



It's ^{all} *not* your fault.

Do not underestimate the importance of **your message's effect on your audience**, it will make or break a marketing campaign.

2 persuasion crafting ● Forgive Their Faults

“You can only find out what you actually believe (*rather than what you think you believe*) **by watching how you act**. You simply don't know what you believe, before that. You are too complex to understand yourself.”

— Jordan B. Peterson, 12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos

This quote is cold with its' logic but should light a flame under anyone who understands its implications. **What people think about themselves, both positive and negative, is almost always ill-informed and under developed.** The significance of your beliefs only matters in relation to the actions you take. Without venturing too deep into the realm of 'self-improvement' this simple insight is the driver behind the philosophy of 'forgive them their faults'.

In your writing, you can build a strong connection with your reader by acknowledging that *just because someone believes they can (or more importantly that they can't) accomplish something doesn't mean it's true.* Given the right tools and training, most people will be surprised at what they can accomplish; and while we can't give our reader every piece of the puzzle we can give them a very important piece: forgiveness.

“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

— Carl Gustav Jung

Our Message Will Have an Affect on Our Reader,
Our Job is to Guide That Reaction...

2 • Forgive Their Faults

“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.”

— Carl Gustav Jung

Part 1: Forgiveness of Faulty Information & Wrong Conclusions

The beauty of forgiveness in our writing is that we're handing our reader the power of choice; a choice to move beyond their current belief system to something better. **How?** Well, firstly as noted most people often don't understand the relationship between their beliefs and reality.

For instance... If they believe they can't lose weight (*through many years of failed attempts*) then that becomes their reality; the feedback loop is painfully apparent when viewed from the outside... *they believe they can't lose weight, so they don't try any new approaches, by default this leads to failure.* This failure both reinforces the belief along with something more insidious; a dark resentment of their apparent lack of ability. Their identity (ego) can get tied in with this belief, “*they're simply not the kind of person who can lose weight*” and they will come to resent this “fact”, and find all types of ways to confirm it in their day to day life (*see confirmation bias*). They may very much want change, but the false belief combined with the resentment of themselves makes success nearly impossible without drastic change.

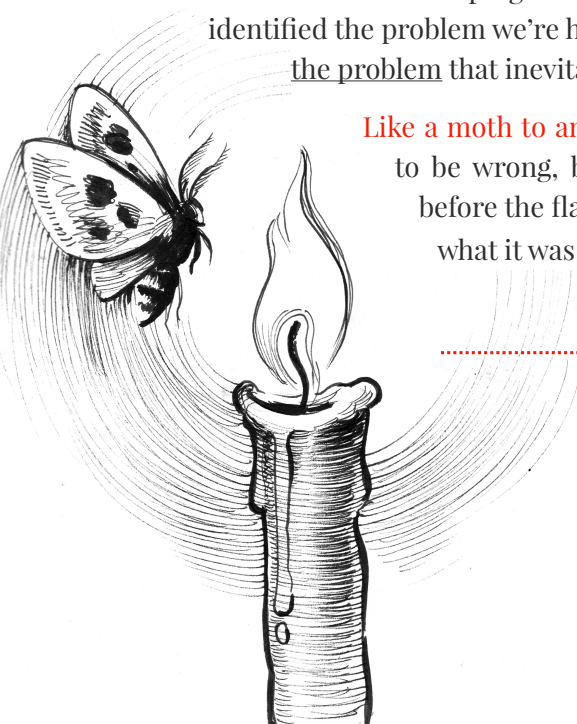
This is why psychological therapy is often the first step for many on a weight-loss journey (or weight gain for that matter). (*Cognitive behavioral therapy to aid weight loss current perspectives <https://link.sean.co/forgive-1>*) The self-deceived individual must be helped to change their perception of reality before they can consistently take the actions necessary to lose the weight, and as important, keep it off long term. Any ‘self-actualization’ adventure, a journey of positive change, includes another crucial step - *Acceptance*. Acceptance that their own damaging false beliefs (they've developed as a form of self-defense) are an immense part of the problem. Acceptance that the resentment they harbor against themselves must be faced and resolved.

In a real way, they must become the kind of person who loses weight before they can lose the weight.

We can all empathize with this challenge, for us it may not be weight loss...
but everyone has personal battles they are waging.

While we may not be therapists, and we may not be selling a product or service that is as impactful as substantial weight loss, **we can and must acknowledge the positive snowball effect our offer can have on people's lives.** We should take the time to identify what battles our audience is facing, and be crystal clear on how our product can assist them. If we're not helping in some way, well *it's not much of a product or service, is it?* Once we have identified the problem we're helping them solve, we then must also work to identify the false beliefs about the problem that inevitably lead our reader to failure.

Like a moth to an open flame humans are drawn to misconceptions. Not because we desire to be wrong, but because there is mysterious comfort in avoiding reality. It's not long before the flame burns away our wings and we are trapped, even going as far as to forget what it was like to fly at all.



Our Message Must Give Light To Not Just The Solution, But Address Misconceptions As Well

Forgive Their Faults

Part 1: Forgiveness of Faulty Information & Wrong Conclusions

That miss understanding, false belief, lie, whatever you want to call it is the piece of the puzzle we need to bring to their attention, and forgive them for their misconception (more on this later).



