



RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY LEAD WITH PASSION PROSPER WITH PURPOSE

How to Write Web Copy That Sells

Hey everyone this is Bryan Holmes from BryanHolmes.com and The Strategic Living Podcast and you're listening to thought leader, faith builder, business innovator and overall great guy, my friend, Ray Edwards.

I'm excited to be here with you for episode 121. We celebrated a beautiful Fourth of July weekend in Spokane, Washington a few days ago and it was fantastic. We had some great family time, the weather was beautiful and I hope you had a great weekend as well. If you don't live in the USA and don't celebrate the Fourth of July well, I hope you celebrated Friday because everyday on God's earth is a gift that we should treasure.

If we take it for granted then there will come a day when we will think, why did I do that? So today's episode is about writing web copy. One of the most important skills you can develop is the skill of writing persuasive copy or just writing persuasively. Copy that sells products, services and ideas, that gets people to do what you want them to do, we're all selling something, even if we're just selling an idea and if just by saying just selling an idea really downplays the importance of selling ideas.

If you want someone to agree with your idea or your ideals it's important that you learn how to communicate them persuasively. There is a formula for writing such copy, whether you're selling products, services, ideas or ideals or spiritual principles. In today's episode I will share the formula that you can start using today, if you will listen, study and apply what I teach you.

If you enjoy this podcast then I'm going to flat out ask you for a favor and that is, first, go to your iTunes and subscribe to have the podcast automatically delivered to your iTunes. It's free and we strive and work every week to provide you with great valuable content that you pay nothing for. Then I want to ask you to review and rate the podcast in iTunes. If you do that it helps bring new listeners to the show. We will thank you right here on the show just for doing that.

Finally, I want to save you \$100. Can I put a \$100 in your pocket? I would like you to join me as I am one of the featured speakers at the platform conference, taking place in Colorado this November. If you love to ski and you love the outdoors, Colorado is a beautiful place. What a great location Michael Hyatt and Ken Davis have chosen to have the Platform Conference this year. It's in November. I'll be speaking along with many other speakers as well that you will love to hear from, including Stu McLaren, Amy Porterfield, Crystal Payne, Jeff Goins, Cliff Ravenscraft, Michael Hyatt and Ken Davis.

You have to be there and if when you go to PlatformConference.tv and sign up, if you'll put in the promo code RAY, you will save \$100 on your ticket price and I would love to see you in Colorado.

Tip of the Week

Normally I do software or app recommendations, books even, tools, gadgets and other things I've enjoyed working with or using over the past few weeks, but today I have something totally different. How would you like to split test your life? Some of you know what I'm talking about already while others of you are saying what is he talking about that sounds like it might hurt? No, in direct response marketing on the Internet or through the good ole fashioned USPS, which by the way three cheers for the USPS I love the. I think their marketing and some of the procedures at the counter could use some revision, but they do a great job.

When we market through direct mail or the Internet we test different elements of our marketing, honing in on the most effective variations, so on a web page for instance, there may be a picture at the top of the page and we measure, if I send 1000 people to this page with this picture at the top, how many of those people will sign up for my newsletter, if that's the goal of the page? If I change and use a different picture and send another 1000 people, does the result get better or worse?

So if I send 1000 people to each page and on page A with picture A, 200 people sign up for my newsletter, that's a 20% conversion rate. Maybe on picture B only 5 people signed up. Clearly, picture A was the big winner, so that version of the page won the split test as I split the traffic between the two variations; hence, the term split testing.

This process can get very sophisticated online you can test multiple elements on a single page all at the same time using something called multivariate testing. It's fun stuff and I'm not that into math but I really love this stuff. That's not what I'm talking about today, what I'm talking about today is using that same process that you used to constantly improve the outcomes of your marketing to do the same for your life.

It occurred to me recently, and I don't know why I never thought about this before, that I could do the same kind of split testing in my personal daily life. So here are some routines and habits that I'm split testing in my own life. Before I give you the things I'm testing, let me explain how I'm doing this. It's very simple and isn't too sophisticated. I'm taking a week and doing version A and then another week to do version B and seeing which one seems to work better for me.

I've never done this before and I realize that so many of the routines I've adopted that work pretty well could probably be made more effective if I just tested some of the elements and I've never done it before, so now I'm being conscious and intentional about split testing my life. Here are some of the routines and habits that I'm split testing in my own life in the upcoming weeks.

- Doing my quiet time or hour of power each morning first versus doing my most important work tasks first each morning.

I've been starting the day off with my quiet time, my hour of power as the first thing I've been doing most days. Recently I had something that needed to be done right away and I got up first light in the morning and started working and accomplished so much in the first two hours, I wondered what would happen if I did this more often. So I'm split testing that to see which works better. Now my two hours of power will come right after I get that first big work task out of the way, but I realize there's an incredible feeling I have when I know the most important thing I have to do today I got finished before anybody woke up. That's empowering. I have the power.

