

Chapter 6

Writing with Flair and Imagination

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.” – Albert Einstein

Here is where you invoke your passion.

Here is when you decorate your sentences and indulge in graceful verbal extravagances.

Here is where I exhort you to emerge from your latent cocoon and emerge a colorful butterfly flapping and swirling in the breezes of life.

Have you thought about writing a story? A novel? A memoir? A poem? A family tale? Comedy? A script for a drama? Now is the time to explore your fecund possibilities and go after them.

Create. Imagine.



Where do you start?

Okay, inspiration:

“I prefer the errors of enthusiasm to the complacency of wisdom.”

— Branch Rickey via Anatole France (indifference)

“Don’t tell me the sky’s the limit when there are footprints on the moon.”

— Paul Brandt

He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.

You can’t make an omelet unless you break the eggs.



Are you pumped??

Let's start with an **idea**. What do you imagine you would like to write? It will be your work, and possibly, no one else will ever read it.

Or you, indeed, want to publish your essay: a short story, an Op-Ed, a submission for a local newspaper, or a community magazine.

Now imagine. What is that kernel of thought that has been percolating in your cranium? What is the subject matter?

Set out an outline. Imagine. What is the message, the storyline?

Now write.

Pay no attention to punctuation, grammar, syntax, or form. Just let your thoughts pour out onto the page. (Another creative idea is to dictate. I do that often.) Let go of your doubt(s). Express yourself. Write until you are weary. Then set it all aside. Ignore it for the rest of the day. Tomorrow — take a deep breath — and read your draft. Evaluate it. Show it to a respected friend.

Now, begin to shape it (incidentally, you should sign up for grammarly.com to assist you in your draft). You are on your way!

In the meantime, fuel your thoughts and creative flow by ... reading.

Select some good literature to help inspire you. Ask your librarian (yes libraries do still exist and are a fantastic source of cheap books!) and you will be able to sample narrative and pace, and sentence cadence. It's a patient process.



Let's try some exercises:

I. What makes you smile — and why? Explain:

- receiving a surprise bouquet on the weekend
- an early morning hug
- an inspiration
- fresh peaches, strawberries, watermelon...
- a kiss from the love of your life
- a big laugh with your best friend
- 75°F, hand-in-hand, on a sun-filled day
- an act of kindness
- a cup of hot coffee on a cold morning
- a good movie on a rainy weeknight
- oatmeal on a cold, snowy day
- listening to a rain shower while you are writing
- pie à la mode — fresh!
- beautiful metaphors
- a dip in the pool on a hot, summer day
- a pooch on your lap
- a piece of chocolate
- Thanksgiving dinner with your family
- a glass of wine while sitting by the fireplace
- a special memory — replayed
- a head on your shoulder as you snuggle on the couch
- telling someone you love them

**“He that dares not grasp the thorn should never
crave the rose.” — Anne Brontë**

II. Write your own metaphor(s).

III. Who do you miss the most if/when they're gone?

IV. Who could you help the most?

V. When you think of “love” what image is in your mind?

VI. What makes you exhilarated? Sad? Regretful?



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And have some fun. When you are preparing to send a message — hey — make it a poem, a ditty! Creative, fun, amusing and impactful. For example, this to my partner in Mexico (Cinthia), who has been expecting a corporate-embroidered canvas tote bag from me:

Your bags are now completed:
in black and one in blue
(which often is how I feel
after dealing each day with you!)

So when Shari delivers them –
I'll certainly let you know –
But she claims with calm assurance
...they are superb and good to go!

And let us not forget...empathy:

We are living in such a divisive and contentious world, we often overlook the importance of thoughtfulness, kindness, and courtesy. Happy gestures that add animation and joy to those with whom we communicate.

We have become overwhelmed with crises: the COVID pandemic, climate change (droughts, fires, floods, typhoons, hurricanes), inflation, mass shootings, war, political polarization, chaos, tumult, and confusion...

We must not lose sight of compassion, consideration, and caring. Understanding each other. Being sympathetic and kind. Nourishing. Nurturing.

My definition of empathy? An example:

My second son, Hankie, had broken his fibula in a rare, freakish accident when he was four years old. The little boy had to endure a spica cast encasing both legs and hips for months. This bundle of happy energy was on his back.

Sadly, during that time, my father was dying. Every day — without fail — that brave, immobilized, suffering boy would ask me how my dad was doing.

“Daddy, are you okay?”

Compassion. Empathy.

At its finest.

Love.

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

– Dalai Lama