

barefootWriter

Celebrating 11 Years of Helping People Find Freedom Through Well-Paid Writing



Barefoot Writer Bonnie Fanning enjoys the sunrise while in Paris.

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ABOUT OUR COVER:

Bonnie Fanning is a freelance writer and photographer. Her past work experience includes Great Escape Publishing and American Writers and Artists Institute, both of which allowed her to meld her love of photography and writing into a unique freelance career that offered ample travel opportunities. She's also involved in exciting work that includes [The Creative Confidence Project](#) with the goal of helping other creatives pursue and accomplish their unique goals and dreams.

All Night Long

One of the biggest draws to online marketing and doing business over the internet is the concept of making money while you sleep. After all, if you can get the wheels in motion for any kind of web-based business, it doesn't stop unless you tell it to.

The same goes for marketing materials that you post online, such as a LinkedIn profile or a professional website: They work for you all day and all night. (This month's Ask Rebecca explains why in more detail — page 34.)

These days, you can even find someone, anyone, around the world to sit and work with you virtually, regardless of your time zone. (See Brad Pickard's explanation of this on page 31.)

And let's not forget the new world of AI robots, where you'll always have a writing assistant at the ready. (But they're not quite as capable as one might think — look to my eye-opening interview with Gordon Graham on page 9 for why.)

Finally, you have the ever-churning engines of the social media world to turn to, and if you've made connections with other writers from around the world (Bonnie Fanning explains the how and why of this on page 29), you can get support at all hours of the day or night.

All this to say that the world of the Barefoot Writer is one that's constantly whirring and roaring, growing and changing. So I think it's worth pointing out the importance of stopping to breathe, reflect, and rest.

Because the truth of it is, this career field is only getting bigger and creating greater demand for well-trained writers. If you're "in it to win it," as they say, you can go as far as your dreams will take you. Just remember to pause and savor whenever possible. Then get up and go big all over again.

Grateful to have you here in our community,



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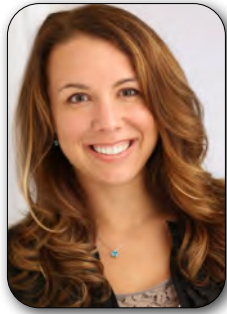
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Challenge Prompt: Write about a time someone hurt you, and why — or whether — you forgave them.



For **Rachael Kraft** (“An Egg-cellent Way to Find Clients in 2023”), *the writer’s life* offers the chance for adventure, freedom, and fresh challenges every day. It’s a welcome change from her former life as a high school science teacher. Today, she works as a lead-gen marketing consultant, copywriter, and scriptwriter. Rachael also enjoys helping new writers perfect their skills as a co-teacher for several AWAI certification programs and as a community moderator. She spends her spare time enjoying the outdoors, competing as a triathlete, and having fun in New Jersey with her husband and puppy.

“Sometimes you have to forgive when others don’t know they’re hurting you. It’s just like that time my 1,200-lb horse stupidly stood on my toe for what felt like an eternity. You just have to stand up, brush off, and move on... even if you’re limping a bit!”



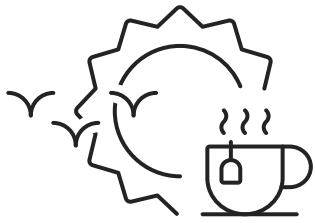
Bonnie Fanning (“Get a Success Boost When You Find Your People”) is a writer, photographer, and mom with 15 years of experience teaching creatives how to make money doing the things they love most. The pursuit of her passions for travel, writing, and photography has taken her to 43 countries and counting! Her new podcast, *The Creative Confidence Project*, helps creatives show up as the most confident, vibrant versions of themselves.

While gallivanting around the world with my French boyfriend, I discovered he was pursuing someone else at the same time. I forgave him but quickly moved on, taking my freshly honed French language skills with me!



Brad Pickard (“How a ‘Focus Friend’ Helps Overcome Procrastination”) is an eclectic mishmash from upstate New York. An aspiring triathlete, Brad is part classically trained musician, part country farmer. Two highlights of his journey have been biking with 17 cyclists on the West Coast from Canada to the border of Mexico and singing with Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion in Central Park. Brad’s ideal version of *the writer’s life* is to work on the road... literally.

I integrate forgiveness into my regular practice each week. My personal policy is to forgive myself and others quickly... and then make any adjustments so I’m less likely to get hurt again. Life’s too short for holding on to grudges!



Mindy McHorse Talks to **Barefoot Writers** From All Walks Of Life

How a Natural Self-Starter Found His Groove in Copywriting

Chad Myers set out for his first job in media with gusto, but he soon realized it wasn't all he'd dreamed it would be. He wasn't long into the disappointment before he came across copywriting and recognized it as the trampoline that could vault him toward his biggest life dreams. Read on to discover how those dreams intersect with writing, and what he's doing to make sure they all come true.

How did you discover copywriting?

In college, I majored in communication and media, and I always knew that I wanted to get into advertising media. I was a big fan of *Mad Men*, the show on Netflix. It sparked my interest. I wasn't exactly sure what I was going to do, but I knew I wanted to be in that industry. And after college, I was lucky enough to get my foot in the door at a media sales company for television advertising. I thought it was in line with what I wanted to do, but I started to not really enjoy it, as it was really just data entry and booking time slots for the advertisements. So I listened to a lot of podcasts on freelancing and entrepreneurship.

There was one podcast I stumbled upon that talked about copywriting and how it's this super-lucrative skill that you can learn and you can make a ton of money doing it and you can go freelance. I started to buy into the freelance dream, and it really appealed to me as I became a little bit bored at my job.



Chad walks with Ashton, his 9-year-old Shiba Inu, on a cold spring harbor hiking trail.

How did you come across confirmation that this was a world where you could make a lot of money?

I found proof through [case studies](#) and things and decided I would go full speed ahead with this. I started to realize that if you just put in the time and effort and learn the skill, you can really make a living online. That dream really appealed to me, because I've always been into trying to start my own thing, start my own groove and not really be tied. I was just very entrepreneurial, like when I tried doing an Etsy store trying to make money selling digital art.

What kinds of writing did you do initially, and what are you doing now?

Now I'm focusing more on building my own personal brand that I can plug my services under so that I don't have to continue to outreach so much. It's a long-term strategy, and I can maybe have clients come to me instead, which is another piece of advice that people have different opinions about. But that's what I'm trying to do right now because it allows me to write for myself, write my own newsletters and write my own social media copy. I'm practicing on my own and talking about my own interests too.

What does your writing life look like right now?

I still work a job, but I'm really trying to do the long-term route and just get good at the craft and do it for my own business, and then eventually maybe do it for other people or just keep running my own business. Because I think creating my own business is what I always wanted to do deep down. But to emphasize the power of copywriting: I wouldn't even have the awareness of how to start my own business if I didn't understand copywriting.

If you could go back and talk to yourself before you discovered copywriting, what would you tell yourself about the future ahead of you?