- Exercising in the early morning hours versus exercising in the afternoons.

I've never tried this before, because I must discipline myself to exercise each day and I have to work at it. So my feeling was if I do it first thing in the morning than I'm more likely to actually get it done, but now I'm going to split test exercising in the morning versus in the afternoon.

- Recording my podcasts weekly as I currently do versus recording them, 6-12 weeks in advance.

I've never tried 6-12 weeks in advance. What if I took a couple days and knocked out 12 podcasts and had them lined up, edited, all the show notes done ahead of time, loaded in and ready to go, which would be better? Who knows, I'm going to try it and see.

- Caffeine intake, drinking coffee versus no caffeine intake whatsoever.

I'm going to split test that and see what my energy level like, my focus level or concentration level and sense of physical well-being. As some of you know I have a physical condition called Parkinson's that causes me to be more sensitive to stimulants and sometimes I need more stimulants, so it will be an interesting test to see how it works for me.

- Taking naps each day versus no naps each day.

This is something else I'm testing. I like taking a nap in the afternoon. It gives me more energy in the second part of the day, but I'm going to try just not taking a nap at all and seeing how that works for me. I've got a list of other things I realize. I could test so many things in my personal life and I'm not becoming obsessive, but I'm going to track for a week at a time to see how version A performs against version B and whichever the winner is, becomes my new normal.

I believe that by doing this I'll be able to greatly improve the quality and effectiveness of my life. I'll report back to you and let you know, the possibilities are endless.

So my question for you coming out of this week's tip of the week is this... **what can you split test in your life?**

Spiritual Foundations

Now it's about to get real. Do you ever feel overwhelmed, stressed, overworked and anxious? I talk to a lot of people each and every week and I know that a lot of people have these feelings. I've had them myself; of course, because I'm having the same kind of human experience that you have yourself. What do we do when we feel this way? I want you to be assured that there is rest and peace for you and me.

God wants us to; as He puts it, enter into His rest. What does that mean? We know that God isn't worried about how things are going to work out. Nothing surprises Him or catches Him off guard. When something bad happens in your life, God doesn't look down and say whoa, I did not see that coming, we're going to have to have a board meeting in Heaven and I'll get back to you. That's not His reaction. He knows the beginning from the end.

I have my own suspicions about how some of this works. I think it's possible, and this may be kind of hair-brained and some of you may write me off about now, but I think it's possible that we agreed to everything we're going through in life right now before we even got here to this planet. It says He knew us before we were born, in the scripture, so we had to be somewhere before we were born didn't we? It's something to think about. I'm not saying you have to accept it as doctrine. I don't even teach it or share it as doctrine it's just something I think about.

So God isn't surprised and He tells us not to worry. He tells us not to be anxious about anything. Here's something that I know, a kingdom principle. In the kingdom of God things are often upside down or in reverse. Think about it. What do we know from the scripture, from the Bible? If you want to be lifted up you must bow down. If you want to rule then you must first serve. Jesus showed us that, clearly, shockingly and scandalously when he washed the disciples feet. Those who wished to be first must be last.

So if things are opposite in the kingdom of Heaven, what does that mean about work, toil and anxious labors? It means to achieve God's rest does not mean that we are necessarily inactive, we're still doing things. In the 127th Psalm it says this, 'Unless the Lord build the house, those who build it labor in vain.' Think about that for a minute. So people are building it, but unless the Lord builds it those people labor in vain. So there's an essential quality of us aligning ourselves and working on the thing that God is working on, stepping into agreement with what He is doing, which means He's building the house, we're doing the labor and building, but we aren't laboring in vain because we're doing what God is doing.

It goes on to say, 'Unless the Lord watches over the city the watchman stays awake in vain.' So we can put the watchman on the wall and turn on the alarm security system at our house, but unless the Lord is watching over our house, we turn on our electronic watchman in vain. This is what I want to share with you that has spoken to me so much recently. It says in Psalm 127:2, 'It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil. For He gives to his beloved, sleep.'

So we know we are God's beloved and He gives to us sleep. What is sleep? It is the deepest rest we are able to achieve in life. What this passage speaks to me is that it is in vain, in waste and it is our ego that causes us to think, I have to get up early and I have to go late to rest because everything that happens depends on me and my efforts. No, because we are eating the bread... we're feeding ourselves on anxious toil, but the Lord gives to His beloved, sleep.