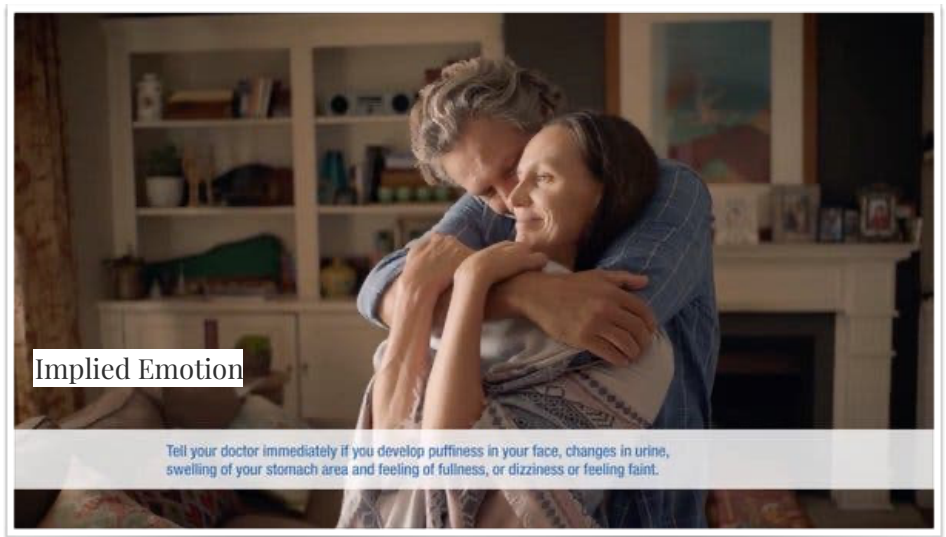
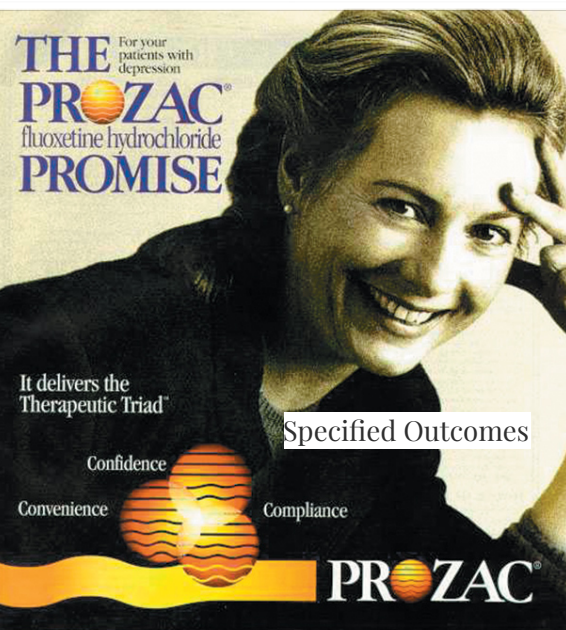
Another example... Let's say we're selling "just" bottles of water. Simple enough product, but think about the real-world benefits of water. It gives the drinker energy, vitalization, focus, a healthy alternative to other sugar-fueled monstrous drinks. Those positive impacts can lead to measurable improvements at work (more money?), more attentiveness in conversation (improved relationships?), and an all-around better life experience for the drinker (happiness).

The misconception about water is, well, it's *just* water. It's not, not if you want to compete in a world

of sugary alternatives. You must appeal to more than just the features; you must **attach and associate real-world outcomes and benefits to make your message resonate**. You must forgive the reader for not realizing the damage they're doing by not drinking enough water, the damage caused by drinking the alternatives... you must forgive them for not knowing. Let's take it a step further, you may want to take the blame off them for not knowing and attach it to the "evil corporations" pumping their blood full of sugar! *More on that in the following section 'Attacking Their Enemies'.*

As much as we may literally be forgiving in our copy, e.g. "*it's not your fault for not knowing the dangers of sugary beverages, and how important water is*" we are also metaphorically forgiving them by not bashing them over their head with these 'insights'. A **'tone' of forgiveness, the way we speak, can draw them in or push them away... and accusing our reader of being an idiot is not an ideal way to draw them in.**

This is easily seen in pharmaceutical commercials, mostly through imagery. The ads start out with dreary people, full of clear signs of hopelessness based on their condition. Then, the dreariness turns utter joy as the solution (the pill) is administered. From there they get their life back, running in a field with their grandchildren, or enjoying something they otherwise often missing from lack of treatment. *Then they often descend into a messy list of side effects that usually sound worse than the condition itself, but I digress.*



Forgive Their Faults

Part 1: Forgiveness of Faulty Information & Wrong Conclusions

Where is the forgiveness in this equation? Well, often it is simply implied... in the paramedical ad for example, since often the medication is “new”, they can easily be forgiven for not knowing about the option. *Ask your doctor if Pill Name is right for you.* That call to action is often preceded with a simple line of “stop living with *condition name*, and experience what life can be like without *condition name*”. Yes, this is a strong promise, but it also is a subtle acknowledgment that *it’s ok*, and *it’s only a problem if you do nothing about it*. It’s a touch of kindness that builds connection.

In a longer form marketing piece, the pharmaceutical ad may deliver a more potent line of forgiveness, something along the lines of “Most people don’t realize that there is now a new treatment option for *condition name*, they may believe that they must live with the pain and suffering that comes with it forever. Perhaps they’ve been misinformed that the treatment is too expensive, or that they wouldn’t qualify for the treatment for some other reason... this couldn’t be further from the truth!” **The copy is informing them that their potential false beliefs are *reasonable* (if not expected)**, that it’s understandable that they might not know; and can continue into a ‘call to action’ of what to do about it.

We, again, are simply looking to give them “an out”, a way of acknowledging any potential mistakes they may have made up to this point. Enforcing that the problem isn’t THEM as a person. The problem is, through no fault of their own, the lack of knowledge (or a tangle of false beliefs) they may have on the subject; or any other enemy we may be able to identify as a cause to their issue.

