



24 Ways to Keep Your Writing Real

DON'T TRY TO COPY ANOTHER PERSON'S STYLE. SOUND LIKE WHO YOU ARE.

Don't set out to write "lyrical or poetic prose." That kind of writing flows naturally. If it's forced, it shows.

DON'T TRY TO WRITE IN ANY PARTICULAR WAY, ACTUALLY. WRITE WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY. YOU'RE COMMUNICATING A MESSAGE, NOT A STYLE.

Write how you speak—clearly and conversationally.

READ WHAT YOU'VE WRITTEN OUT LOUD. IF YOU FIND YOURSELF GASPING FOR BREATH BEFORE THE END OF A SENTENCE OR STUMBLING OVER YOUR WORDS, REWRITE.

If what you've written makes you laugh, great. But don't try to be funny on purpose. That rarely works.

IF IT'S NOT YOUR STORY TO TELL, DON'T TELL IT.

If you find yourself in tears as your words hit the screen or as you read your work aloud, you've likely hit upon something that will touch someone else too. At this point, don't shy away; dig deeper.

WRITE TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, COMFORT OR CHALLENGE. NEVER WRITE TO IMPRESS.

If what you've written flowed from a deep emotional well, save it. Come back to it in a few days or weeks. Time has a way of revealing whether or not you should hit send or publish.

.DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY. THAT KIND OF ATTITUDE DOESN'T TRANSLATE WELL.

Ask someone who knows you and loves you well to read your writing. Give that person permission to let you know when what you've written doesn't "sound like you."

WRITE WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR. IF YOU FEEL COMPELLED TO SHARE A CERTAIN MESSAGE WITH SOMEONE, TRY TO DO IT IN PERSON.

Ask yourself: Is it right? Is it necessary? Is it kind? If not, don't write it.

AS A GENERAL RULE, DON'T REACT. ORIGINATE.

If what you are writing makes you squeamish because you think no one will be able to relate, keep writing. You are not alone, and others in the same boat need to know that they are not alone either.

IF YOU'RE AFRAID TO WRITE SOMETHING, ASK YOURSELF, "WHAT IS THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN IF I POST THIS?"

There are times when real is better in retrospect.

IF YOU WRITE ABOUT FAITH-RELATED TOPICS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO INCLUDE A VERSE OR MENTION GOD IN EVERY PARAGRAPH, OR EVEN IN EVERY POST.

Humility trumps the need to make sure everyone knows that you are right.

PRAY WHILE YOU WRITE AND BEFORE YOU HIT SEND OR PUBLISH. ASK GOD TO DIRECT YOUR WORDS TO THE PEOPLE WHO NEED TO READ THEM.

Let go of your expectations about how any one thing you communicate is going to be received. Write from your heart and leave the results up to God.

LAST PARAGRAPHS ARE HARD TO WRITE. SOMETIMES ABRUPT ENDINGS ARE BETTER THAN TIDY BOWS.