What I'm saying then is go ahead and do what needs to be done. Do what God is doing. Co-labor with him and what He wants to work on, but in the process of that, rest. When you have done all that you can do, rest. Leave the outcome to God, because what He has for you, beloved, is sleep.

Feature Presentation

I told you at the beginning of this episode that whatever it is you're trying to sell there is a formula for how to do it effectively. Of course, I'm known as a copywriter, one who writes sales and marketing copy, and I've had the great privilege of doing that work for many of the masters of their various industries for people like Tony Robbins and his organization, Jeff Walker of Product Launch Formula fame, and Armand Morin, Frank Kern, Robert Allen and others.

It was a dream for me when I started in this business, that someday I would maybe be able to shake hands with a few of these people. Most of them are now my friends it's been a dream life I've been living. What I've learned is that writing copy is not just about selling stuff. Yes, I am a devout capitalist and I think you should be rewarded for what you know, what you teach and the services you perform, and you should be rewarded richly.

This is how everyone benefits in a true free market environment, this is how we benefit. We exchange value for value and everybody wins, that I believe. I also believe that the ability to convey the importance of people buying into your ideas, premises, philosophy's, wisdom, experience, recommendations and yes, your products and services, investments or whatever it is

you're selling. The point of your Sunday morning sermon if you're a pastor or a preacher. The cause you promote in the world if you're trying to rescue people from human trafficking or feed hungry people across the world, whatever it is that you are called to do and accomplish, at some level involves convincing other people of the rightness of a decision in your favor in this matter.

That's why learning to be persuasive is necessary. People don't take any action initially without some kind of convincing, unless you can tell the story of why what you have to say is important and why it's important that they take action... they being the other people whom you're writing, speaking or talking to... If you can't convey it they will do nothing. People do not spontaneously stand up and say I think I will go look for a new different place that I've never thought of to spend my money today, my time, energy or give my physical presence or my volunteering. They don't do that as a general rule.

More to the point, when it comes to your specific cause, products, company, service or industry, they don't know you. They don't like you and they don't trust you. When I say they don't like you I don't mean they dislike you, because if someone doesn't know you than how can they possibly like you? They aren't even aware of your presence and if they are aware of your presence than they know nothing about you.

Think about all the various images and faces that you see on social media, in your email inbox, on your television and here on the radio or on the bunch benches, the magazines, newspapers, newsletters, the print stuff that comes to you in the mail. How many of those people do you actually know anything about? There are faces I see on social media so often, and occasionally I stop and look. I say I know that face but I know nothing about that person. If they don't know you they can't like you and they certainly can't trust you.

Copy begins to fill in this gap. Everything is copy. I even look for a new way of talking about writing copy constantly, because copywriting seems to narrow it down to one specific genre of commercialized selling of stuff, advertising and I love that I love that business, but I believe this applies to any kind of writing. Any kind of writing you're doing you're either seeking to either persuade people to do something, you're telling them you should do this or you are empowering them to do something and saying you can do this.

This is a distinction that I learned from my friend, Ken Davis, at his SCORE Conference. I railed against this principle when I first heard it. I wanted to say there are other reasons for writing, other than to persuade or to empower, but I can't think of one; I've tried. You might say to give information. Why are you giving information? So people will know something. So you want them to know something. Why do you want them to know the thing that you're writing about? So they will do something or so that they will believe they can do something.

Is there any other reason? I challenge you. If there's another reason for writing other than these two reasons than you tell me. You might say I write poetry, it's art. Why so you write art? Because I want to convey my message. What message? Just about the beauty of the world. What is it you want to convey about the beauty of the world? I want people to see it and experience it. Oh, you want them to do that. I've worked at it very hard to figure out some other reason to write or convey a message, other than to persuade or to empower. I haven't found one.

I'm often asked; why is copy so long? Why are sales letters and sales copy pages and pages long? Who reads all of that? Does anybody? Maybe people will say to me, I know that long copy works but I never read that stuff.

One time I had somebody say this to me at a three-day conference that we were putting on. I was in a room with over 100 people there, had been teaching for about a day and a half and the person who told me this, I just looked him in the face and said, how did you get here? What do you mean he said, I signed up on your website? Yes I know you did. When you went to the web page where you signed up what did you see? Then the light went on in their eyes. Oh, copy. A long number of pages of copy about this event.

Precisely, so you do read it sometimes don't you? Yes, but I was interested in it. Brilliant. That's it! There's no such thing as copy that's too long there's only copy that's too boring.

I've been reading novels by an author named Brandon Sanderson. He's a fantastic writer. He's gifted, a master storyteller. The first book I read by him was 1000 pages long. I devoured every word. Then, with great anticipation I opened the second book which was over 1000 pages long and I devoured every word. At no point did I say, 'this is too long', because I was enthralled with what he wrote.