In this capacity as a writer, we are serving as a leader, a positive authority figure. And leaders must be willing to forgive those who lack understanding, and boy is our audience often misinformed and misunderstood.

At the beginning of any individual transformation, there is going to be resistance to the notion that “*it’s all my fault*”. And as empowering as it is for an individual to “*just do it*”, to take responsibility, and as much as we may believe in individuals’ rights and need to do so, **the reality is that, so far, they haven’t**. So, again, **don’t let our own beliefs harden our ability to give help to our readers, even if we may see their lack of action as pitiful**. You have not experienced their personal hell, and the first step to heaven may live in your ability to carry some of the load of resentment and loathing they carry; to assure them that it’s not *all* their fault.

Forgiveness can be seen as a gift, and as cold and monochrome as business may seem there are pockets of warmth and color that can arise from your brand, delivered through your messages... **you may be surprised how many people desire both what you’re selling, and a better understanding of their circumstances.**



*Let your message be
the lighthouse that
guides them through
the storm.*

2. define the light

1. define the storm

3. define the path

Forgive Their Faults

Part 2: Forgiving Desires - They, like you, are only human.



(not the actual bag)

It's ok to purchase something for reasons that may, to some, *seem less than righteous*.

One evening I was out with a friend who had just purchased a very expensive bag for his wife, this bag evidently cost around \$80k (yes, eighty thousand dollars). You could imagine my astonishment, regardless of how much money you make that's objectively a hefty price tag. She proceeded to show me this admittedly elegant bag... which *of course* was very difficult to purchase, at this level of luxury the buyers are mostly celebrities and the sellers prefer to keep it that way.

The exclusivity factor was overcome and my friend was with great effort able to purchase the gift. Admittedly a lovely gesture on some level. She progressed to demonstrating the features of the bag, the quality of its leather, the nice magnetized hatch, it's many convenient pockets. All while my mind kept doing the math on what I would rather do with \$80k, no amount of bells and whistles was going to justify its price tag to me.

Pragmatically this purchase made no sense, and I'm going to guess most of you reading this may agree with that assessment. Buying a small condo, paying off student loans, getting a luxury car, or a considerable donation to charity; all of these things sounded like a better purchase decision to me. But guess what? We are not the target audience of this product, in-fact the seller takes it up a notch and makes it difficult for just "anyone" to purchase it, even if they're pounding at the door with cash in hand. *Now that's a distinctive level of luxury.*

You may also conclude that it's a disgusting display of materialism, or some other moral or political assessment, but that's another discussion entirely.

Why didn't my friend come to the same conclusion about the price of the purse? Because we're not living the same reality, in a sense, his experiences up to the moment of purchases are much different than mine. Not to say they don't have a concept of how much money that is, they aren't trust fund kids or billionaires. But their reality is that they have luxury cars, no student loans, they don't need a new condo to add to their collection, and they give plenty to charity... At the point of purchase what they were looking for was what we all look for in a gift: *giving something desired and beautiful to someone we love... well, at least at the surface.*

If that is where the purchase decision came from then who are we to judge? And, more valuable to this discussion, **what are the lessons for us as marketers?**

Do Not Assume You And Your Customer Have All The Same Motivations or Desires



Forgive Their Faults

Part 2: Forgiving Desires - They, like you, are only human.

I share this story simply because it demonstrates a less overt form of forgiveness in our marketing, and it has to do with the concept of 'ego-morphing'. **This relates to the idea of why we buy the things that we buy**, beyond the pure utility of the item; the motive. For example, we may buy a \$20 watch for its utility of telling time, so why would anyone in their right mind purchase a \$200,000 watch? If you ask someone who's done such a thing, they may often go to great lengths to explain the craftsmanship of the item, the beauty, the historical significance of the long-standing company that created the piece. All of which may be true.



But, underneath these justifications **is the very real and natural desires tied into a persons 'ego', the need for status, confidence, power, and, well, sex.**

A \$200,000 watch is a powerful social shortcut to establish the purchaser's place in their perceived hierarchy, sharing quite clearly and quickly with others their status. And more to the point of 'ego-morphing' it confirms it internally to the buyer. They bought the watch to fulfill a need to confirm such things, they kept it for whatever justifications they prefer.

Before you judge the buyer too harshly, you should know that **even the person who purchases based on what they might consider "utility alone", the person who buys the \$20 watch, is reinforcing pieces of their ego.** It may be that they see themselves as frugal, something they're proud of, or perhaps they see themselves as more intelligent than others - after all, they did get a great deal on that \$20 watch, *'what silly person would spend \$200,000 on a watch?'* they think. **The point is, each buyer has a complex array of reasons and needs behind a purchase, any purchase, and being aware of these reasons will help us write copy that appeals to these reasons.**

So, which comes first? The egocentric desires, or the subjective justifications?

It doesn't particularly matter, they both naturally bubble up whenever we trade something we have for something we want or need. Most of the things we purchase today we don't *need* to stay alive; and realistically anything 'beyond the basics' our human nature is going to find an 'ego-centric' way to interpret the purchase.

The type of person you think you are determines largely the types of products you choose to buy, or not to buy.