I would tell myself, *Listen, I know you want to start a massive business. I know you want to create a better life for yourself and not do traditional things and not spend the rest of your younger years working a traditional job.*

But listen, don't go out and start trying to do all this stuff. You might learn a lot, but it's going to take you a long time to figure out what you want to do. Learn copywriting instead. Words are everywhere, and learning the skill is going to give you the awareness that you need to start a business or that you need to make money online and create an income for yourself doing anything you like. Basically, learn this, and the clarity will come.



Golf is one of Chad's favorite activities with friends; here he plays at the Glen Cove Long Island golf course.

How This Family-Driven Woman Is Changing the World One Word at a Time

Monica Coleman had a longtime thirst to help others. Despite a successful career in finance, she knew more was possible for her. It wasn't till she discovered the power of the written word that she found a way to meld her interests and passions with a versatile writing career that keeps her busy and engaged. Today, she has time for her family plus plenty of intriguing work to keep her busy...

Take me back to your life before you discovered writing as a career. What was it like?

I was born in poverty, but fortunately we had a great family, and through school I was in a lot of plays and did a lot of entertainment stuff.

Then I met my husband, who's an amazing scientist and a really wonderful guy, and he arranged for me to go to college, where I did basically consulting and finance. One of the reasons I went into finance is that I wanted to do marketing, but I learned that at that time, if you were a man, you got \$250,000 a year. As a woman you got \$50,000 a year. So I changed to finance and was in finance for 20 years. Then I decided I wanted to do something different.

And that's where copywriting entered the picture?

Yes. I moved to [Washington], D.C., and switched to consulting, but then took the summer off to spend time with my son because he'd just graduated from law school and was getting ready to leave. So with nothing to do, I saw an ad that asked, "Would you like to be a writer?" I ended up going to take a test with this place and got an assignment, but this guy said, "This is horrible. This isn't the way you write." Then he said, "Look, I'll give you this sheet. It's from AWAI, and I want you to go home and study it and rewrite this the way it's supposed to be off of this paper. If you can do it, I'll keep you as a writer, but if you can't, I'll have to fire you." So I came back the next day and he was in awe over what I did. He gave me a \$200 bonus.

So they became your first client?

Yes. I wrote for them for a couple of years, but they didn't pay very well. So I decided in 2014 I was going to join *Circle of Success*, and I did and I've been there ever since. That's how I made my leap to writing. That part I can do. But I'm really bad about asking people to be my client, so I've been fortunate in that when we moved to D.C., because I love networking, I



In addition to copywriting, Monica also does a lot of press coverage, which brings in a nice side income.

just built a huge network of different things. That's how I got into copywriting.

What have you done with that network you built?

I started a business. It's Inside Capitol Hill and Beyond. We do a lot of copywriting with it, and I have four divisions. I have the consulting division, and I do issue campaigns like cause marketing and crisis management. We also train people who want to be political operatives, and we help people who want to be campaign managers.

What kind of flexibility do you have since you've built up your own business as a copywriter?

I get the work done, but I can do it whenever I want and as long as I keep a schedule. For my typical day, I get up at four or five o'clock in the morning and make my own bread for my family and for others. And always in addition to the bread, I make some kind of sweet treat. It's usually some kind of muffin or a cupcake or something like that.

What's one piece of advice you would give to somebody who is new to this world?

First, I would ask, "What type of writer would you like to be? What would you want to write about?" Then look for just three or four leads on where they can go to expand and learn about that interest that they have. It can really be as simple as that.

I would remind them that copywriting is so special because it speaks to the people who need help. I just love it. I'm so glad that I stumbled into AWAI. And I love *Barefoot Writer*, by the way. I think it is awesome. ■



Monica stands outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., after her first assignment covering a congressional hearing.

interview with a barefoot writer



“Everybody can write an email. It doesn’t mean that everybody can write something that will make somebody else feel something or think something or do something. That’s rare. And that’s why writers get paid to write the kind of things that get a reaction from people.”

— Gordon Graham

By Mindy McHorse

Gordon Graham has a magnetic appeal to him, both as a quiet genius of words and as someone who genuinely enjoys each day and loves his work. He’s built a life to enjoy, to be sure, as you’ll discover in this interview.

But don’t let his humility fool you. Gordon has completed over 300 white papers for clients ranging from Silicon Valley all the way to Switzerland, covering everything from how to choose enterprise software to designing virtual worlds for kids. Past clients include Google, 3M, and Verizon. He’s also the author of *White Papers for Dummies*. Along with being named AWAI’s 2019 Copywriter of the Year, Gordon has won 16 awards from the Society for Technical Communication.

I invite you to soak up this refreshingly honest interview that delves into Gordon’s longevity and experience and details the result of following what you love to do. You’ll find he offers useful tips for conversing with clients on timely subjects. Plus, note the interesting prediction he makes for what’s next on the horizon for writers who make their living online.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

Was writing your first career, or did you transition in from something else?

I joke that I started in journalism by delivering newspapers when I was a kid. I had lots of paper routes, but really, I was editor of a college newspaper when I was 17, so that was a pretty good gig. Nobody else wanted to do it, so I became the editor of the newspaper. I didn't know very much, but I learned really quickly. We had to do production by hand and take it to the printer and all that kind of stuff. So I learned that old-fashioned photolithography way of producing things, and I've done journalism on and off ever since then.

I worked for several other student papers as I went to university, and then one of my first jobs out of university was being a trade book editor for an astronomy publisher. I was not an astronomer or anything, but I was always interested in science. I studied arts, I studied philosophy and creative writing and things like that. But I always was interested in science and engineering because I thought it was so logical compared to people and philosophy and creative ideas going off in all directions.

What kind of writing did you do after university?

I became a technical writer, writing manuals about how to use software and big giant mainframe systems. Really, a tech manual is a lot like a nonfiction book. That was something I felt pretty comfortable with, but I was still freelancing for magazines. And then I went into marketing writing because I found the tech writing a little dry. It's all about "Type this and then press 'return,'" and there's no people, there's no humor. There's no emotion in it at all.

From there I did lots of newsletters and all different types of marketing materials. When I discovered white papers, I thought, *Wow, these are really great. They're like little nonfiction books.* And case studies were little newspaper articles, little magazine articles. So those two formats I felt really familiar with, and I've done them ever since.

You found your sweet spot.

I just realized that first student newspaper I worked on, that was 50, 51 years ago. So I've been writing for over 50 years for publication, and that's how time flies.

Just think how many words you've written in that time!

Well, it's a million for sure.

For sure. But what I really value, just looking at the smile on your face as you talk



Gordon and his wife, Angie, on the shore of Lake Michigan near Traverse City, Michigan.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

about this, is that it seems you really enjoyed every aspect of the journey. Was there anything about writing that didn't appeal to you?

Oh, as far as running a business, I'm pathetic at running a business. I think I have a kind of entrepreneurial spark, but I don't have that logical strategic planning thing. I just write what I'm excited about.

I've had my blog for 18 years, and have I ever monetized it properly? Have I ever strategized about it? Have I ever really looked for SEO terms? Not really. I was just lucky that I was there long enough ago, and I've done it consistently since. I'm really highly rated in Google. So I've been on the first page of Google for white paper writer most of that time, just because I started so long ago. But I am not really anybody's expert on anything to do with running a writing business.