If we want to read it if it's interesting it's not too long. There are some practical reasons why copy is long and chief among them is that we have to answer all of the objections to our proposal ahead of time. If we are having a conversation with someone or even if we're speaking in front of a large group of people about our topic, we can watch the body language of the other person or people in the room.

We can see if they're interested, engaged? Do they appear to be focused on me and paying attention? Do they exhibit body language and facial expressions that show me they're interested and in agreement or do they seem resistant and as if they are preparing an argument against what I'm saying in their mind? We can observe all this in the moment. We don't have to think about it we are natural born communicators in this fashion. So, when we observe that behavior we adjust our presentation.

If we say something and we notice we evoked a skeptical facial expression or body posture, we can pause and say, I know you might be skeptical about this, I would feel the same way, let me explain what I mean by what I just said, we can then back up and answer the objection that we now provoked a reaction in our listener. If we're in a one-on-one selling situation we can have an interactive dialog and the other person asks questions and raises objections and has requests that they make of us where we can have an interactive dialog where we can deal with all the questions they have before they make a buying decision.

That interactive process if done well, if done with empathy and manipulation or control, will result in them making a decision that's in their best interest, whether it's to buy or not. By the way, let me say that, our goal in any persuasive communication is not to control the other persons behavior, to make them say yes. I know that traditional sales training tells us that that is the goal, but it is not.

The goal is to empower and inform the other person and then persuade them to make a decision, whether that decision be, yes or no. We want to encourage them to make a yes decision. We want to encourage them to make any decision, because making a decision most of the time is in the best interest of both parties. Sometimes, and I know there are sales managers, salespeople and sales trainers who will cringe when they hear what I'm about to say but sometimes, not usually, I would say less than 10% of the time, the best decision is to wait to make no decision.

Salespeople hate to hear this because when someone says to you, if you are a salesperson, if someone says I need to think about this and get back to you later. Every fiber of your being and

every ounce of training you've been given says don't let that person get away. Most of the time that is an excuse for not making a decision, but sometimes the decision to wait and circle back to this decision later is the decision. It sometimes is and if you're a sales manager or sales trainer, or a highly successful salesperson and you don't believe I'm right, you're entitled to your belief.

But I would encourage you to put yourself in the position of the buyer and ask yourself, haven't there been times when the right decision for you was simply to wait? I want to be careful to highlight something here, that's usually not the case. Over 90% of the time, in my estimation, it's best to make some kind of decision and I believe that most of the time we know what the decision is already.

When you're standing in front of the car salesperson, when you're at the gym and talking to the personal trainer about possibly signing up for their program or if you're sitting in a seminar room and someone is selling a program that teaches you how to invest in real estate for 5000 or you're thinking about buying that new house, deep inside you already know what the right decision is, but we so want to avoid confrontation with the person that has to hear our decision that we often don't want to say no, so we say things like, I need to think about it. I need to come back. I need to talk to my accountant or to God, and hey, I talk to God about nearly all my major decisions, because sometimes I goof up and forget to consult with the most important being in my life. I do I'm human and I usually live to regret it.

The point is this. We usually know what the right decision is and a good muscle for you to exercise is the ability to say no when you know the answer is no, to look the person in the eye respectfully and say thank you for your time and explanation, but my decision today is no, thank you so much. They may try to talk you out of it, but you have to have the integrity in the moment to end the conversation at that point when you know what the decision is.

Americans especially have a hard time with this type of confrontation. We will lie rather than confront lovingly and settle the matter. So this has very little to do with copywriting, but I encourage you as you go through your daily life this week to try this. When you know the answer is no, try to go ahead and tie off that open loop right at the moment where you just say no, no thank you. People will try to manipulate you but do not do this. Do not practice this.

I'm on my third tangent now, but we'll come back to the copywriting. I was at a pet store recently buying something for my new pug puppies, Bobby and Buttercup. As I was paying for my transaction, the clerk looked at me and said, "Would you like to save a dying dog from cancer today?" How am I supposed to answer a question like that? No, I would prefer to let the animal die. I resented being manipulated, because clearly my answer is yes I would like to do that, but I already give generously to many causes and I try to practice the Dave Ramsey philosophy of giving every dollar a name before it goes out the door, which I'm not perfect at either. I don't like being manipulated so I simply said, "No thank you."

Not to mention a little over a year and a half ago I spent about \$10k trying to save my own dog, but that's beside the point. The point is, don't allow yourself to be manipulated. Exercise your decision-making muscle this week and let's get back to copywriting.

