

Writing to Persuade



How to influence action with effective writing

Understand confirmation bias.

We all believe what we believe.

Do not be arrogant and think you are different.

Do not think, “I am open-minded. Other people are not.”

We all cling to our own opinions, and to those of our tribe.

How Do You Break Through?

Tell stories.

Stories with emotion.

We all respond to details, to visuals.

To real people.

To tragedy.

To triumph.

Emotions persuade, but facts do matter.

You might not persuade with facts.

But if you get them wrong, watch out!

If you mislead people, you will lose trust.

Listen. Understand your audience

Think about the colleague, the editor, the reporter, the salesperson.

What does that person want? Need? Value?

Create your message for that audience.

Be empathetic.

That sounds easy.

It is not.

To connect, you must truly get out of yourself.

Make friends

People are more likely to help their friends.

They are more likely to listen to their friends.

Brains do not win the day. Warmth does.

Flattery

We all like to be flattered.

There is really no limit to how much approval we all want.

And none of us ever get enough.

What do most editors want?

It's simple:

A new idea.

A surprising take on an old idea.

Chocolate.

Be quick about it.

People are busy.

Keep your email short.

Use the subject line efficiently.

Banish jargon

You don't even notice you're using it.

You are.

Don't.