I'm laughing because I relate to that, and I think a lot of creative people do. It's fun to go into these ventures, but the analytical/logical part of it is not as exciting, though it's equally important.

Yes, it's important. And if I could do anything over in my career, I would've been a little more strategic 25 years ago. Maybe when I started my website, I would have said, "Okay, now how am I going to actually build this thing? How am I going to make some money back from this?"

One of the most common searches I get on my site is white paper samples and white paper templates. And I think, *Oh, I should make some templates and sell them for 50 bucks. I should have a swipe file and sell it for 99 bucks.* But I just never get around to that. I guess that thing of productizing stuff doesn't appeal to me nearly as much as getting on with writing the next white paper.

So that's one thing I would maybe put a bit more energy into or hire someone to do for me 20 or 15 or 10 years ago.

But you make a good point that it doesn't appeal to you. There's a lot of pressure on the entrepreneurial side of freelancing to do everything possible, but you have to guard against burnout. Do too much stuff you have no interest in, even if it does have a great payoff, and you burn out quicker and quit enjoying what you love. I admire you for sticking with the writing.

Thank you for saying that. Really it's just I've done what I felt like doing and fortunately, there is a market for that.



Gordon was named AWAI's Copywriter of the Year in 2019; shown here with Katie Yeakle (left) and Rebecca Matter at Bootcamp in Delray Beach, Florida.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

What does your typical writing workweek look like in terms of the projects and obligations you have?

Well, remember, I'm semi-retired, so I'm working a bit less than I used to. But I'd say ideally I like to get up at 6 a.m. and get writing, but it might not be for a client, it might be for my own newsletter or one of my own projects. I like to spend my very most creative time in the morning on my own things and then do client work in the afternoon.

And I'm a pretty involved dad. I have two kids who are 9 and 12, and I like to get them off to school. One of them comes home for lunch, and I just had lunch with her. They get home by 3:30 in the afternoon, and we're often doing something together. It's a bit too early here to go to the beach, but once summer comes, we're going to the beach every single day.

People can't believe that: "You're up in Northern Ontario and you have beaches?" We have incredible beaches up here, and for two months it's really, really great to go to the beach.

So I do a lot of things besides writing, and I take a lot of time off. I'd say I'm really fortunate I don't have to grind it out 80 hours a week or 50 weeks a year. I sort of work on things I want to work on when I want to work on them.

What I'm hearing is that really, life comes first. You can prioritize your kids and that precious, very short-lived time as a dad with children under the same roof while still doing what you enjoy doing. What about your writing process — can you describe that?

You know the old saying about the trio: You can get it good or you can get it fast or you can get it cheap? Well, I have never been fast. My dirty secret is I don't think I've met a deadline in my life. Maybe for a little article or a pretty short piece. For a big, long white paper, unless it's a trade show or real-world deadline, clients say, "Oh, it would be nice to get that out by the end of the month."

Well, sure, it would be nice. It'd be nice to get it out by the end of the day, wouldn't it? But that doesn't mean it has to be. What I generally say to my clients — here's a little tip — is "Honestly, I've got a draft, but I'd like to polish it for a little longer and make sure I give you my very best work." What client is going to say, "No, don't do that. Just give me your first draft right now. We've got to get it out by the end of the month."?

Most clients are happy to hear that. They're happy to hear that I want to put more time into their project. Or if I say, "There's another person I'd like to interview for this, but I haven't reached them yet because they've been on holiday," they like that. So I haven't found there's a lot of deadline pressure for white papers



A selfie of the whole family on a walk in the woods: Angie, Lily Rose, Cassidy Rain, and Gordon.

There's pressure if I'm trying to juggle five of them at once. And that is tough because those are such big projects. So usually I do one or two at a time. That's plenty.

I relate to the challenge of deadlines, because writing is creative work. And it's easy to listen to a lot of other people talk about writing within a tight structure, but that doesn't necessarily lend itself to quality. So admitting that it's not always going to fit so neatly into a box is refreshingly honest.

Amen to that. It's a creative process. Really, it's not the sort of thing you can predict mathematically. One of the worst writing tools I ever saw was this martech [marketing technology] system from a giant tech company that had 100 steps to publish content. And guess how many steps were devoted to actually creating the content? Just one step was "create content"! Everything else was like, "check SEO terms," and "circulate for comments," and "put in HTML," and blah, blah, blah. It's just ridiculous to say the writing should only be one one-hundredth of content creation.

The weird thing is that everybody thinks they can write. And sure, everybody can sit there and type, and everybody can write an email. It doesn't mean that everybody can write something that will make somebody else feel something or think something or do something. That's rare. And that's why writers get paid to write the kind of things that get a reaction from people.

That human element is what adds the emotion and the connection and the power to writing. Can you comment on any new or ongoing developments in the writing world that really excite you right now? I have a feeling I know what you're going to talk about...

Oh, AI, AI, AI, because for that trio of fast and good and cheap, well, AI is fast, and it's cheap. I figured out that \$20 a month for ChatGPT is 10 cents an hour or so. It's absolutely ridiculous. That beats any agency or any writer quoting \$100 an hour. That's what we're worth for sure, that's what I make or more, but I don't express it by the hour. Because if somebody is saying, "Well, I could pay this writer hundreds and hundreds of dollars, or I could get ChatGPT for 20 bucks for a whole month" — well, maybe I should look at ChatGPT.

AI checks two of the boxes. It's cheap and it is fast. The only remaining thing that writers can offer that is quality, to be good, to be able to write something that makes people feel something or do something or think something.

I've got a few predictions about AI, but first I wanted to tell you about my experience.

I tested using ChatGPT to write a white paper. If anyone wants to see that, they're welcome to come to my website at www.thatwhitepaperguy.com and download it. It's called "9 Reasons Why ChatGPT Can't Write Your Next White Paper."



The cover of Gordon Graham's white paper on why AI can't write a white paper, written by AI.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

I did two editions; this was in February and March. As far as getting the idea, it took a few seconds. I said to it, "What are some reasons why a person shouldn't use ChatGPT to write a white paper?"

And it went blub-blub-blub-blub. I couldn't even start a file in Word before it was done with the ideas. So as far as generating ideas, brainstorming, spitballing, whatever you call it, these chat AI sare incredible at that. They're really, really good. And even if 9 out of 10 of their ideas are terrible, it might have one that is just right on. It gave me these nine reasons why it can't write white papers, and they're all pretty good. I thought, *Okay, I don't even have to come up with any more ideas.*

So then it was on to the research. In the first version, ChatGPT just made up all the sources! But even though I had to fact-check and redo all of the original research with the new Bing, the total time to research was six hours. And that was the biggest chunk of time in this whole project.

I don't know if I could have researched this whole thing in six hours. That's fast. One day to research a whole white paper! I think in the second edition there are 20 sources, books and papers and articles and quotes from published interviews, great sources for every point.

I pushed it through 10 drafts, because the quality really wasn't that good. But doing 10 drafts was an hour and a half. And that was me learning how to prompt it and saying, "No, make that more creative. No, make that longer." A lot of reprompting and learning on my part, but still only 90 minutes to write this white paper. It's 3,000 words, a numbered list with nine reasons. It's got an introduction, a conclusion, about the writer, footnotes. It's a respectable white paper. And it took AI an hour and a half to write. I figure that would've taken me at least 10 times that long, at least 15 hours.

