

The Power of the Pen: Getting Public Attention on Your Issues

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What's a good story?

- A good story is often richer than a news story, it does more than inform or amplify. It adds value to the topic.
- It is “storytelling with a purpose.”
- Research proves two common things about good stories:
 - **Treatment trumps topic.** How a story is told is more important to the audience than its topic, what it is about. The best story is a well-told tale about something the reader feels is relevant or significant.
 - **The best stories are more complete and more comprehensive.** They contain more verified information from more sources with more viewpoints and expertise. They exhibit more enterprise, more reportorial effort.

Story archetypes:

- Overcoming the Monster
- Rags to Riches
- The Quest
- Voyage and Return
- Comedy
- Tragedy
- Rebirth

Elements of Style in 10 bullet point:

1. Avoid alliterations always
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with
3. Avoid cliches like the plague. They're old hat.
4. Comparisons are as bad as cliches
5. Be more or less specific
6. Writers should not generalize
7. Be consistent
8. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
9. Who needs rhetorical questions?
10. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

Why write?

Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul. When writers make us shake our heads with the exactness of their prose and their truths, and even make us laugh about ourselves or life, our buoyancy is restored. We are given a shot at dancing with, or at least clapping along with, the absurdity of life, instead of being squashed by it over and over again. It's like singing on a boat during a terrible storm at sea. You can't stop the raging storm, but singing can change the hearts and spirits of the people who are together on that ship.”

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