

Momentum

Bonus Playbook

Awaken Your Inner Storyteller

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Here's What's Inside!

The Six Word Novel.	3
“OMG! So I’m sitting at Starbucks....”	3
Every Piece of Marketing Tells a Story.	4
Your Assignment: Stretch Your Writing Muscles.	5
One Last Thing...	7
Goodies and Inspirations	8

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The Six Word Novel

Baby shoes. For sale. Never been worn.

Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway penned these six poignant words on a napkin, in response to a bet that he could write a novel in six words. While this Hemingway connection [has since been debunked](#), it's still a valuable lesson for us on how to convey a world of emotion and plot in one simple sentence.

Writing can seem like some mysterious skill reserved for an elite few. Don't get me wrong: I fully recognize the craftsmanship required to spin a powerful story, write a (good) 300-page novel or compose an emotional poem. I crave such amazing talent, hoping that, like an untapped goldmine, my writing prowess will emerge one day, fully formed.

Ain't gonna happen.

But we're making the wrong request. To persuade buyers, delight readers or inspire customer loyalty, we shouldn't just wish we were better writers: **we should strive to be better storytellers.**

And to do that, we need to practice. We're going to flex our writing muscles just a bit and get those juices flowing!

“OMG! So I'm sitting at Starbucks....”

You may not know this, but I was a child actress in New York. Starting from the age of six, I was shuttled to Manhattan auditions at least two times a week. I did TV commercials, radio voiceover and even the occasional film until I went to college, where I rebelled against my parents' artistic dreams by getting a practical business degree. Not really...well, kind of....

I never took one acting lesson at that age.

When people asked me as an adult, “How did you know how to act?” I would brush it off and say,

“You've been a kid. Did you ever lie to your parents to cover something up or try to convince them to buy you a toy?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Well, then you know how to act.”

If you're all hung up on “not being a good writer” or “I hate to write” or even “I don't know how to write well,” relax. Again, the key to engaging and igniting your audience is about being a *good storyteller*.

There is a saying that “Facts Tell, Stories Sell.” And it's 100% true.

Newsflash: You already know how to tell a story. You do it every day. When you reveal a delicious piece of gossip to your friends, that's storytelling. When you crack a joke and deliver the punchline just right, that's storytelling. When you describe how you met your spouse or that crazy thing your two-year old just said, that's storytelling.

I would bet money on the fact that, when you share those stories in person, on Facebook or anywhere else, you're not thinking about sentence structure, grammar or punctuation. Heck, you may not even be thinking about plot realism. You're focused on sharing the information, in your own voice, and eliciting a reaction: laughter, shock, anger, awareness.....

You do it all the time and you probably do it well. But the more you do it consciously, by writing it down and recognizing patterns and structure, the better you will get.

P.S. To round out my childhood story, I should note that, as an adult, I've actually taken many acting classes, and even took a respected Conservatory's summer intensive to hone my craft. Everyone has to practice. The more you do something, the better you get. That's the whole point of this week's lesson.

Every Piece of Marketing Tells a Story

You might be thinking, “This is all well and good for blogs or social media, but what about the *business writing* I need to do: my About page, Bio, sales copy and whatnot?”

While there is indeed a certain tone you need to strike in some copy (a press release boilerplate can't be flowery, for example.) It needs to make the reader take a next step or feel a certain way.

Otherwise, why are you writing it?

Don't let “business speak” get in the way of sharing a good, compelling story with people.

In the next few weeks, we'll be talking about brand copy as well how to create compelling content. But like warming up before a tough workout, this week, we're going to stretch our writing muscles and limber up!

Your Assignment: Stretch Your Writing Muscles

Some of you may already be amazing writers. Some of you may hate writing with the white hot passion of a thousand suns. But give these fun writing prompts a try, whatever your mastery level!

Describe, in as much detail as you are comfortable, your first romantic kiss. This can be funny, awkward, poignant, erotic. Describe where you were, how you felt, what you saw, smelled, heard and tasted. Feel free to write this as a narrative, a series of random phrases and words or even a poem.

Describe your favorite customer or client story. If this does not apply to your business, describe a favorite work-related story. Again, this can be funny, sad, epic, harrowing, unbelievable! Pretend I'm sitting in front of you over coffee and you're saying, "*Oh, I have got to tell you about this one time when I.....!*" Just free-form write it out as you say it out loud. You can even record yourself telling it and then transcribe your words here:

This next prompt is borrowed from writing teacher Alexandra Franzen, whom I adore. During one of her workshops, she had us do this to show us that everyone can write beautiful words if they simply let it flow within a set time limit to avoid censoring themselves. The work produced was amazing! She did it with Tarot cards, so it's dubbed "Taroetry" (instead of "Poetry"!) but we're just going to use a lively image.

Study [this image](#) for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Then, stop looking at it, set a timer for 1 minute, and write down, free-form, whatever poetry or story comes to mind:

By examining what attracts you, you can glean insight into your own voice. Whose storytelling style do you love? This could be an author, website, entrepreneur, singer or even a screenwriter, comedian, or actor. Why do you like it? How is it structured? Does it use fragments or flowery sentences? Does it evoke sensory imagery or is it just crisp, sharp, quick phrasing? What is the voice? Is it snarky or sweet?

But wait, you're not quite done....

Now: we'd ALL love to see some of your creative work posted on the Facebook page by Friday. Don't be afraid – we're here to support you. I'll be rewarding you all year long!

Remember, we are here to encourage you and provide any feedback. If you're like me, often it's fellow collaborators that help me polish my ideas to a glossy sheen.

Again, I'm going to reward you all year long, so don't lose your **MOMENTUM**: Post it now and keep that train moving!

One Last Thing...

Please don't be intimidated by writing. It's one of the best ways to fully express yourself. If you don't like it or think you're not "good at it," it's most likely because of the way you think it ought to be done.

Let self-doubt and insecurity go as you do these writing prompts. **JUST WRITE.** The more you write, the more your voice will emerge and the more fun you will have with writing.

There are lots of other media options we'll discuss in the ensuing lessons about how to create your content. Not everyone enjoys the writing process: they may be more visual or prefer speaking. And that's cool. You will ultimately find what works for you.

But the most basic form of communicating your message is to express it in words. No getting around that. **You will have to do some form of writing to get your teachings, skills and ideas out into the world.**

We're going to be diving into writing important brand copy in the next few lessons. But you have to warm up first!

Let go. Try.

Maria

Goodies and Inspirations

Wanted to repeat these fab “word finding” resources from a previous lesson, so you had them at the ready while you work through your prompts!

- In addition to finding just the right word by playing around with Thesaurus.com, get those creative juices flowing from these [380 high-emotion words](#) guaranteed to make you more persuasive.
- A good read about [“personality words”](#) and how you might replace some tired old ones with some fresh, new ones.
- When searching for just the right word, try [Thesaurus.com](#)

More from the wise Alexandra Franzen.....[33 Prompts to Unlock Blog Posts and Stories That Need to Be Told](#)

Whether you’re writing a novel...or trying to write website copy...these [14 tips from writer Anne Lamott](#) are fabulous.