You can't just sit there and type out a white paper. You have to introduce the sources smoothly and build an argument. You have to take the time to edit and polish. I didn't do much editing because I wanted to show people what it could do raw without me polishing it up. So I took maybe a couple of hours to fuss with Word and put the footnotes in nicely. But really the whole time to do that paper was a couple of days.

When somebody says to me, "How long does a white paper take?" I say, "Six to eight weeks." That's not all my time, but my time is going to be five to 10 days, not two days. I figured the fastest I could ever do this would be four days. Call it a week. So it did in two days what I could do in five days. Wow.



Gordon does his "Christmas tree" yoga pose in an ugly Christmas sweater.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

We're talking about speed. There's the speed. As for cost, well, it cost me a fraction of \$20. As for quality, I'd say that the quality was C quality or B-minus-minus. No way it's an A. No way it's a B. But it could be polished up and humanized in a few hours by a good human writer. I think that is what we're looking at over the next few years, what all writers are looking at.

I think that anybody who can't already write better than ChatGPT is going to have a hard time getting any clients. If they get their first project in from you and it's something like ChatGPT would do, why should they pay you?

Honestly, why should they? It's a hard truth, but I don't think there's a big future for people unless they're very, very good wordsmiths who can generate at least B-grade copy. I'm not saying don't try, don't learn, but you really have to learn and you really have to keep learning.

What can human writers do to stay ahead of AI?

Well, AI has no body, it has no life, so it has no experience. So one of the things that human writers can add is personal anecdotes, stories, sensory information. Because ChatGPT and the other AIs are terrible at that.

They might say, "Oh, the wonderful smell, the coffee." But they've never smelled coffee in their life. They don't really know how to express that, so they can't. What they are is a giant copy-and-paste machine. They know what they've been trained on, they know what's been fed into them.

They don't know what's in our minds. They don't know what's in the minds of the experts that we interview. They don't know the creative new metaphors that we could come up with or the figures of speech we could come up with.

I've asked ChatGPT over and over, "Can you put a proverb in there? Can you put a figure of speech in there? Can you make

a metaphor?" That's really frustrating! It barely knows what a proverb is. Or a little epigram to sum up something — what it comes up with is cliché piled upon cliché, because that's what it knows. So what we get from these AIs, at this point, and for the next few years, is average. Really, really average copy, a mix of what's been fed into them with no ability to combine ideas and come up with creative original ideas.

Do you encourage writers to experiment with AI?

I think a timely piece of advice for any writer is to engage with your clients about the fact that you intend to use AI. I'm writing a white paper right now, and I talked to my client about this. And you know what she said? She said, "Oh, I'm so happy you're telling me this. My manager comes by every single day, and he's urging everybody to use AI as much as we can. He says, 'How did you use AI today? How did you use AI this



By the giant thimble in Toronto's Fashion District: Lily, Cassidy, Angie Gallop, and Gordon. Gordon and Angie both lived in Toronto for many years.

interview with a barefoot writer (continued...)

morning?’ He’s always pushing us to use AI, so I’m really happy to hear that you’re doing it.”

So then you can explicitly say, “I plan to use AI to give you the best of both. You’re not just getting my limited human speed, and you’re not just getting the limited quality capabilities of today’s AI. You’re getting the best that the AI can do, coupled with the best that I can do.” And who wouldn’t want that?

From my editor’s seat, that’s exactly what I want. It covers the whole breadth and width of what you need in copy. But at the end of the day, AI can’t offer any kind of careful understanding of necessary elements in writing, like writing with keep inclusion and diversity in mind.

When I was working on that white paper, ChatGPT mentioned gender equality, cultural diversity, writing for people in different parts of the world. It admitted it wasn’t good at that! A human writer can be far more attuned to the issues of gender, culture, language, different belief systems, and provide a more sensitive analysis. You nailed it.

There are so many layers of human emotion and nuance that have to be learned first if you’re going to do it as a writer, and that cannot be duplicated through AI. And that’s the sweet spot, I think, where a lot of writers will want to be.

What we need to do is incorporate AI in a smart and measured way into a writing business, and then it will be our friend and not our enemy. I think of it as my little writing buddy that never gets tired, that works whenever I ask him to do something, and is always cheerful and always says, “Of course, I’d be happy to do that for you!”

It never tires. ■



A selfie on the beach: Lily Rose with another prized stick, Angie Gallop, Cassidy Rain with eyes closed, and Gordon. The family lives in a small town in Canada, a short walk from two sandy beaches on Lake Huron, where they spend lots of time in the summer.



How to Tell a Story

By Gordon Graham

Every child knows what a story is. We've all been hearing stories since before we could walk.

Marketing experts constantly tell us to use stories to engage prospects. For sure, any case study or problem/solution white paper must tell a compelling story.

But have you ever stopped to ask what "a story" really is?

Any Fiction Writer Can Give You an Answer

Fiction writers might say a story is about **people in a place with a problem**. And we must care about those people and how they deal with that problem.

For their part, an English teacher might say a story has **characters, setting, and conflict**.

(Just another way of saying "people in a place with a problem.")

Of course, a good story is not predictable. It must have some **dramatic twists and turns** to make us wonder how it will turn out in the end.

And any story has a **beginning, a middle, and an end**.

Beyond that, stories come in all shapes, sizes, genres, and media.

People All Over the World Need Stories

Robert McKee is a screenwriter who has studied and taught about storytelling for many years. I was delighted to attend his three-day workshop in Montreal a few years ago. McKee says the desire for stories is not culturally determined.

And this desire is not confined to any time in history, any part of the earth, or any one race or people or creed.

He says something in the human mind seeks out stories. In fact, we all need stories to

help make sense of our experiences in this world. We need stories to pass along cultural insights and to stay safe from danger.

But how can knowing this help anyone write a good case study or white paper?

How to Use Story Elements in a Case Study

A case study is a story that describes specific people in a specific place (their company) with a specific problem.

Most case studies follow a before/after format:

- Before, the people in a company had a terrible problem.
- After, the problem was solved and everyone was happy.

In a case study, your challenge is to find the story and bring it to life with details about the people, place, and problem.

People: Most of us are interested in other people, especially people we have something in common with. The people in a case study are your client's clients, the people you interview to get the story.

If you can't mention the **names** of the people and the company, your case study has no people. That makes the story harder to believe.

Place: The industry, sector, market space, or location where the people work and the problem occurs.

Setting adds realism and specific details that make a case study come alive. If you can re-create a scene in your case study with a person at work, that makes it more realistic.

If you can't mention the **company** and its **location**, your case study has no setting. That makes the story harder to believe.

Problem: A tough problem the people faced and solved. If you can't mention the **problem**, you have no story at all.

How to Use Story Elements in a Problem/Solution White Paper

Remember, a "problem/solution" white paper describes how many businesspeople in a certain industry suffer from a nagging problem.

People: Everyone suffering across an industry from the same problem.

Place: The industry, sector, market space, or location where the problem occurs.

Setting adds realism and specific details that make the story come alive.