As Pratkanis and Aronson noted in their work "Age of Propaganda", 1991, **"By purchasing the 'right stuff,' we [consumers] enhance our own egos and rationalize away our inadequacies."** Consumers (we) are using what we have purchased to enforce a perception of their own attributes. This process works in relation to both the positive and negative judgments of ourselves, On some level, everything we are selling is interpreted through this lens of 'who we think we are'. If a potential buyer sees our product & marketing as reinforcing their perception of their own self-worth in some way they are likely to consider our offer... conversely, if they see our offer as something that diametrically opposes a "truth" about themselves they will be turned off. *Think of the people who buy Apple vs. Android.*

That may read as quite accusatory, like a judgy parent questioning why their teenager bought a muscle car instead of a more reasonable and safer Volvo. The problem with judging others for their purchase decisions (that don't harm themselves or others) is that we frequently commit the same "sins". If you personally don't want to purchase things for what you perceive as the wrong reasons, fine, **but don't let this drive your copy.** The pragmatic approach is to view the 'reason' someone justifies a purchase as what it is, human nature at work. You wouldn't fault a dog for peeing on a tree, then don't judge the rationalizations others make when they purchase something... or the price of the offer you're writing for. This usually isn't a problem for entrepreneurs who write copy for their own offers but can become an issue if you are writing for someone else.

2 • *Forgive Their Faults*

“Learn too light a candle in the darkest moments of someone’s life...

Be the light that helps others see; it is what gives life its deepest significance.”

— Roy T. Bennett, *The Light in the Heart*

A’s of Influence That Apply

Acknowledgement ~ *join the conversation in your audience’s mind.*

Arousal ~ *tap into the emotional appeal of what you’re selling.*

Aspirations ~ *identify where your audience is & where they want to be.*

Ascension ~ *guiding your audience through the stages of growth*

Affirm ~ *take a stand for what you know to be true.*

Associate ~ *associate your brand with positive familiarity.*

Animate ~ *give life to your content & marketing.*

Action ~ *present an offer they can’t refuse.*

Forgive Their Faults

Ego-morphing in action...



▶ <https://link.sean.co/watch-example>

Transcript

Starts at 6min 45sec

Kevin O'Leary: Like that's what I'm ask you about my watch. Yeah.

Kevin O'Leary: That's a piece of consumer electronics.

Marques: It absolutely is.

Kevin O'Leary: And. You know, again, because I Mr. Wonderful, I want to tell you the truth, when you walk in a room with that on your wrist, you're telling everybody, I'm 20 percent off retail. You want to get a watch that talks about you. As, you know, it's a style thing.

Kevin O'Leary: Know what I'm saying? I wouldn't be caught dead with that on my wrist.

Marques: Here's how I see it. Cause I kind of see parallels in the car industry in an interesting way, you know, an investment watch. [Yes]. Versus a utility watch. [Yes]. So when I when I'm walking down the street and I get a notification on my phone and this shows up and I can just dismiss it real quick, right? Or someone calls me and I don't have to take my phone in my pocket. I'm just hanging onto the subway with one hand and I can take the call real quick and then end it. That is some of the things that I value any utility watch where if I was just buying a fashion piece or an investment watch or I have different goals, what I wanted to appreciate in value or I want to look better, this is not what I would choose.

Kevin O'Leary: So what would be cool for you would be to have a watch that speaks to you from a styles perspective or an investment perspective. And the electronics utility, you know, the other day I looked I was looking at this watch and a woman beside me who I didn't know said, what time is it? I said, I have no idea. She said, you just looked at your watch, she said, that has nothing do with the time.

Kevin O'Leary: I'm appreciating the art, the mastery of making this piece, which is one of 10 in the world. And it just brings a tear to my eye. And I love to look at it. I have no idea what time it is. I don't care. [Yeah. Yeah.] That's what a what a watch is about.

Marques: Totally. And if you see the same thing in cars too, right?

Marques: Someone will just love and appreciate a car sitting in their garage. Beautifully. I might not try to drive, but once a year, but I can look at and admire it for the mechanical art that it is. Or I can buy a borderline piece of tech, an electric car at Tesla, [yeah] and it's just getting me from point A to point B over and over and over. And I'm saving money because I don't buy gas and has all these other values to it.

Kevin O'Leary: Well, maybe it's because you're a young guy. But at some point you want to appreciate the art, the mastery of it, of a man spending a thousand hours to make something that has no reason to exist other than it's a piece of art, because that watch tells the time a lot better than this piece of art. Right. But this thing costs 4000 times what that does.

As salesmen, as copywriters, as business owners, there's nothing wrong with polishing the 'ego-centric' aspects of our offer. By doing so we are forgiving our buyers for their rationalizations. The ethics here are simple - if you believe in your offer, provide a reasonable way for the individual to receive a refund if they change their mind, and aren't making false promises then there's no harm in a bit of ego-stroking. They can, after all, always return the Rolex.

While putting this piece together a friend of mine sent me this video of Kevin O'Leary (aka 'Mr. Wonderful') interviewing one of my favorite Tech YouTubers Marques Brownlee which perfectly illustrates the cognitive processes that happen when a purchase is made. Watch as Mr. Wonderful explains why he purchased his 5 figure watch, and what it means in the context of social status and how he quickly pivots into a story behind the watch. Marques then explains why his watch fills his personal needs. Both have solid justifications for their purchases, and neither particularly discounts the other's perspective.

Kevin O'Leary: And I appreciate what this person did with his life to make this thing.

Marques: What is this watch and should I get it or is that not appropriate?

Kevin O'Leary: Well, this is an FP Journe Centigraphe of which there are only 10 on Earth.

Marques: Sounds like I can't afford that.