We're trying to help people make decision. It's better for us as copywriters and salespeople, which we all are, even if what we're selling is that people buy into a scriptural truth that we're teaching on Sunday mornings. It's better for us to raise and answer all the questions for them ahead of time, which makes our copy, our talk, our podcast longer than it might be otherwise. I believe it's time for us to adopt a new paradigm in this area and my contribution to that effort is that I have created a paradigm, fashioned a paradigm, building the work of those that came

before me, a five-part framework for writing better sales copy and I would suggest to you that to sell more of your ideas, products and services you should pastor your customers.

If you want to sell more of your products and services or you want to sell more people on your ideas or cause, than you must learn the basics of the art we call copywriting. Some of you may still be unclear as to what copywriting is. One of my favorite definitions was given by a man named John E Kennedy back in 1904. Kennedy defined advertising and copywriting as “salesmanship in print”.

If you can write effective sales copy on the page on the screen or speak it from the stage or on the phone or interpersonally then you can literally write your own paycheck. Zig Ziglar was famous for saying timid salespeople have skinny kids. What he was actually saying was, if you are bold and confident in your sales ability then you will not have skinny kids you will be able to feed your children. There really should be no such thing as a broke copywriter. By definition good copywriters can create money right out of thin air.

So the question we should ask ourselves is why does copy so often fail? You may have written copy that you thought was good copy or you may have paid for copy you thought was good copy and maybe it didn't work. Why? What happens that copy that looks like “copy”, turns out not to be effective at all? Copywriting fails when you ignore universal principles. There are universal psychological and spiritual triggers that will help you sell more effectively and all of this is resting on a presupposition, which is that you are writing or persuading in the best interest of those with whom you're communicating and if you're not than none of this will work for you, not long-term.

The problem is the field of copywriting, advertising and marketing is strewn with misleading, manipulative and even in some cases malicious techniques and methods for tricking and cajoling and controlling people into doing something that's not in their best interest. It's been said that the difference between manipulation and persuasion is that **manipulation leads you to making a decision that you will later regret, while persuasion leads you to making a decision you will later celebrate.**

These days you can barely swing a cat without hitting a copywriter who has some type of formula or acronym describing their copywriting method. Most of these formulas are actually quite good. Many however, are based on tricks of manipulation and psychology that I believe are morally off base. At their root they rely on fear, control and manipulation and trickery. I don't want to practice those techniques in my own business and I'm sure you don't want to practice them in yours either.

So the framework I'm sharing with you today is intentionally based on universal principles that are focused on doing good and on helping people make decisions that are in their own best interest, so let's get to it. My presupposition, my premise to you and my proposition is that to sell more you should pastor your customers.

Most people, of course, will associate the term pastor with the preacher at church and that's true. Preachers at churches are pastors, but the original meaning of the word pastor was actually to shepherd. Think about that. What does being a shepherd bring to mind for you? A peaceful setting, peaceful environment. A shepherd does what? A shepherd cares for, feeds and protects their flock. The shepherd realizes that the flock is the livelihood of the shepherd's life. That without the flock the shepherd would not be able to make a living for their family or for their community, supply wool and food.

Now, before I go further with this analogy I want to take care of something that I know has probably arisen at least in some minds as I'm speaking of shepherding the flock. There is a habit that some well-known marketers have of referring to their customers as their herd. I've listened to talks where some marketers and entrepreneurs have talked about; yes I had to make a payment on my yacht so I sent the bill to my herd, which seems to paint a rather unflattering picture. Do you like being referred to as someone's herd? This kind of imagery isn't what I'm talking about or invoking here.

The actual role of a shepherd is that of a loving, caring and protective guardian and provider. In fact, Jesus, who called himself the good shepherd, actually laid down his life for his flock. Now, I'm not suggesting that you adopt any religious overtones for your copy, so if that's freaking you out you have my permission to calm down because that's not what I'm saying. What I'm trying to suggest to you is that you adopt the same loving, caring and protective role as you write copy for your prospects and customers, that the good shepherd has for the flock.

That you think of yourself as being in a role of carrying for, loving, protecting and providing for your flock. As you have probably guessed by now, you know that P.A.S.T.O.R. is an acronym for the major sections of the copy you're going to write. Here is the explanation.

Problem

You have to begin by identifying the problem you're solving for your readers. If you aren't solving a problem, take a step back and ask yourself what is the problem that I truly am solving? I promise you, you wouldn't be writing or communicating if there wasn't some problem that you're solving and certainly if you're selling something you already know what this is. The simplest and most effective way is to describe the problem in great detail.

It's a well-known psychological principle that the more accurately you can describe your readers problem in terms that they relate to, the more vividly you can evoke the images of the problem they have, the more they instinctively already begin to feel that you must have an answer to that problem because you understand it so well. A powerful way to do this is to use your reader's own language, the very words and phrases they use to describe the problem they want to solve.

