

'I'-Voice, Style, Audience



On Writing Well

Commentaries by William Zinsser

Three Immediate Points:

- writing is important for people to increase effective communication
- writing well is *not* a genetic trait
- writing *is* hard

'I' Voice

- writers connect best to their readers by asserting a sense of self into their work
- this is a development of an individual's styles
- is essential to build a bridge between you and the reader *however*—
- the reader will see you as self-indulgent, self-involved
- *the reader does want* to know your various opinions, observations
- *they do not want* to be reminded that you created the ideas and observations

Web Log Mentality

Web logs or blogs consciously (and subconsciously) promote trends in the hopes of promoting a struggling writer to celebrity status.

- movie *Julie & Julia* analogy
- written and directed by Nora Ephron, *J&J* is the first movie to be based on a popular blog
- “I *am* a writer!”

Trends = cliches= lazy writing

- Be conscious of your every word choice and every phrase you wish to use.
- Express your point of view and perceptions, honestly.

Craft versus Attitude

Attitude is expressed in your writing through tone and through your personality. Ultimately, keep in mind, *writing is an art of pleasing yourself*. With this as your focus, you will promote a sense of self assurance and confidence.

Craft is essential to maintaining your audience's focus.

- rhetorical elements
- writing patterns
- basic grammar skills

Audience

Zinsser believes an audience should not be a prime concern.

He also states that readers cannot be predicted nor defined.

“Don’t try to visualize the great mass audience. There is no such audience—every reader is a different person. Don’t try to guess what sort of thing editors want to publish or what you think the country is in a mood to read. Editors and readers don’t know what they want to read until they read it. Besides, they’re always looking for something new” (Zinsser 25).

- *Well, yes— and then again, no.*

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: Harper Perennial. 1998. Print.