Kevin O'Leary: This is number six. I'll tell you what it costs. It's about eighty thousand dollars. But it's not, it's not about the money. It's about that, the FP Journe, who is actually Picasso alive, if you could buy a Picasso from Picasso in the south of France, walk into a studio, say, I really love that I'm going to buy it from you and I know who you are. That would be really what's happening here with an FP Journe, right. So when a man only makes 10 watches, he's really gutting his soul for you because he's not doing it for the money.

Marques: That's like the the McLaren GTR like special edition. [Exactly] Only in the World, you know they're special. They can only make so many.

Kevin O'Leary: Does that sing to you? Would you like to own one of those cars? You a car guy?

Marques: I'd say I'm more of a car guy than a watch guy. And I can make those parallels. And I appreciate the mastery of the mechanical design of a watch [Yeah] in the same way. But let's say I want to get a watch and I can't go headfirst into the McLaren GT of watches. Where should I start?

Kevin O'Leary: The watch that I think would be perfect for you as a starter Watch would probably be the Patek Phillippe 5711 Nautilus. It is the most pursued watch on earth today is steel with a blue face. Yeah, but it is a beautiful mastery of what Patek Phillippe is all about.

Marques: This watch face, it's like copying some of that. Yeah I know. But like that ain't a Patek, I know.

Kevin O'Leary: But the point is when you walk in a room with that, people that love watches know right away that you respect the mastery of making something like that. And also that you would have one says Patek really digs you because there's a thousand guys around the world that want one of those.

Marques: But it's difficult to actually get?

Kevin O'Leary: I think I can help you out... [ok] But you have to make that decision that you want to get there.

Marques: Alright, that might be something I can dip my feet into.

Part 3: Ways to (Ethically) Stroke the Ego & Make the Sale

There are two key ways to explore ways to leverage ego-morphing in our writing. The first is obvious, **we can tailor our message to specifically engage the egotistical values of those we target.** They want status? Show them someone using your product in a way that gains the admiration of others. They want sex-appeal? Show them someone looking sexy, receiving not so subtle suggestions of that kind of attention from others. Just open up a magazine and explore a few ads to see this in action.

Don't forget, when viewing an ad we're quickly judging both the product and the message in relation to how we might fit in the picture... The ad for a Jeep is designed to appeal to the person who sees themselves as an explorer. The wrinkleless heroine showing off the latest age-defying cream appeals to the desire to be seen as young, throw in a fun and flirty expression to tap into the desire to be seen as desirable... you get the idea.

Use messages and images that illustrate a distinct value that we know our target would very much like to reinforce in their own life. [See *Hero's Journey Framework* in this book for more information on how to accomplish this.] Make 'them' feel sexy, confident, smarter, more fun, more flirty, more powerful.

The second way to tap into ego-morphing in our writing is much more demanding of our imagination and can be even more influential. It involves combining both the positive ego-boosting aspects of our offer and our audience along with addressing much less desirable aspects of their ego... and forgiving them for their errors in perception.

As we've discussed previously the 'negative values' we assign ourselves subconsciously are almost always much more dramatic in our minds than in reality... and/or they're simply not true. Someone may see themselves as a complete failure in the dating world, where in reality it has nothing to do with them as a person and everything to do with the fact that they simply don't leave the house.

What are we to do with someone who has falsely attributed a 'situational issue' (not leaving the house) with a 'value conclusion' (that they are bad at dating)?

Well, it might be as simple as just *telling them.*

how it's done

1. Acknowledge a negative/false belief.

So you think you're bad at dating...

2. Give them the context as to why they're not alone in having that false belief.

You may feel this way because you haven't been on a date for a long time, and you seem to get little attention from your preferred prospects.

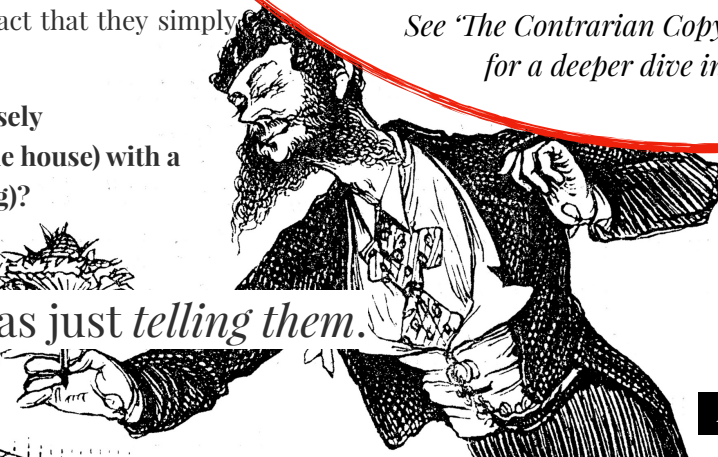
3. Forgive them for having the belief... after all, they didn't understand; it's not their fault that they miss attributed lack of action (leaving house) to a personality issue (bad at dating).

I can understand why you feel this way, many do - even the most charming and beautiful people may conclude they're undesirable at times. You would be forgiven for believing that you have nothing to offer. THE REAL PROBLEM IS... You simply haven't put yourself out there.

4. Invite them to leave the false belief about themselves behind.

You see, many people haven't given themselves a chance to shine. They put themselves in the wrong situations with the wrong people, or no situations at all, and conclude something is wrong with them when they strikeout.

See *'The Contrarian Copy Structure'* for a deeper dive into these steps.



Forgive Their Faults

Part 3: Ways to (Ethically) Stroke the Ego & Make the Sale

Again, this strategy may lend itself to more long-form marketing pieces such as sales pages, emails, video sales letters; but with the right imagery, it can work wonders in advertisements as well. It also lends itself to working well on offers positioned around self-improvement, personal growth, and health; *though I highly recommend looking at your offer from those perspectives; even if you're selling something as innocuous as bottled water.*

A simpler way to look at all this may be to change our own perspective on what we're selling from: "product/service" to "a new (better) way of doing things". Sprinkling into our message forgiveness in both literal and metaphorical ways.