For instance, if you're writing about fitness or weight loss, you might begin by describing your prospects current situation in words that they might choose. So your copy may say something like, 'You've tried every fad diet that's come along. You've started and stopped a dozen different exercise programs. Maybe you've joined several gyms, hired personal trainers or purchased DVDs. You've bought exercise machines and equipment that has filled your basement and ended up serving only as a rack to drape your clothing from once it comes out of the dryer.

The truth is you just can't seem to take the weight off or keep it off. Maybe you even feel a little disgusted with yourself and your inability to control your eating and your weight. Maybe you're frustrated that you can't seem to develop the discipline you need to exercise. Maybe you feel like no matter what you try it's not going to work, because it never has. These are words that people in this market might choose to use to describe their own situation.

How do you learn this language that people speak?

How do you learn the words and phrases they use to talk about their problem?

You invoke a mysterious arcane and little known skill that few possess called '**listening**'. You just listen to what people say, they will describe for you exactly what their problem is. Go to online discussion forums or blogs where people comment and discuss these very issues and you'll hear

key phrases like, do you know what I hate? I hate it when... and they'll tell you what they hate. I hate it when I'm hungry at night and all there is to eat in the cabinet is chips, cookies and crackers. I wish my spouse wouldn't buy all that stuff. Or maybe they'll say I hate it when I turn on the TV and all I see are ads for creamy fat filled sugary desserts and beverages. I can't stand that it drives me nuts.

They'll say I hate it when I sign up for the gym and I go for two or three times and then never go back again. You pay attention when people talk about things they hate, that they're frustrated by or angry about, or if they have phrases or sentences that begin with words like, I wish somebody would just show me how to or I wish somebody would just make a... these are signals to you that they're speaking the language of passion around the topic you want to discuss.

Remember, you aren't judging their behavior you're just describing their experience as it currently is which means you have to understand their experience as it currently is. You have to know your audience and what they're thinking. It takes work and research, spending time with people and listening to them. As the great copywriting legend, Robert Collier said, *"You have to join the conversation that's already taking place in the readers mind."*

When you can do that, people will read your copy or hear your video sales presentation or your speech from the stage and they will say either out loud or to themselves, yes that's exactly how I feel, nobody has ever put it into words before, you know exactly where I'm coming from. You get me. When you can open that door then you've overcome a major hurdle in the sales process.

Amplify

This is the next step, to amplify the consequences of not solving the problem. This is really the key to making sales and is probably the most neglected step in the entire process. What will motivate people to buy your product, to invest in your service or accept your idea? It's usually not the beautiful outcome framed in a positive light. I wish that it were, but people will do more to avoid pain than they will to gain pleasure.

Why is this? I believe it's because the pain is more real to them. Think about it, if you're trying to quit smoking, and I know this pain because I used to be a smoker. I smoked two and a half packs of cigarettes a day for many years and I quit cold turkey on New Years Day, January 1, 1988. It's not the way you're supposed to do it. THEY say don't quit on New Years Day and don't do it cold turkey, don't do it as a resolution. I did all that wrong and I still quit.

I struggled with it before that date, off and on trying to quit, and the pain of not smoking the cigarette was more real to me than the reward that was off in some distant diffuse future and the thing that finally pushed me over the edge was that we had a son, a baby. Then I started smoking outside the house and I realized that if I kept up the smoking habit that I might not be around to see him grow up to be a man, which was a huge motivator for me. That pain became more real to me than the pain of giving up smoking.

So you have to make the pain real to people. We aren't manipulating or controlling them, we aren't even using fear to control them, but I feel we're doing people a disservice if we sugarcoat the future and don't show them if you don't change what you're doing, if you don't change your current situation or the way you're dealing with this problem or area of your life or business, relationship or whatever you're helping them with, here's what's going to happen.

What motivates people is realizing the cost of not attaining the outcome you offer them. In other words, what is it costing them to not solve the problem?

When I'm writing copy about a business improvement program, for instance, I may have the reader walk through a simple exercise like this. I'll say to them, write down your average monthly revenue over the last 12 months. Then, write down what you want your average monthly income to be, what you're shooting for, aiming for and what you really want. Let's say that your average income is \$5000 per month and your goal is to actually be making \$15k in your business. This means that the gap between where you are and where you want to be is \$10k per month. You're paying a cost of \$10k every month you don't solve this problem, just as surely as if you were writing a check for \$10k and sending it in the mail to someone else each month.

How long are you willing to keep paying that check every month? Wouldn't you like to take care of this so you can keep your \$10k each month instead of sending it out the door? That's one way to dimensionalize this cost of not solving the problem.