Problem: Some nagging widespread issue that everyone in a certain industry faces and no one has ever managed to completely overcome.



The Bad Guy and the Good Guy in B2B Content

You might think the bad guy in B2B content is your client's main competitor. Sounds logical, right? But that's not correct.

The bad guy is the problem everyone in your case study or white paper is trying to beat.

The competition is all the people who have tried — and failed — to beat the problem.

Those are all the other knights, brave and strong, who tried to slay the dragon but instead got burned to a crisp.

In other words, many lesser heroes throw themselves at the problem using inadequate plans, ineffective technologies, and limited ideas. And the problem beats them all.



The good guy: Then who's the hero? Not your company.

The real hero is the **new and improved solution** that your white paper proposes and your case study shows in action.

The good guy uses something that's never been tried before: a thoughtful plan, a new technology, or an imaginative idea that truly vanquishes the problem.

A Story Is NOT a Sales Pitch

Thinking about the elements of a story helps illuminate the difference between a piece of B2B content and a sales pitch.

A case study shows an actual customer success.

A problem/solution white paper sketches out a big problem and a new solution that works better than anything else that's ever been tried.

Either type of content must show how big the challenge is, and what a tough thing it is to deal with.

A **sales pitch** simply skips over the drama, lands right at the ending, and shouts, "Hey, we're the hero!" Is it any wonder that most sales pitches fall flat? They ignore all the basic tenets of storytelling!

A sales pitch is all about how great we are, how wonderful our product is... instead of talking about people in a place with a problem.

Try using the traditional elements of a story to help structure your next case study or white paper, and see how it becomes more engaging.

It may take a little practice, but storytelling is a powerful device to use in your content. After all, we all know what a story is. ■

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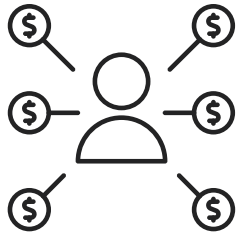


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Enjoy a **Competition-Free, High-Paid** Path to the *Writer's Life*

By Mindy McHorse

If you're like a lot of our Barefoot Writers, you enjoy doing research: digging into fascinating topics, unearthing all kinds of surprising details, and sharing your findings with others.

Well, what if I told you there's a terrific writing opportunity that's not only extremely lucrative and fun for lovers of learning but also perhaps the least competitive one around?

It's called white papers, and it's the inquisitive writer's quickest path to the six-figure life of their dreams.

Get Paid to Research Fun Topics

White papers are simply thorough papers on a topic related to a business's industry, product, or service.

The closest similarity is probably a college paper, where you must dive into a topic, cite your sources, and convince your professor that you understand the material to get an A.

The big difference here is, you get to *focus on topics you are interested in*. And rather than convincing anyone of anything, you simply have to present the information in a way that offers a solution to a problem the target audience is facing.

Oh, *and* you get paid for it. Quite well!

White papers are most common in business-to-business marketing because of the nature of how purchases are made. Businesses tend to need more evidence than your average consumer to make buying decisions, and white papers are the perfect vehicle for the seller to share this information.

Not only are white papers chock-full of details to support a company's product or service, but they also act as sales materials *without any form of hard selling*. And no matter where your interests lie, chances are there's a company in that field that has a need for these materials.

Even if you don't feel you have an expertise in something, the amount of research that each white paper requires will *make you an expert by the time you're done*. So, it's a win-win for writers who love to dig in and get to know the topics they write about.

Make Big Money Without Asking for a Thing

This style of writing is slightly different from most of the writing opportunities we share here in the magazine. For starters, business-to-business (B2B) companies' needs are slightly different from what business-to-consumer (B2C) companies' need.

In addition, white paper writing requires more of a reliance on facts and numbers versus opinions and emotion. That's not to say that persuasion doesn't play a part, but it must be backed by verifiable statistics.

That's why to this day over half of all B2B companies still use white papers in their marketing strategies. According to a 2022 consumer survey report, *most B2B buyers interact with three to five different pieces of content before speaking to a salesperson*. And white papers are right there in the mix.



This means that nearly any business in any field can benefit from them.

Beyond that, there are agencies that specifically develop marketing strategies for the B2B sector. And I can almost guarantee you that they need skilled white paper writer. (I'll get to why in a minute.)

So, whether you choose to work with companies directly or become a go-to for a marketing firm, there's a pathway for you to make your claim as a writer in this highly specialized field.

This is especially great for writers who don't enjoy having to work "hard sells" into their writing. The goal of a white paper is simply to present a solution through research and facts. There's no need to worry about how to market the white paper itself, or the product or anything else.

You simply need to get to know the target audience's main pain point and then use your research and writing skills to show them how the product or service helps. If you can do that, you'll be one of a very small group of writers who can deliver something of extremely high value.

barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

Life as a Big Fish in a Small Pond

Given how lucrative and in demand white papers are, you'd think writers specializing in them would be a dime a dozen, right? That couldn't be further from the truth.

In fact, most businesses and marketing firms don't have even *one* dedicated white paper writer to call on. That means a huge opportunity for you to be the "go-to" for them whenever they need one. And you'll likely never have to worry about competing with another writer for the spot.

This is especially true since a "general copywriter" or the like won't be able to deliver the same high quality as an expert white paper writer.

What's more, specialized marketing materials like this command a very healthy fee. The highest rate we've ever seen clocks in around \$1,000 per page. Granted, that was from a well-known writer writing for a large company, but it's not an uncommon fee.

Rates for white papers can range anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000, depending on several factors such as length, your experience level, and the size of the company hiring you. And since the typical length is around 2,500–3,000 words, we're talking a big return for your efforts.

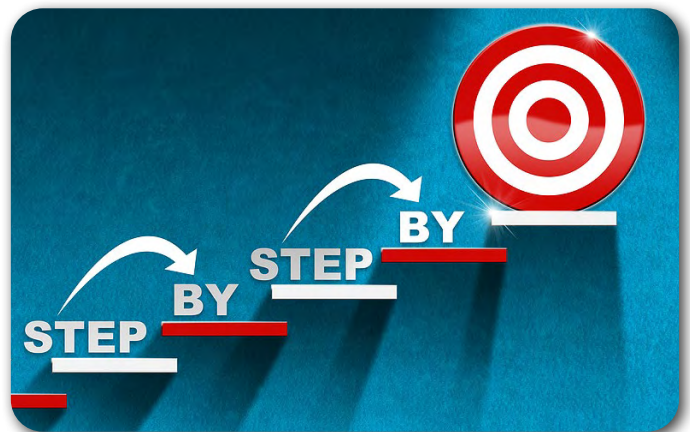
Although it may seem that doing a lot of research, writing, and sourcing information could be time intensive, the best thing about white papers is how consistent they are. They all have generally the same basic requirements, and once you nail down the formula, you can make a lot of money very quickly and be an asset to nearly any business out there.

The Easy-Bake Recipe for Success

White papers are consistent in a few ways. For one, most white papers are *at a minimum* 2,500 words. That means they are longer projects than most and provide high payouts to make up for the time spent. Of course, they can be *much longer than that*, but 2,500 is generally the lower end.