By granting someone forgiveness for a long-held damaging misunderstanding about themselves you are accomplishing several things. Once you're building trust, *forgiveness is perhaps the most robust trust builder there is*, two you're setting yourself up as both a confidant and an authority. In a very real way, you are also (third) giving them permission to forgive themselves. Powerful stuff indeed.

Ask yourself...

How does your offer help to alleviate negative self-image beliefs of your audience?

How does your offer help to enhance the non-negative* self-image beliefs of your audience?

* **Non-negative** are subjective values such as vanity, esteem, self-importance, superiority, or social approval... They shouldn't be interpreted by us as either completely positive or negative, but they are all things considered consciously or subconsciously when a purchase is made.

You might think that your offer has little to contribute directly in terms of improvement or reinforcement of desired attributes... it can be tough to attribute 'improved social status' to a cup of coffee. There are, however, other ways to imply these attributes.

One way is to **personify**. To give personality to a brand or product or service.

The Dos Equis "the most interesting man in the world..." campaign, or "The Old Spice Guy" commercials. These ads sell-by associating their product with values (personified by the actors and events) the target audience *desires to have and accentuate*.

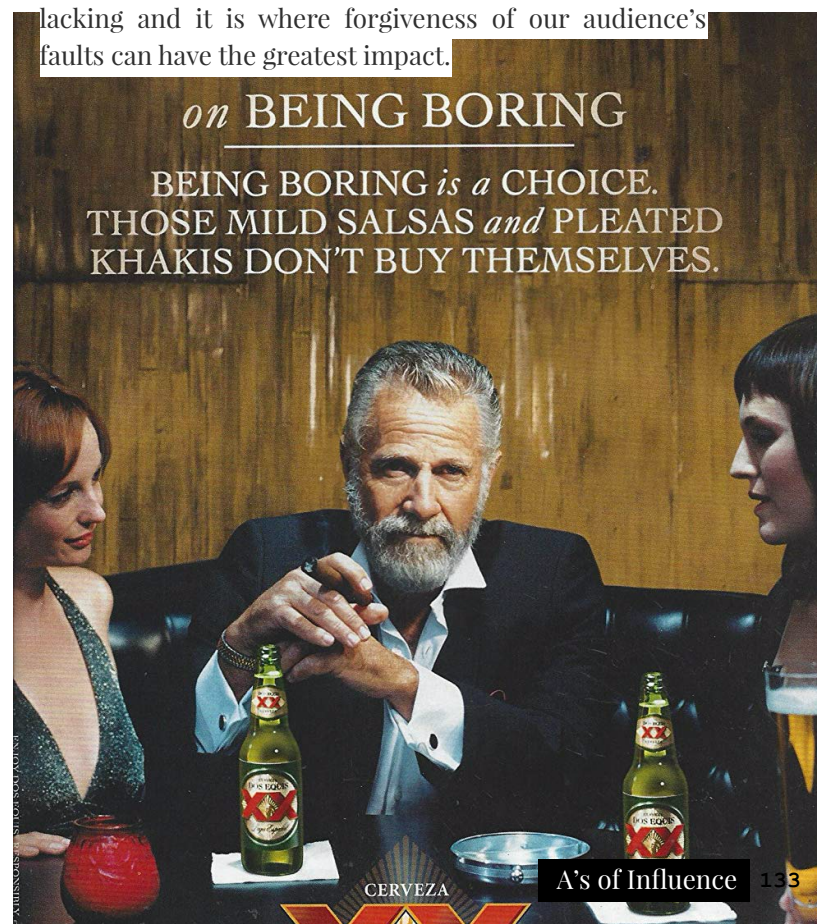
We'll dive deeper into 'values-based selling' in other sections within this guide, but in essence, WE as writers

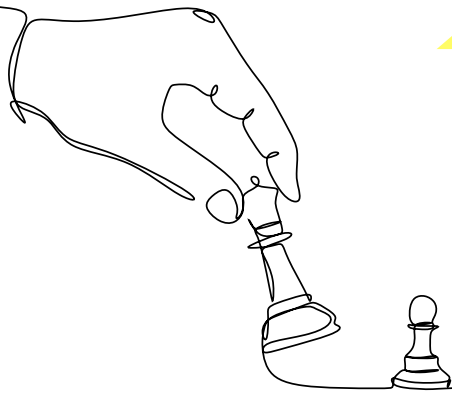
need to remember that our target audience has desires, desires we shouldn't ignore or judge them for.

In short... Identify what qualities (values) your target audience wishes to associate with themselves after their interaction with your brand/product/message. Not just how you want them to feel (emotions) but what qualities/values do you want to enhance in their life?

It can be easy to forget that most of the individuals interacting with our brand or message have never heard of us before, have no clue who we are, and no ideas (positive or negative) about "us". They may have associations with our industry which can color their attitude, but mostly they are coming to us with a blank slate. **Whatever message we put forth at the start will serve as the foundation for their perception.** If we shape our message to be attractive to both literal and 'ego-centric' needs quickly we are well-positioned to build the sales relationship... If, however, we start with a convoluted mess of a stance, no clear values, no clear ideas or useful insights, **we will likely lose their attention before we had a chance to explain our offer.**

This is why we need to have a crystal clear understanding of (1.) what we are selling, (2.) who we are selling it to, (3.) how our offer affects the buyer, and (4.) how our message affects the potential buyer. This 4th factor in the equation is where most marketing copy is lacking and it is where forgiveness of our audience's faults can have the greatest impact.