Story and Solution

Once you have described the problem and amplified the consequences of not solving it, you've shown them the future, done the scrooge treatment on them or have become the ghost of Christmas future and said this is what will happen if you don't solve the current situation that you're in. Now it's time to share the story of how the problem can be solved and this will be difficult, depending on your specific situation, product or service. It might be the story of how you yourself finally solve this persistent problem. Perhaps you were in the position that your market, audience, readers, tribe are currently in.

It may be the story of how you helped a client or customer discover the solution on their own if you didn't solve it yourself. It does need to be more than just a description of what the solution is. You can't just say here's the answer and spit it out, because that has no emotional impact or connection for people. Telling the story of Bob, the frustrated business owner, who was on the edge of bankruptcy, whose family had lost faith in him and who, out of desperation tried one last idea that saved his business, because he could no longer look himself in the eye in the mirror, but when he tried this one last idea it turned his business around.

Telling that story is infinitely more powerful than simply saying, one day Bob figured out the answer. Now, it's something that should go without saying, but I'll saying it anyway just in case somebody needs clarification. The story you tell must absolutely be true, don't make these things up, don't lie. You might not have permission to tell a certain individual's story so you change the details like their name and/or business perhaps, whatever you need to do to disguise it so you're not giving away somebody's personal story without their permission.

However, if you can tell your own story and you can dredge up the emotional impact details of what you went through to solve a problem, that's the best solution of all. The next best way to write the copy is to tell the real story of a real person and get their permission, even get them to tell the story with personal details.

If you can't then you can fictionalize it to an extent, but be honest about that and say this isn't the person's real name to protect their privacy, but there was a business owner named Jan, who went through the following things. Just make sure the story is actually true and if you're thinking to yourself, what if there is no story. I don't have a story like that. Then I would suggest that you haven't looked closely enough, because there is always a story to tell. Even if you just intellectually thought up a brilliant answer to a problem you saw that was pervasive and you helped many people solve the problem, yet you didn't know any of their stories, go back and talk to the people that you helped. Ask them what the story was.

Pick up the phone and call. Say Jan, I know I helped you a few years ago with this situation in your business or in your physical health, with your relationship or whatever it was that you helped with. You were my client and I'm getting ready to write some material that will help other people decide to solve this problem as well, can you talk to me a little about what happened? Do you feel that what I did for you created some value, made a change in the quality of your life and the quality of your business, that it affected your family, your employees, the people around you, the people that you serve in your business? Did it have any affect at all?

As Jan begins to open up and tell you those things, be sure to encourage her by saying, tell me more about that and you will discover that there is a story with every client.

Transformation and Testimony

The next key step in writing your copy is to remember that whatever you are selling, whether a home study program, a book, a seminar, your consulting services, a new way of behaving, of thinking, acting or being that you're convincing people of. Anything at all, what people are buying is not the stuff. They aren't buying your meditation technique your scripture study system or your exercise program, home study course, DVDs or book, training system or your widgets. They aren't buying any of that stuff they're buying the transformation that this stuff brings them.

When people buy the P90X workout program, to cite a popular example you're probably familiar with. They did not wake up one morning and say to themselves, I sure hope today somebody tries to sell me a bunch of DVDs and a wall chart, that would be awesome! They didn't role over in bed and look their spouse in the eye and say honey, I hope today I can buy a prepackaged exercise program, you don't happen to know anywhere I could do that do you? That's not what happens.

Those things, the DVDs, wall charts, weights, exercise mat, water bottle or jersey is all stuff. What buyers of P90X are actually purchasing is that lean healthy, youthful and attractive physique they want for themselves. The feeling of pride, energy and a great appearance. The side long glances from members of the opposite sex. They want those things for themselves. They want the transformation.

It's also important that you offer testimony, real life stories of people who have made the transformation that you're teaching, and who have done it successfully. The more like your average customer these stories can be the better. If you study the most successful infomercials on TV you'll notice that they consist of about 70% testimonials. P90X is no different. In fact, what's different about P90X is for a long time one of the standards in the weight loss and physical training industry was that you don't show people sweating. You don't want people to look like they're working too hard.

P90X's advertising is very truthful and basically says we're going to work you so hard you're going to feel like you want to puke in a bucket. It's going to be tough. They have a workout called Insanity, but they're showing the truth that people know that I can't get in shape without exerting physical effort. Then they're showing the result that will come from doing that.

And while you probably will not be writing an infomercial it's important to remember that there are three questions people are asking when you sell them coaching, consulting or instruction or anything like that. If you're a speaker, trainer, coach, consultant, author, seminar leader, the three questions people are:

1. Has this person been able to do what they're describing, for themselves?

So, if you're teaching people to make money with an online business, have you been able to make money with your own online business? That's a question people will ask about you.

