

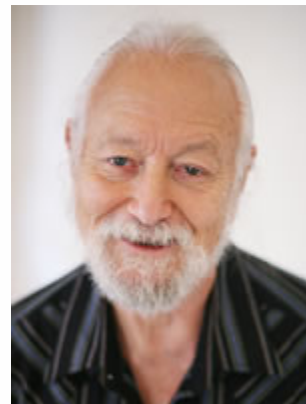
Adopting the Mindset That Lets You Write Great Copy

By Will Newman

If you haven't been a part of the AWAI family for very long, you might not know that in addition to *The Writer's Life*, I write an exclusive blog for *Circle of Success* members.

So, in planning what to write for you this week, I decided to give you a peek into the Exclusive COS Blog vault. I've picked topics from some of the most popular of previous COS blogs. Topics I feel will help you in your quest for *the writer's life*. I'll be writing about those topics for the next four days.

We'll start our peek into the vault by talking about the mindset of an "A-level" copywriter — AWAI's terms for highly successful copywriters.



Will Newman

I know you want to achieve *the writer's life*. It might seem to reach that goal, you must become an "A-level" copywriter. But after the almost 20 years I've been writing, I've decided that success as a copywriter doesn't come from working to become an "A-level" copywriter. That's looking at your career from the wrong direction.

Don't worry about titles ...

If you want to be an "A-level" copywriter and have a six-figure career, there's only one thing you should focus on.

Make sure you write "A-level" copy. Don't strive for recognition. Strive to make your copy your best possible.

So, what's the mindset of an "A-level" copywriter? Here are five strategies for getting there ...

1. No job is too small for your best work

Regardless of what stage you're writing at in your career — rank beginner or 25-year veteran — you might work for small clients. In all likelihood, they won't be able to pay you what you feel you're worth. When this happens, avoid the temptation to "dash something off."

Give these clients your absolute best work. You're building your portfolio. More important, you're building your own mindset that *everything* you write is important. Everything is worth maximum effort.

2. All strong writing begins with research

Maybe you know the topic better than anyone else. But "A-level" copywriting begins with finding new things about your product — and your prospect — that other copywriters missed. A golden nugget that sets your copy apart from all others.

You can't find that golden nugget without digging. *Never* shortchange research.

3. Give yourself time to revise

Great writers — copywriters, fiction writers, writers of all kinds — never accept their first draft. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to revise multiple times.

4. Never accept "good enough"

If you've been writing for a while and get to where you're ready to settle for less than your best, put your writing away. Take a break. Give yourself and your writing a rest.

"Good enough" *never* results in "A-level" copy. And it never leads to becoming an "A-level" copywriter.

5. Always listen to criticism

When someone critiques your writing, and you're tempted to explain why you said what you said ... STOP. The fact that someone stumbled over your words means your words weren't good enough.

But understand this: Your words weren't good enough. Not you. Criticism of your writing is never about you as a person. It's about the words. Your singular focus *must be* to make the words the strongest you can get on paper.

There you have it. Five strategies — no, my core beliefs — on how to become an "A-level" copywriter ... by not concentrating on that goal.

Tomorrow, we're going to talk about a truly crucial part of successful copy ... your headline.

Until then, I'd love to hear your thoughts and experiences on setting goals like "becoming an 'A-level' copywriter." Let us know right now by commenting below.

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21 Responses to "Adopting the Mindset That Lets You Write Great Copy"

Will, You are a reliable cheer-upper. What you write always gives a lift. And us solo amateurs often need a lift. Hope I get to meet you in October.

Robert

[FROM WILL: Being a cheerleader for members is as important to me as teaching strategies and skills. Thank you.]

Guest (Robert Phillips) – over a year ago

Thank you, Will. I was raised with the adage "if it's worth doing it's worth doing right". Also "do it right the first time and you won't have to explain why you didn't".

Thank you for your insights. I've earmarked them.

[FROM WILL: I like not having to explain why I didn't do it right. A similar adage from carpentry "measure twice, cut once" applies as well to all things. Thank you.]

PatriciaPjrs – over a year ago

Thanks Will, I enjoyed this article immensely. A great way to look at becoming an A-Lister.

[FROM WILL: You're welcome.]

JohnE – over a year ago

Thanks for sharing these principles with me. I'll remember to use them when I do start the copy writing program. I've been receiving a lot of very persuasive emails about registering for the six figure program and several other packages as well. I sure will be starting soon.

[FROM WILL: Some TWL readers feel these emails are annoying. I think a better attitude as shown by your comment is to look at them as examples of effective copywriting ... examples to learn from and follow. I hope you're able to make the leap

soon.]

Guest (William) – over a year ago

Will, you're giving away the store here. If this wisdom represents even a fraction of what you have in waiting in the wings... then anyone who wants six-figures needs to get on board immediately.

This stuff is pure gold... especially #3.

Thanks much!

[FROM WILL: Not giving away the store at all. There is much to learn ... and I love helping members learn.]

Guest (Kevin Dawson) – over a year ago

Mr Newman, I always love reading your articles, but this one crowns them all. The first four are great points, and the last one is a real sore spot for me. I'm way too sensitive, and always on the defensive!