Forgive Their Faults

try this

The philosophy behind much advertising is based on the old observation that every man is really two men—the man he is and the man he wants to be.

- William Feather

I love this quote because it clearly defines a distance in life that we all wish to shorten.

The distance between who we are and who we want to be. Forgiveness is a key part of that process.

Quick practical ways to put ‘Forgive Their Faults’ into action...

Let’s help our readers get from where they are to where they want to be... Applying the principles behind ‘Forgive Their Faults’ works wonders with content marketing, it can serve as the framework for a whole series of blog posts, cornerstone content pieces, and even whole eBooks or lead guides for us to create. We will draw from it for more direct marketing pieces such as emails, sales pages, and advertisements. Before we start crafting our pieces we first need to collect some information, follow the following 5 steps to **create a master research document to draw from while your writing.**

Your ‘Mistakes’ Research Document

STEP #1

DEFINE THE MISTAKES: Review to the 4 steps in Part 3 “How it’s Done” a few pages back, then identify and write out at least 3 harmful and/or misguided beliefs related to your offer. [For inspiration search ‘KEYWORD mistakes’ and your niche/industry on blogging sites such as Medium.com]

Ideally, you want to find mistakes that you have experience with, mistakes you’ve made or ones you’ve helped customers overcome. If you find a mistake that seems important but you haven’t yourself dealt with it keep digging into the subject, find more articles and books related to the topic. **Look for videos of people who faced the issue you’ve defined,** often you can find passionate stories of people who’ve overcome them. If it’s particularly interesting you may consider reaching out to individuals (clients or otherwise) who may have experienced it and interview them. At a minimum, you’ll want to be sure you have a strong handle on the issue itself, otherwise, your reader will see right through you.

The Six Biggest Mistakes I Made as a Beginner Writer

Common pitfalls that we’d all be better to avoid

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4 Mistakes You’re Probably Making as a New Writer

It’s okay, I made them too

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2 responses

3 Mistakes Startup Founders Make

Vidhya Ravi [Follow](#)
Jun 13, 2018 · 5 min read

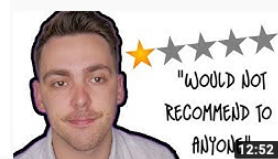
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You’re pouring blood, sweat, and tears into ensuring your startup beats the



The Worst Writing Mistakes I Made

Reedsy · 7.2K views · 9 months ago
We all make mistakes...here are some of mine. DISCOVER REEDSY HERE: ...



Facing my Writing Mistakes

Wolfshot Publishing · 4K views · 12 months ago
Kind of a scary video to make, actively telling people to be done. (Open Me) The ...

How To

STEP #2

RAISE THE STAKES: Next, define the cost, raise the stakes! What damage is affecting your reader this very moment? Create a list of bullet points of the possible real-world negative consequences that stem from the mistakes you've defined.



Our goal here isn't to frighten *necessarily*, our aim is **to make the consequences clear**. What are the cascading effects they can expect to experience if they don't address the issues? Where might they find themselves 'stuck' in the future if they don't change? Why are these mistakes going to hold them back from reaching their goals? Painting a picture of dark clouds on the horizon will heighten the desire for the reader to find a solution, one you and your offer can provide.

Example...

For example, Nick Wignall's post "6 Subtle Habits That Are Sabotaging Your Happiness" (<https://link.sean.co/6-habits>) does a great job of raising the stakes for each of the habits. Here's an excerpt...



Bad Habit: Worrying about the future and other people's opinions of you...

Worrying is the mental habit of trying to solve a problem that either can't be solved or isn't really a problem. **[defines the mistake]**

It's easy to fall into because it feels productive, like we're at least doing something. It staves off the feeling we hate most of all: helplessness.

Worry gives us the illusion of control.

Source: <https://link.sean.co/6-habits>

But here's the thing: sometimes we are helpless.

Sometimes things are bad, or painful, or terrifying and there's nothing we can do about it.

- Yes, something terrible could happen to you or people you care about in the future.
- Yes, some people really, truly, deep-down don't like you very much.

Worrying about it is denial of reality. It's a demand that everything be the way you want it. It's an attempt to control what is fundamentally outside your control. It's expectations gone wild.

Sh*t happens. People are jerks.

Worrying about it **won't change things**. But it will lead to a lot of anxiety. **[raises the stakes]**

The implication being that it will actively impede our goals while causing anxiety.

STEP #3

THE FORGIVENESS: List out possible reasons someone may fall for the mistakes, both internal and external. Why might they hold onto these false beliefs (internal)? What influences might be interested in keeping the truth about their false beliefs from them (external)? By default, we can always count on 'ignorance' as a common issue, "they just didn't know" - and we're here to fix that.

Example...

Let's continue with Nick Wignall's post "6 Subtle Habits That Are Sabotaging Your Happiness" (<https://link.sean.co/6-habits>) and highlight where he 'forgives' the reader...

Bad Habit: Worrying about the future and other people's opinions of you...

Worrying is the mental habit of trying to solve a problem that either can't be solved or isn't really a problem. **[defines the mistake]**

It's easy to fall into because it feels productive, like we're at least doing something. It staves off the feeling we hate most of all: helplessness.

Worry gives us the illusion of control. **[Forgiveness]**

But here's the thing: sometimes we are helpless.

Sometimes things are bad, or painful, or terrifying and there's nothing we can do about it.

