■



ask AWAI



As managing partners of AWAI, Katie Yeakle and Rebecca Matter have guided, motivated, and celebrated thousands of Barefoot Writers over the years. Got a question for them? Send it here: info@thebarefootwriter.com

Q: I keep reading about email lists. I understand why businesses have them, but why do writers need them?

Katie Yeakle: The point of any email list is to show expertise or authority in a subject, forge connections with prospects, and build up a level of trust that makes readers want to turn to you when they need help. A veterinarian might start an email list to build a network of people she can give professional advice to, who then grow to respect her ability and book her services. A photographer might use an email list to attract clients by showcasing not only his photos, but also his methods for choosing the right scene and lighting, proving there's more to his art than just point-and-click. A writer would do something similar — though it depends on your goals. Well-respected copywriter Bob Bly has built up a sizable email list over the years and freely shares advice about copywriting

and running a writing business. He monetizes that list by selling how-to-write products now and then or recommending other writing-related products through affiliate deals. Still other writers I know build up a list of potential clients who might hire them for writing projects someday, then use their lists to communicate their expertise, methods, and recommendations on how to create and use quality content.

Q: How do writers conquer the fear of failure? I'm working my way through AWAI's Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting, but I'm already afraid I'm going to fail. Help!

Rebecca Matter: You are not alone. Almost every writer I've ever known has experienced a fear of failure. And the reality is, you *are* going to fail at some point! Nobody hits a home run every time at bat.

But that's OK because, you will learn a ton from those failures. What to ask the client next time in advance, learning you should charge more next time, uncovering which projects you enjoy most... these are all lessons that will develop from failures. But you won't have the opportunity to fail if you don't get out there and try. So my advice is to go start failing!

And if you're *still* afraid of failing, dig deeper to figure out *what* you're so afraid of...

Are you afraid nobody will ever hire you? If you

consistently market yourself as we suggest, you eventually will find clients. Are you afraid your writing isn't up to par? In that case, keep practicing. Quality persuasive writing is a learned skill, not a natural-born talent. Afraid a client will have you blacklisted if the project doesn't go well? First, know that there's no such list. And with literally millions of companies looking to hire well-trained writers in the U.S. alone, you literally can mess up a dozen projects and still not have trouble landing more. ■

Want to write for *Barefoot Writer Magazine*... or any other publication? Here's what you need to know...

1. Follow Directions.

It might seem obvious, but it's not uncommon to skip details in the excitement of submitting work to a publication or writing contest. Before you submit your final copy, always go back and check for submission guidelines. Pay close attention to word count limits and formatting requirements.



2. Submit Your Copy as an Attachment in Microsoft Word.

Unless otherwise specified, this is the industry standard.

3. Name Your File Appropriately.

Include the name of the publication or contest in your file name, and include your own name as well. If you're short on space, at least include your last name.

4. Put Your Name and Contact Information on Your Actual Copy Submission.

Even if you're submitting by email, where your name and contact information are obvious, you can't assume your copy submission will stay linked to your email. Staff members for a magazine may save your Word attachment to a separate folder for the editor to review at a later date. If your name and contact information aren't on that Word document, you might be sacrificing your shot at getting published.

5. Review Your Submission for Typos and Errors — at Least Twice!

Even the most glaring typos sneak by the best writers. Here are two tips to avoid embarrassing typos: Read your submission aloud, slowly. This is a great way to pick up errors your eyes otherwise miss while reading. Or, try reading your submission one sentence at a time, starting at the end. By reading "backwards," you're more likely to notice errors that otherwise sneak by when read normally.

the glicken

What is “Glicken”? It’s a Yiddish word referring to the icing on the cake. That extra reward on top of the regular benefits you get as a Barefoot Writer. Every month, we’ll showcase a Barefoot Writer we know who’s enjoying a little Glicken. Have a Glicken story of your own? Send it to: MyStory@thebarefootwriter.com.



Strike Up the Band and Strike Up Some Glicken!

By Shawn Maus

I’d been working my way through AWAI’s *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*. It was a slow process since I was also working full-time at my day job.