The next ingredient is that every white paper is at its core a research paper. The goal is to provide facts and details that show potential buyers how a product or service can help solve their problem. This is what makes it enticing for them to move forward in the buying process and make a purchase.

Because everything is so factual, your focus is on research and the presentation of your findings. You will be required to add footnotes, source your information, and make sure everything is laid out in a clear way that showcases a solution to your target audience's problem.



barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

If that sounds dry to you, I assure you it's not. There's a lot of fun to be had in digging into a field and making it digestible and relevant to a consumer.

Finally, and here's where the copy element comes in, most white papers have a call to action at the end. Which, I promise, is not any form of a hard sell.

Typically once the reader is done with the white paper, they'll want to take a next step. As the writer, you can show them how they can set up a meeting to discuss the product in further detail, get them to fill out a questionnaire about what they learned, or have them take any number of actionable steps that engages them and excites them about continuing with your company.

Once you've gotten the hang of this, you'll realize that white papers are quite simple and formulaic, in addition to providing immense value to businesses. And that's why now's as good a time as any to get started in this field.

The 3 Super-Simple Steps to Getting Started

It's easier than you may think to get started with white papers, even if you're a brand-new writer. Here are three steps to get started on the road to becoming an in-demand white paper writer.

1. Familiarize yourself with white papers

The best way to get comfortable with white papers is to read them!

Believe it or not, there are countless places online where you can find samples of white papers. A simple Google search for "white paper examples" will bring up many sites with shining examples of the best in the biz.

It's enlightening to read through these to see how they flow. You'll also start to see the similarities in structure, yet just how different the *presentation* can be. (This is our way of saying white papers can be exciting!)

As you're reading through them, start to fill a folder somewhere on your device with examples that excite you. They will be excellent references for when you start working on your own.

2. Choose an industry to focus on

As a white paper writer, you have the luxury of approaching projects however you like.

You can either focus on one healthy industry that has a huge need for white papers. Or you can be more of a jack-of-all-trades in terms of subject matter, and work all over the place.

Since you're still specializing in white papers themselves, either path works. But for the purposes of getting started from scratch, it can be less daunting to focus on one industry at first.



barefoot writing opportunity (continued...)

And the best way to do that is through LinkedIn and job sites.

Nearly every day, you'll find postings looking for white paper writers. As you're sifting through them, take note of what industries seem to have the highest demand. Chances are they're a good place to start.

Of course, the next thing is to look into said industries and figure out which are actually of interest to you. After all, white paper writers are in the rare position of being in demand *virtually anywhere*, so go wherever your heart takes you!

3. Put yourself out there

Once you've familiarized yourself with white papers and settled on an industry that excites you, you're ready to tackle your first gig.

Start calling yourself a white paper writer on all your social media handles, your business cards, your LinkedIn profile, you name it. Tell your friends, family, and colleagues. Make sure everyone knows about it!

Heck, if you're feeling bold, you could even apply to those job postings you were looking through.

The point is this: *You do not need to be an expert to get started.* You simply need to have a familiarity with the specific structure of a white paper. You will quickly grow and learn as you take on more gigs.

Remember, most B2B marketers don't know *any white paper writers*. There's very little competition and hardly anyone to compare yourself with.

So, truly, the only thing standing between you and *the writer's life* is taking that first leap.

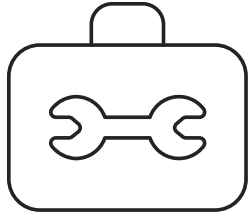
The Golden Ticket to Your Dreams

The biggest key to success in the world of writing, no matter your dream, is getting started before you feel ready. I assure you that if you're reading this piece and have followed these steps, you are *quite* ready.

White papers specifically provide the biggest level of opportunity with the least amount of resistance. So, if ever there were a "niche" to take a leap on, it's this one!

Of course, I understand it can be daunting to jump into something brand new. So if you're looking for further guidance on how to get started and create amazing white papers, check out AWAI's program [How to Become a Professional White Paper Writer](#). ■





An **Egg-cellent** Way to Find Clients in 2023

By Rachael Kraft

Inflation... recession... harsh economic climate... Yikes! Now, I never took an economics class in school. But it seems like these words are starting to weasel their way into our daily vocab.

As a writer, you might be feeling a bit uneasy about finding clients in 2023.

I'm here to drive those thoughts away!

Finding clients these days comes down to a few key practices you'll need to adopt.

And it all starts at the grocery store...

I'm No Chicken Expert

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the price of a dozen eggs in California skyrocketed from \$2.35 in 2022 to \$7.37 in 2023. That's not even taking into account those brown, organic, pasture-raised, fancy-schmancy eggs you sometimes use in your morning omelet.

(Oh, only me? Never mind then.)

So, in a word... eggs are *expensive*.

It's easy to blame this price hike just on the "harsh economic climate."

But, goodness, what if it were simpler than that?

In fact, it is!

A big reason eggs are so expensive is that there was an [outbreak of avian flu in 2022](#) and it wiped out over 50 million birds. The poultry industry is recovering... and egg prices are high.

So, how does this relate to your writing career?

Well, let me ask you...

Is the reason you're having trouble finding clients the "harsh economic climate"?

Or, is there a simpler reason?

I may not be an economist (or a chicken expert), but I am a fairly successful copywriter who has enjoyed consistent and profitable work over the last 11 years.

And during that time, I've noticed a number of reasons why some writers seem to struggle with finding clients, and others manage to thrive... regardless of the economy... the headlines... or the price of eggs.

Here are three practices you can adopt immediately to start filling your calendar with well-paid writing projects.

Practice #1: Use Multiple Methods (All at Once) to Connect With Clients

Many writers make the mistake of using just *one* method to connect with new prospects. Then, they stubbornly stick to that single method over and over again... never trying anything new or changing course.

(Just imagine the writer who applies for official copywriting "jobs" — and refuses to check their local network, talk with agencies, or build a LinkedIn profile.)

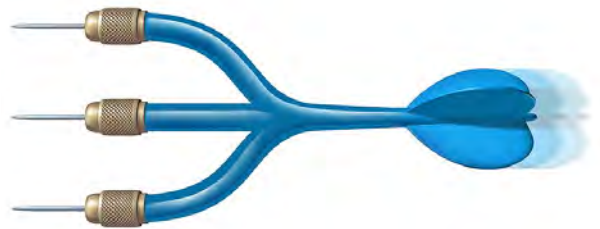
Instead, it makes much more sense to use at least three client-finding methods all at once. I call this the Three-Prong Method for finding clients.

In a nutshell, this method results in higher confidence, more connections, and greater momentum for your business. To learn more about specific client-finding methods, check out [the AWAI website](#). There are a host of free articles, webinars, and "how-to" videos available.

In fact, I recently found 22 methods on the site. *(Seriously... go look!)*

But, since we're talking eggs, here are my favorite *dozen* client-finding methods.

1. Tap your local network.
2. Use LinkedIn.
3. Build a website.
4. Try email prospecting.
5. Use freelance websites (like UpWork.com).
6. Apply for in-house jobs.
7. Use job boards (like WritersWanted.com).
8. Complete spec assignments.
9. Apply to marketing agencies.
10. Build your professional network.
11. Ask for referrals from existing clients and colleagues.
12. Offer to do overflow work for other writers.