- Yes, something terrible could happen to you or people you care about in the future.
- Yes, some people really, truly, deep-down don't like you very much.

Worrying about it is denial of reality.

It's a demand that everything be the way you want it.

It's an attempt to control what is fundamentally outside your control.

It's expectations gone wild.

Sh*t happens. People are jerks.

Worrying about it won't change things.

But it will lead to a lot of anxiety. **[raises the stakes]**

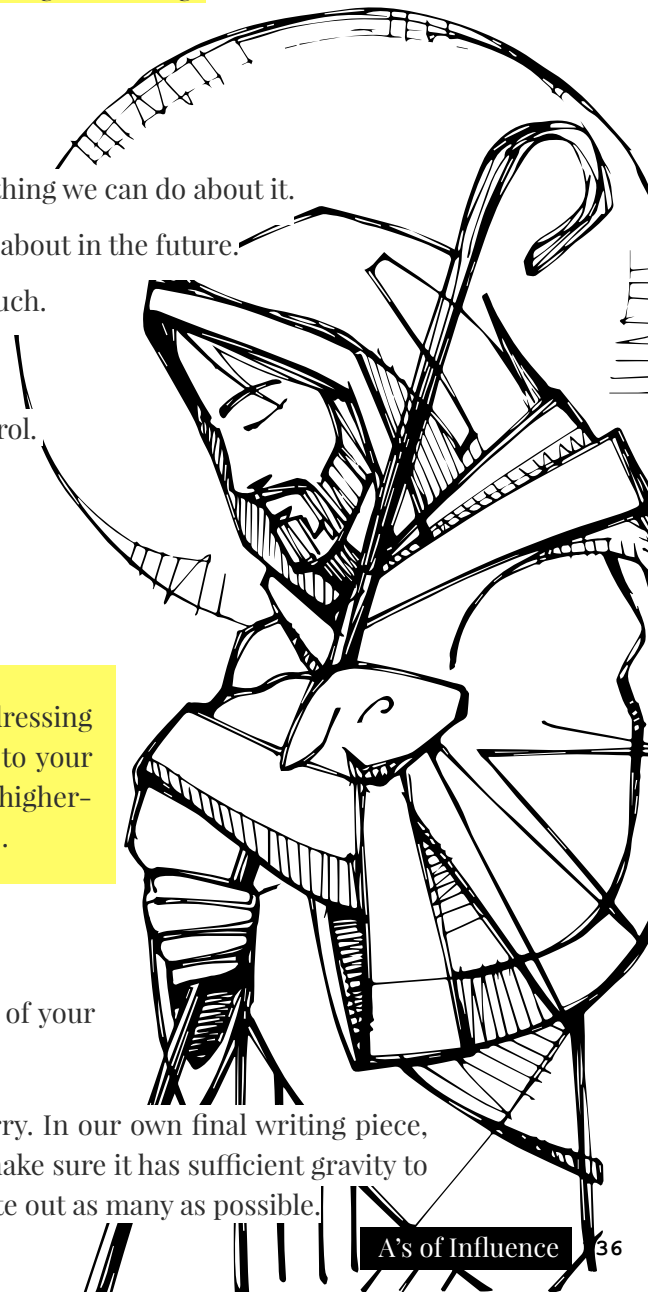
STEP #4

GRAND ILLUMINATION: Highlight the immediate benefits of addressing the mistake. What are the easily identifiable benefits? Then, return to your easily identifiable benefits and extrapolate to more complex and higher-level benefits [See also example of selling bottled water a few pages back].

Nick's concludes his 'worry habit' section with the following line...

- ▶ "Learn to accept the pain of what is or what might be and let go of your habit of worry and all the anxiety it generates." **[illumination]**

Nick went with one simple benefit of addressing the bad habit of worry. In our own final writing piece, we may wish to 'keep it simple' and hone in on one key benefit - but make sure it has sufficient gravity to pull the reader in. In your research document, however, be sure to write out as many as possible.



Your 'Mistakes' Research Document *cont.*

STEP #5

WHAT'S NEXT: What steps can be taken to address the mistakes? Even if they seem obvious list them out. One of the steps should be related to your offer, of course, it needs to be part of the process of 'fixing' the problem.



Example...

Let's finally return to Nick Wignall's post (<https://link.sean.co/6-habits>) and see what practical advice he gives on the subject.

[what's next?]

Work to become more aware of your habit of worry, then question it:

- *Am I productively solving a genuine problem, or doing mental hand wringing?*
- *What function does my worry really serve?*
- *What benefit does it really give me?*



The 'What's Next' section should be as concise and actionable as possible, Nick gives us a very simple yet practical set of instructions and not much more.

The type of marketing material we are creating from our research document will largely determine how much detail we will want to include.

A blog post may give us plenty of room to dig into details on each step without risking losing a sale, but a sales page may simply hint at them; and an email may not have any at all but instead leaving this section to be answered on the next page. In our research document, we will want to include as many details as possible so we can pull what we need from it when we are creating our pieces.

What to Do With Your Mistakes Research Document

You can start to craft persuasive materials from this document right away, these types of pieces can stand alone as powerfully empathic cornerstones for your brand. **At the end of the A's of Influence framework we will look at more specific ways to weave this content together in ever more persuasive and useful ways.** Next, we're going to build upon 'Forgive Their Faults' with the concept of **'Defeating Their Demons'**. We'll explore the ultimate impediment our audience faces on their journey to success, and how we can help them conquer it.

"Now it's the dark's turn to be afraid."

— Joseph Delaney, Curse of the Bane

Up next... Defeat Their Demons