2. Has this person been able to teach other people to achieve the results they are describing?

So maybe you, the super gifted athlete, were able to bring out your six pack abs with this exercise and eating program, but maybe that's because you're physically gifted or genetically lucky. You won the genetics lottery. Have you been able to teach other people who are like me, to do that? Showing cases of where you taught other people is important.

3. Will this person be able to teach me how to achieve these results?

Am I convinced their system will work for me? This is where you have to make an effort to make sure you communicate that message, that you absolutely can.

Offer

Let's look at what we've done so far. We've defined the problem, clarified the cost of not solving it and amplified what that outcome will be if they don't solve the problem. We told the story of the solution and how it came to be and we've helped your reader/viewer or listener visualize the transformation through the testimonials from others and you, and in that mélange of testimonials or stories you've told to them, hopefully there was a story about someone just like them.

Now is the time to describe exactly what you're offering for sale. This is just the section of your copy where you lay out your offer. You can even create a little subheading on the page or in the copy with a section called... Here's exactly what you get...

You want to make certain when laying out your offer that you focus 80% of the copy in this section on the transformation itself. Yes, you do have to talk about what they're actually going to get. We call those the deliverables. So, this might be the class schedule if you're teaching a life class, the DVDs, books, manuals or software, whatever it is you're delivering. That should only occupy about 20% of the copy in this section. Remember, as you describe the deliverables in the offer section you have to keep tying them back to the transformation and the benefits that your buyers will receive.

For example, instead of just writing that the buyer will receive 8 DVDs, each containing a 45 minute workout session, you want to communicate that they're getting the DVDs, but also describe the benefits that will flow that lead toward the outcome they want. So you might say they receive 8 DVDs that each contain a body sculpting, fat burning transformational workout that will help you craft the lean muscle you really want and melt away fat like magic.

Response

This is one of the areas where copy tends to often be the weakest, requesting the response. We are asking the customer to buy. At this point in your copy if you've done your job well, you should not be shy about making this request. You should tell the customer exactly what they need to do so they can get your program, consulting, book, software or product, etc. and start receiving the result they really want. You should remind them why it's important to do so.

In the part of the copy where I'm requesting a response I will often write copy that's similar to this. I'll say something like you're at a decision point now. You've come to a crossroads. You can either continue down the path of least resistance, the path you've already been traveling on, or you can choose the road less traveled. The path of least resistance will probably result in your getting the same outcomes you always have, experiencing the same frustrations, failure, contempt, anger and disappointment.

But if you want something different to happen. If you want to change the direction of your health or the quality of your relationship, the state of your finances or the pride that you feel when you look in the mirror, whatever it is you're teaching, promoting or selling. You'll have to do something different. If you want a new result you need a new behavior. Make a new choice and pursue your new outcome, and then I'll get specific with them and I'll give them very instructional, directive copy telling them exactly what to do, almost at an elementary sounding level.

I'll say something like, click the button below, fill out the order form, double check your information and then click the submit order button. We will immediately ship your entire package to you. It will contain everything you need to get started. So you're telling them what to do and then it's also good to describe what will happen next so they can begin envisioning being an owner of what you're selling.

Some people shy away from strong language like this because they feel it's insulting, but the fact is if you truly believe that you have a solution that will solve a problem for people why on earth would you not be as direct as possible in telling them how to get the solution? In fact, aren't you doing them a disservice by not making the strongest case possible? My suggestion is that you use this five-part framework that I've described, to write or rewrite your own sales copy.

The key to making this approach to writing sales copy successful is having the mindset of being a PASTOR, a shepherd.

So to review, the letters in the word PASTOR are an acronym for the major sections of your copy.

Problem
Amplify
Story and **S**olution
Transformation and **T**estimony
Offer
Response

If you apply the principles of being a shepherd to your readers, prospects, customers or tribe and you follow the sequence of the PASTOR formula, my prediction is, you will experience more sales, more profits and more happy customers more often.

What to Do Now

This was a long episode, but I really wanted to give you content you could put to work in your business this week. I hope you will. Will you use what I've taught you to write or rewrite some sales copy and then share the results? That would be awesome if you would do that. You can share the results by posting your comments underneath this podcast on the website, RayEdwards.com/121.

I would love to hear the story of how the new copy framework of PASTOR worked for you.

Until next time, when we are back with another podcast, I pray that God will continue to bless you and prosper you in crazy outrageous ways you never dreamed possible, because that's the kind of God he is. Be well. Speak with you soon.

By the way the transcripts of each podcast are being provided by Janette Mowry and our friends at SuccessTranscripts.com or call 229-246-4264. If you need sermons, audio programs, podcasts, speeches or whatever transcribed, you need to check in with Success Transcripts.