Practice #2: Keep Your Marketing Engine Running Strong

Once you identify three methods for finding clients, make that a regular part of your schedule. Don't stop revving that marketing engine just because you landed a gig.

Instead, keep building those connections, talking with prospects, updating your website, and building a backlog of potential clients you can contact whenever you need to fill your calendar.

Practice #3: Create the Right Mindset

And finally... let's talk about mindset.

You're going to have to hustle to find clients (*especially at first*).

Some writers reach out to just a few clients and then sit back waiting for their phone to ring. But, in the world of freelance writing, you need to play the numbers game.

For example, I used to make it a goal to reach out to at least 10 prospects *every single day*. I got used to hearing "no" over and over again. And if something wasn't working, I switched tactics.

Then, I got my first "yes." Then, another.

And now, 11 years later...

I'm writing this article.

So, when you're looking for clients, have the right mindset.

Don't be afraid to hustle.

Be disciplined.

Stay strong.

Don't "chicken out."

You can do it! ■



Join us for the next Barefoot Writer Member Meeting!

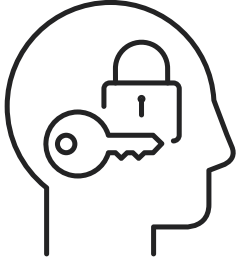
Come talk about your wins and challenges and get community support for your goals.

Friday, June 23, at noon ET.

[Click here for the link to join.](#)

Block this time and date on your calendar and gain insight into how to grow your freelance career and earn money through paid writing.

Hosted by Executive Editor Mindy McHorse



Get a Success Boost When You Find Your People

By Bonnie Fanning

Y*ou are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.* If you've ever taken an interest in self-improvement, you've probably seen that popular quote by motivational speaker Jim Rohn.

It's one of those things that *seems* true.

And although it may or may not be that simple, research shows that our behaviors are definitely influenced by those around us.

For example, a number of studies have revealed that we eat more when we're around people who eat a lot.

Other studies show that your work performance is influenced by your nearby co-workers. If you work within 25 feet of a high performer, it may give you a 15% "boost" in your own productivity.

Why does this matter to writers, who largely work from home?

For one, we have to be careful who we share our dreams with.

After all, even your closest friends and family may not "get it" when you tell them you want to be a paid writer.

Since they have no idea how many people are finding success and completely transforming their lives in our world, it just doesn't make sense to them that you'd try it, too.

But that's okay!

Because there are plenty of ways to boost your confidence — *and* your success — by surrounding yourself with like-minded writers and positive people.

Here are three ways to "find your people" right here within the AWAI world, so you can get that social boost you need to keep pushing forward with your writing goals:

1. Hang out on the AWAI Facebook page.

You'll find nonstop inspiration, support, and motivation in the many videos and free online events on the [AWAI Facebook page](#). Check in on Facebook and our other

social media networks and connect with other writers who “get” what you’re trying to do. Whenever you need a little extra encouragement or want to chat with fellow writers who are in your shoes, it’s the perfect place to start.

2. Join our free events.

Watch our [events calendar](#), AWAI’s *Week in Review*, and the AWAI Facebook page to keep up to date on the many free online events and training webinars we host. Join us for “Writer’s Coffee Breaks,” “Ask Me Anything” sessions, and [Inside AWAI monthly webinars](#). You’ll learn what’s going on in our industry and connect with other freelance writers worldwide. Anytime you virtually attend a session, you’ll start getting to know the friendly folks who hang out in the comments.



3. Create an accountability group.

When you take part in any training programs or events like [Create Your Own LinkedIn Profile in a Day](#) or the *21-Day Challenge*, you’ll have a chance to connect with other writers. You can find other AWAI members who are looking to build an accountability group. They can be a huge advantage and encourage you while you’re working toward your goals. You can check in with each other to keep track of your progress and motivate each other to move forward.

One more thing I’d like to encourage you to do is look into AWAI’s *Copywriting Success & Getting Clients Bootcamp*... It’s another way you can find a group who will be with you throughout your copywriting journey. Bootcamp is all about helping you build connections with mentors, colleagues, experts, and prospective clients.

Many of AWAI’s greatest success stories come from aspiring writers who attended this in-person event and connected with big names in our industry to build their careers fast.

As an attendee, you’ll get to brush up on core writing skills and find out what’s working now in today’s fast-paced and ever-changing direct-marketing environment.

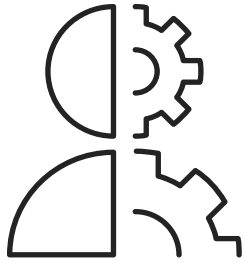
Plus, you’ll meet A-list writers, industry influencers, copy chiefs, and marketers, and you’ll be able to connect with and build relationships with other writers who share your goals and aspirations...

[Go here to learn more about Bootcamp.](#)

With so many ways to surround yourself with friendly, encouraging writers, you should never feel like you have to go it alone.

Even if you’re an introvert (let’s face it, many of us are!), connecting with just one or two writers in person can help boost the positive voices around you and keep you moving forward.

And — who knows — once you achieve the level of success you’re aiming for, maybe you’ll be that positive voice for someone else, too. ■



How a 'Focus Friend' Helps Overcome Procrastination

By Brad Pickard

What's the difference between procrastination and misery? Misery loves company; procrastination feels solitary.

Look at your own history of putting things off...

Does your love-hate relationship with deadlines and getting things done hold you back?

Does your ideal *writer's life* include overcoming these obstacles?

Because if you struggle to start writing, stay motivated, or put the finishing touches on something *before* the day it's due, you're not alone.

For example, let's say you've got a writing deadline in a few weeks and you haven't started yet...

Are you *really* free to live the life you truly desire in the meantime? Or, while spending time with family and friends, do you feel miserable because you aren't as far along with your writing as you'd like to be?

If you've ever experienced what I'll call "procrastination purgatory," you know it can easily put a cramp in your ideal writer's lifestyle — both when you are and aren't working.

Procrastination Purgatory's Worst Enemy

One of the well-known perks of life as a writer is being 100% free to structure your days as you wish. After all, there's no boss breathing down your neck, and no looming performance review to simply keep your job.

Your continued freedom, however, is contingent upon meeting your deadlines — which is often easier said than done. Luckily, there's a fabulous digital solution.

And, it's...

- easy,
- effective,
- available 24/7, and
- inexpensive (and often free!).

It's called body doubling, and it harnesses the collaborative power of working with another person to increase your motivation, focus, and productivity.

How does it work?

First, find a writing buddy. Schedule a time to meet, set a time limit, and before you start working, share with each other what you plan to accomplish. When the timer goes off, take turns sharing how it went.

But wait — you may be saying, *I don't have any writing buddies I can do this with.*

Well, thanks to the magic of the internet... that's not a problem!

Twenty-First-Century Body Doubling

Body doubling over the internet, better known as virtual body doubling, can be as effective as being with someone in person.

Cost-effective (sometimes free!) body-doubling platforms exist, such as [Focusmate](#) (my personal favorite), [Flown](#), and [Flow Club](#).

