

# Easy Copywriting: Develop a conversational style

By Angela Booth

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Summary: What makes writing copy for everything from sales letters to ads to your Web site easy? Developing a conversational style.

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What makes writing copy for everything from sales letters to ads to your Web site easy?

Developing a conversational style. Try the tips I've outlined below if you're trying to write copy. (Or dialog for a script, or a novel, for that matter.)

If you initially find writing in a casual conversational style difficult, relax.

You can do it. It's just a matter of getting the hang of it. Write as you speak, with the redundancies, which we all use in conversation, chopped out.

\* It's vital that you learn to relax while you write\*.

We all tend to tense up when we write. Writing, or any creative task, produces anxiety because of the adrenaline pumping through our body. We need this adrenaline, it gives our words energy.

However, unless you're aware of the problems that too much adrenaline can cause (anxiety, tense muscles leading to health concerns like RSI and tension headaches), your creative tasks will be more pain than pleasure.

If you have concerns about tension, do a relaxation course. You'll find books and tapes on relaxation in your local library, or at your bookstore.

The tips below will help you to build your conversational writing style. The transcribing exercise is especially helpful.

= TIPS:

\* Record a few minutes of TV commercials using audio-tape. Transcribe the tape into your word processor. This lets you see what a conversational style looks like on your computer screen--- this is handy if you're trying to write an audiovisual script.

Note: please do this simple exercise, even if you have no intention of writing audiovisual scripts.

When I wrote my first two novels, I had a real problem with dialog. I audio-taped a couple of movies and transcribed them. It worked. For an investment of maybe eight hours, I've found dialog easy and fun to do ever since.

The bonus --- not only did it improve my dialog 1000 per cent, but it also improved all my performance writing as well. I formed a mental link between how the words look on the page, and how they sound.

\* Write, then: read your words aloud. Or: talk. Start talking to yourself (it helps if you have your own office) about the product you're writing copy for. Include sound-effects. Be outrageous. You'll create excellent copy.

\* Think about sub-text. This is the underlying meaning of our words. The better the script (dialog) writer, the simpler the writing, because it relies almost completely on sub-text. This is difficult to do. However, don't let that stop you. The more practising you do, the better you'll get. Look for examples of sub-text when you're watching movies and TV, and write the examples down in a notebook.

\* Listen to the conversational styles of the people you meet.

Unless they've made an effort to change it, their conversational style reflects their early family environment. So you'll find that someone who's grown up in a home where her parents are from another culture may not speak her parents' native language, but she nevertheless has some of that language structure in her conversational style --- in the way she uses words.

You can use this knowledge to add veracity to your conversational style.

Try the above approaches. For a small investment in time, you'll improve your copywriting skills.

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