At the time, I was the communications coordinator for a local school district. The marching band was the only band in the state to be invited to play in the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. But as is true in most public school systems, there weren’t additional funds to send the band to DC. The kids were devastated. The faculty members, and even the superintendent, were nonplussed. This was such an honor to be chosen to represent the state. But the event timing was too close for the school to mount enough fundraisers — the band had only five months’ notice!

I decided to speak up and announced that I was

a copywriter. This was a big leap for me since I hadn’t completed my AWAI training. But AWAI is always saying that we need to put ourselves out there. So I did.

The superintendent of schools was skeptical.

“That’s a lot of money to raise in a short amount of time,” he cautiously stated.

But I have chutzpah.

I formed a small group of parents and faculty to draft a letter asking corporations to help sponsor the trip (a \$60,000 venture) so that each member of the marching band could participate.

It took several drafts and a few small test mailings before we finally hit it big.

That letter garnered far more than we could have imagined — \$75,000 in sponsorships!

I used techniques I learned from the program, such as “Picture, Proof, Promise, USP,” and I was surprised — not that the techniques worked, but that I could do it!

That was the launch of my Glicken.

The success of that letter led to other jobs. But it’s not just about the money. It’s about the relationships I’ve built that have led to me becoming the go-to guy for idea generation and big-picture planning. It’s also using that experience to help encourage myself to plow through tough projects.

As copywriters and creative types, there are many times we get stuck in the mire, and the muse leaves us — but remembering the Glicken you’ve gotten along the way can help jumpstart you when you don’t feel you’re up to it. And looking back at the small things you’ve accomplished is a great way to start your day.

Since that first letter, I’ve done a lot of work for nonprofits, many without huge budgets. But in a lot of cases, getting invited to that reception or

dinner, receiving tickets for the concert, or being asked to attend the event as a guest because of my work is worth more than money can buy.

I’m also an amateur photographer. So, when one of my copywriting clients couldn’t afford the art for a piece I was writing, I said I would do it for them. While on the shoot, I broke my flash. Several days after turning in the photos and the copy, I received a package from Amazon. The client had purchased a new flash for me because they were so appreciative of the work and the cost savings to the project. That is Glicken you can’t invoice!

So, from having the courage to stand up and announce that I was a copywriter and could help lead the band fundraising, I’ve earned more Glicken in the last few years than I can possibly remember. But, I write it down in a journal and refer to it every so often when I need a bit of encouragement.

My advice to you: Go out and strike up the band! You’ll be surprised by the high note you hit from a little bit of Glicken. ■



The Marching Wildcats of Finneytown, Ohio, were invited to play in the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington D.C.; Shawn wrote the letter that raised \$75,000 in sponsorships so the band could afford the trip

Finally...

A Professional Organization for the Benefit of All Direct Response Industry Ad and Content Writers.

(Best of all, membership needn't cost you one single penny!)

The Professional Writers' Alliance is dedicated to helping you improve your persuasive-writing skills, network with writers and marketers, and find exciting projects.

You'll learn all that's new and happening within our exciting and fast-paced industry – including the latest opportunities to emerge from web writing, e-commerce, and traditional direct mail.

You'll enjoy full and unfettered access to a long line of benefits, including:

- Concrete ways to quickly elevate your writing and marketing skills
- Regular invitations to free marketing and writing webinars and teleconferences
- News on what's working now in the world of direct response
- Access to industry experts and unlimited networking opportunities
- Access to the latest jobs and freelance assignments
- Discounts on resources all writers need
- And much, much more

Whether you are (or aim to be) an ad writer, web writer, website owner, content writer, newsletter writer, desktop publisher, grant writer, researcher, marketer, or even a graphic artist, *The Professional Writers' Alliance* is the best way to stay in touch with what's happening in the industry – and gain the “persuasion” skills you need to prosper from it.

Click below to see everything that's available to you – get a feel for the enormous impact it can have on your financial and professional success ... and don't forget – membership in this organization *needn't cost you one red cent!*



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– Michele Peterson



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