Perhaps the most important factor, regardless of which platform you choose, is the quality of your partner. And although you may not know in advance if someone is a good focus friend before you have a session, you'll know after it's over if you should schedule another session with the same partner.

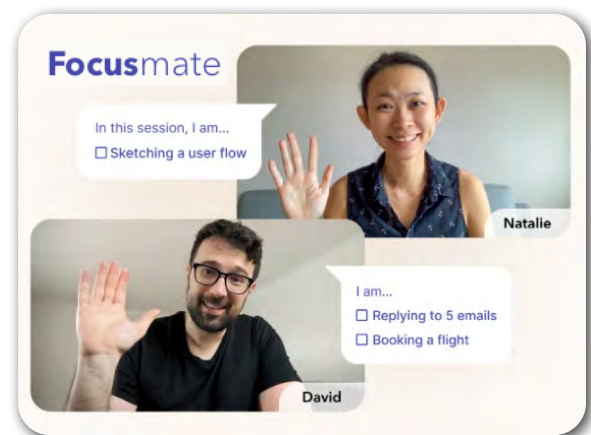
How can you tell? It's simple: Just ask yourself how productive you were during the session. Did you stay focused? Did your partner's productivity help or hinder your own productivity?

How Does Virtual Body Doubling Work?

After a brief introduction, you'll each simply state your goals and get to work. The simple collaborative accountability is what brings the real power.

Because when you say out loud what you're hoping to accomplish — knowing your focus friend will soon ask how you did — you're much more likely to stay focused and get your work done.

Sessions vary in length, anywhere from 25 minutes to over an hour. You choose the length when you schedule the session. After just a few sessions, you'll learn how long you need to maintain a state of flow in each phase of your writing process.



During your virtual session, your webcam stays on, and you can choose to mute or stay unmuted. Seeing or hearing your partner be productive often creates a highly motivating environment in which you can focus and also be productive.

When the timer goes off, you'll each share how it went. Did you stay focused? Were you able to complete what you hoped to? After sharing, it's time to thank your partner and go on with your day.

The Benefits of Body Doubling

With body-doubling platforms, breaks are built in. This helps to eliminate much of the guilt and guesswork. It also activates a psychological reward system; when you know a break is coming, it can help you stay more focused until the timer goes off.

Also, when you're prone to distractions, having another person present can help. Just knowing you'll soon need to update your partner on your progress often reduces the number of times you get distracted.

Soon, missed deadlines and all-nighters to meet a deadline will be a thing of the past.

I hope you'll find renewed focus and motivation by using the power of a focus friend.

But if you do, beware...

The solitary world of procrastination purgatory may kick you out. ■

the barefoot writing challenge



Write about a time someone hurt you and why — or whether — you forgave them.

A check for \$100 will be awarded for the winning essay!

Send entries to contest@barefootwriter.com by midnight ET on **June 18**.

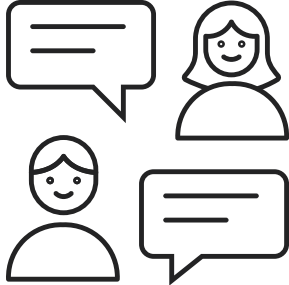
Please submit entries as a **Microsoft Word attachment** and limit your essay to **500 words or fewer**.

Congratulations to **Valerie Sulzinski** for winning the May Barefoot Writing Challenge! Here's a glimpse at her essay:

He climbed up on top of one of the lab tables and plugged in an electric guitar, and we got Mr. Goldstein's rendition of "Pistol Packin' Mama." Okay, that was entertaining, but you might be wondering why he did it. Just to be "cool" with us kids? Nope.



Click [here](#) to go to the Barefoot Writing Winners Page and read her inspiring copy.



As managing partners of AWAI, **Katie Yeakle** and **Rebecca Matter** have guided, motivated, and celebrated thousands of Barefoot Writers over the years. Got a question for them? Send it here: info@barefootwriter.com

Q: The wealth of resources available to Barefoot Writer Club members is great but a little overwhelming. How do I decide what to read first?



Katie Yeakle: You're right — there *is* a ton of terrific how-to information you can access once you've joined the Barefoot Writer Club. But to make it as streamlined as possible for you, we've broken the steps down into 10 modules. So when you log in to your AWAI Member Page and click the membership tab, and then select "Barefoot Writer," you're taken directly to Step 1. I highly recommend going through the modules in order, because each section builds on the previous one.

I completely understand how tempting it is to jump ahead, especially to areas like the "Bonus Guides" section where the content gets you excited all over again about the possibilities within the world of paid writing. But trust me, that content will be even *more* exciting and useful to you if you've completed the modules that come before it.

Q: I've gained a lot of confidence from reading about how other Barefoot Writers market their services, but how do I know which approach is right for me?



Rebecca Matter: There are so many ways to market yourself to clients ([here are 26!](#))... The key is choosing methods that you feel good about and spending a little bit of time every day doing something to market your services.

For starters, make sure you have a [professional LinkedIn profile](#) that clearly communicates who you serve (your ideal clients) and what problems you solve (the services you offer).

Next, set aside 15–20 minutes every day to work on making connections. This might mean researching potential clients, connecting with them on LinkedIn, commenting on articles they've published, following up with requests from prospective clients, working on your website, publishing your own content to LinkedIn, and so on.

Looking for more ideas? Try this [fun marketing challenge from Barefoot Writer Rebekah Mays](#). Just remember, consistency is key to anything you want to build. So get started, keep going, and have fun with it! And then be sure to share what worked best for you over in our Facebook group, so other members can benefit from your experiences too. ■

Finally...

A Professional Organization for the Benefit of All Direct Response Copywriters and Content Writers.

(Best of all, membership needn't cost you one single penny!)

The Professional Writers' Alliance is dedicated to helping you improve your persuasive-writing skills, network with writers and marketers, and find exciting projects.

You'll learn all that's new and happening within our exciting and fast-paced industry – including the latest opportunities to emerge from web writing, e-commerce, and traditional direct mail.

You'll enjoy full and unfettered access to a long line of benefits, including:

- Concrete ways to quickly elevate your writing and marketing skills
- Regular invitations to free marketing and writing webinars and teleconferences
- News on what's working now in the world of direct response
- Access to industry experts and unlimited networking opportunities
- Access to the latest jobs and freelance assignments
- Discounts on resources all writers need
- And much, much more

Whether you are (or aim to be) an ad writer, web writer, website owner, content writer, newsletter writer, desktop publisher, grant writer, researcher, marketer, or even a graphic artist, *The Professional Writers' Alliance* is the best way to stay in touch with what's happening in the industry – and gain the “persuasion” skills you need to prosper from it.

Click below to see everything that's available to you – get a feel for the enormous impact it can have on your financial and professional success ... and don't forget – membership in this organization *needn't cost you one red cent!*



“The Professional Writers' Alliance is a great resource for additional training from top-level experts, and the Premium Access to DirectResponseJobs.com is outstanding as well. But the biggest benefit of membership, for me, has been the added credibility I've gained by listing PWA as one of my professional associations and displaying the logo on my website and marketing materials. Thanks, AWAI!”
– Michele Peterson



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