Thanks for the great advice - Ms J

[FROM WILL: I don't like using sports metaphors, but sometimes they are very apt. Writing can be a lot like learning jujitsu (Mark Ford is a great advocate). Sparring hurts until you learn enough to avoid the moves. And eventually even if you're hit it doesn't hurt so much. The cure for sensitivity to criticism is to keep writing and keep getting critiqued. Your writing gets better, the critiques get easier on you, and you learn to accept. Good luck!]

Jackson Holland – over a year ago

#6: It's less about giving them what they want than giving them what they don't yet know they want (per Steve Jobs).

[FROM WILL: That's a very interesting comment. It's also the basis of some very profitable copywriting that COS members learn about in the Leads Targeted Learning Program. Thank you.]

Guest (Chris Morris) – over a year ago

It's not me it's the words. I've been working on that for a long time. I should separate my feelings from what people say about my words. I've since learned a new thing about rewrites also. when you have changed everything you can to read the best, you will see that the same piece can be used for other projects. thanks for your good words.

[FROM WILL: Amen to that!]

Guest (Valrie) – over a year ago

Thanks for another great post, Will!

Truer words never described the budding "A-level" copywriter's journey ...

To be great, we're going to have to try every kind of copy. AND perform endless research, revisions, and regimens of self-improvement--all while receiving round after round of feedback.

That's a lot of strategic Rs! It's also a 'Will Newman Recipe for Success' we should all follow!

[FROM WILL: In another one of my lives, I've been a triathlon director for my Rotary club. Now, I did never compete in a triathlon. But I'm amazed how much the competitors, some as young as nine years old, enjoy themselves. Writing can be a lot like running a triathlon. It's hard work while you do it. It demands lot of you. But it sure is enjoyable when you succeed.]

Cara Flett – over a year ago

Thank you all for taking the time to leave comments on this article. I appreciate your doing it and look forward to hearing from you again.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success, Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

Dear Will YOU HAVE RUINED MY LIFE!

Not really, but I can't read copy now without checking to see if the copywriter knew what he was talking about.

But I am questioning whether copywriting is right for me.

I am annoyed by manufactured urgency, it seems to me that if something can be sold for x amount before midnight on April 14 say, why can't it be sold for the same amount a month later? Testimonials leave me cold as well, if someone is trying to sell me something isn't it logical to assume that they won't include bad reviews in their copy? I know these things must be good marketing tools after all these annoyances and others are included in every email I get from AWAI with the notable exception of yours, you are why I joined.

Thank you

[FROM WILL: I can understand how urgency and testimonials might not work for you. However, the important thing in writing copy is to write what works for the greatest number of prospects. And what you call, probably rightfully, manufactured urgen

John Reid-Green – over a year ago

Wow! Like all your writing, Will, this was fantastic. Especially the first and the fifth points. Those, truly, are chunks of wisdom. I try to apply the 1st one, working on giving my best, no matter how much they pay me. But the fifth advice of not feeling bad when anyone criticizes is powerful, that it's not about me, it's my 'words' they are not very happy with. It's a great new way to look at my work.

Thank you for doing what you do. I hope to be able to help other copywriters someday...

Balaka – over a year ago

Thanks Will for your tremendous insights, as always they speak to me 'Newbie' that I am, about treating every assignment with the utmost care I can offer. As a Taurus I tend not to be the fastest writer but instead strive to be thorough. Thanks for reaffirming how important the research must be to the end product. It was the right message at the right time. Cheers!

Guest (Nikki C) – over a year ago

I love those mindsets,they really changed my thinking.

Thanks

Guest (Lil Janne) – over a year ago

Mr Will, words cant explain how luck I am in finding u guys. But I sure promise u, I will make u guys proud by using all your information to be a six figure copywriter. U are all so amazing

Guest (Abali Success) – over a year ago

Thank you all for taking the time to leave these comments. I really appreciate your doing so.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success, Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

Will,i just stumbled on your newsletter and i believe it makes a great sense. My question is this, does it have age barrier to become a copywriter?

[FROM WILL: I'm almost 68 and started when I was 50. I know many successful AWAI members who are older than I am. I hope that answers your question. And good luck!]

Guest (james) – over a year ago

I don't know why but I am concerned right now if I can write as well as I should but in the past I learned to play a classical guitar in several stages of learning from simple to completed passages. That was hard! So can't I write as well?

Capture Emotions help your body heal – over a year ago

Thanks for this powerful, succinct set of principles, Will. I especially like #5: I agree that taking criticism personally leads to defensive behavior, and diverts one's attention from the primary objective of crafting effective copy.

DA Ford – over a year ago

I am new to the field, but I will say that your 5 principles are closely aligned with principles in any area. I started out as a music major, but when I was hired for a part time retail job,I fell in love with marketing. Again, one can apply those

principles to changing a layout, correcting errors, then making the customer feel wonderful when all they are buying is a pair of socks. Post college I became a retail buyer, and wrote my own ad copy for a major department store. I became a financial manager for a national laboratory, and dove into applied physics with the same curiosity. When I finally became a consultant, I realized that every job I had ever done contributed to my expertise, and I still needed to learn more.

Guest (Cynthia) – over a year ago

I'm pleased to hear that this article has sparked fought among all of you. Thank you very much for taking the time to comment.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success, Will Newman

Will Newman – over a year ago

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