

barefootWriter

Celebrating 10 Years of Helping People Find Freedom Through Well-Paid Writing



Top direct-response copywriter and copy chief Marcella Allison has over 25 years of helping others grow their businesses and regularly “pays it forward” by mentoring new writers.

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ABOUT OUR COVER:

Marcella Allison is a top direct-response copywriter, known widely for her talents in writing, copy chiefing, and collaboration. She's written multiple multimillion-dollar controls for both alternative health and financial direct-response companies and is a popular and respected mentor to up-and-coming writers and entrepreneurs. Originally from the Midwest, Marcella is also known for her quick wit and memorable laugh.

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The Double-V Lens that Helps Grow Your Writing Career

It's okay. You're human." This is one of the lessons repeated daily in my household. Usually it's because I'm reassuring my kids after they make a mistake or fly off the handle.

But as they get older and watch me make mistakes or fly off the handle, they gift it right back: "It's okay, Mommy. You're human." Because I'm still learning, too.

What's intriguing to me, after working on this June issue of *Barefoot Writer*, is how often we overlook our humanness when it comes to professional success and goals. Who wants to admit they made a mistake and goofed up some copy, turned something in late, or wrote a promo that bombed? (Psst... I've done all those things.)

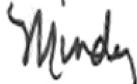
We all experience failure. And though it's not exactly what you'd lead with in conversation... sharing your vulnerable moments and the valuable lessons that come out of them both helps you grow as a professional and helps whomever you share the lesson with. You see growth as a result: in your community, your network, and eventually... your entire writing career.

It may seem like a big leap between those dots, but you'll read about this playing out firsthand in Marcella Allison's Featured Interview this month (p. 9). Holly Rhoton takes the lesson one step further by showing you how to reshape challenges with intention (p. 30). Heather Belisle and Peter Smolens share methodical approaches to revving up for goals (p. 28) and then following through on assignments (p. 25).

Marcella rounds out these points with her essay on navigating that point where inspiration meets resistance (p. 17), and then we bring it home by presenting the writing opportunity that best represents this art of connection (and happens to bring in the money!) — p. 19.

Your take-home lesson this month is to use this "double-v lens" of recognizing both your vulnerabilities as a human and find the value in the lessons you've learned (or are still learning). Do this and you'll quickly and exponentially grow your network, your community of support, and your writing career.

Cheers to both your vulnerability and the value it brings,



Mindy McHorse

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Here I am with one of my own early mentors, Paul Hollingshead, having dinner at the Writer's Retreat in Delray Beach, Florida, last month.

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Challenge Prompt: Summer is coming to the Northern Hemisphere... Describe in detail your favorite summer meal. Is it a barbecue? a picnic? homemade ice cream for dinner? Tell us about the feast!



Peter Smolens ("Four Phases of Content Writing") is a writer, photographer, and digital painter. Through his company, P.B.S. Studios, he has published over a hundred feature articles, photos, and digital paintings in newspapers, magazines, and online publications. As a digital photo painter, he published a book called "Digital Photo Painting with Adobe Photoshop." For twenty years (before he retired), he was a contract technical writer. For exercise and fun, he's a lifetime golfer.

I'm a meat and potatoes man. My favorite summer meal is a steak cooked on an outdoor grill or a medium-rare piece of prime rib with a baked potato and corn on the cob.



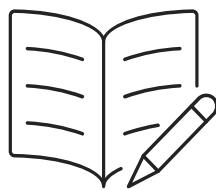
Heather Belisle ("Establish the Right Infrastructure to Achieve Your Goals – From Concept to Realization") is a Certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt who specializes in optimizing processes and helping others be their best selves. With over 20 years of experience doing human and process improvement programs, she has a bag of tricks that can be used for generating the best pathway forward. Today she's living *the writer's life* by using her experiences to write compelling copy for personal and professional development coaches.

I love a good barbecue! My favorite meal is barbecue baby back ribs, potato salad, grilled corn on the cob, and watermelon for dessert. To wash it all down, I love to enjoy a nice, frosted mug of lager... YUM!!!



Holly Rhoton ("Be It Until You See It") worked in a hospital as a mammographer for 16 years. She finally broke free in 2021 to live the life she had always dreamed about... the life of a writer. Now she's setting her own schedule, writing, and having the time of her life with her family and friends!

My favorite summertime food is the same as my always-favorite food: bean and cheese burrito with chips and salsa. If I had to choose, it would be my last meal on earth.



Completing the Assignment: Three Phases of Content Writing

By Peter Smolens

Congratulations: You've got the assignment to write a feature article, blog, column, or case study. After a few moments of celebration, fear begins to set in. Now what? You have convinced a company that you can do the job, and now you must complete the task.

The biggest eye-opening lesson I've learned is that the actual process of writing the article is the easy part. Copy and content writers already know how to write engaging copy, and there are templates available with examples of different kinds of persuasive copywriting.

The harder part, in my opinion, is the research it takes to get the information to engage the copy.

As someone who has published more than a hundred articles, I've developed a submission tracking system (STS). The system has three phases:

1. Perform research to get background information.
2. Write the manuscript to professional standards.
3. Send the submission to the client (company or publication) so it arrives on time.

I use this STS every time I write a feature article, blog, column, or case study. It works for me, and may help you in your writing process as well.

become a better writer (continued...)

The STS starts when you hang up the phone call, receive the email, or walk out of an interview or meeting where you learned you have the writing project.

First, take some time to enjoy the moment. Then get to work. I start by putting the assignment date on my calendar, and I add a reminder a few days before the submission date.

Then, create a new folder with the article's name. I also make subfolders labeled "Notes & Interviews" and "Related Images."

Into my new main folder goes a copy of the original query. I also create four other documents:

- Manuscript — the actual article name
- "Outline" — areas to cover in the manuscript
- "Source Listing" — a list of contacts (including addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers) of people associated with the article
- "Questionnaire" — a list of questions to be answered while researching the article

Phase 1: Perform Research

Research for the article breaks into two main areas: secondary and primary research.

I start with secondary research, which is the gathering of printed or video material about the subject. For writers, the internet is a gift sent from heaven. With a few mouse clicks, you can get information on almost any topic — often too much information. Once you find the appropriate information, there are questions to ask. Who said it? What makes that person an expert?



While at the website, open your "Notes" document and copy the appropriate information. Include a link to the secondary research article. Always double-check the information you get from the web with your primary source. During your secondary research, put questions to ask your primary sources in your "Questionnaire" document.

Add the author and experts quoted in the secondary research article to your "Source Listing" document. They can become your primary sources. Other ways to find primary sources include trade associations, corporations, museums, colleges, and universities.

Phase 2: Write the Article

Depending on your knowledge, you may already have some idea of the structure of the finished article. During your research, note the patterns of the information you are getting.

become a better writer (continued...)

Write your first draft from notes you compiled during your background research and interview stages. The goal of the first draft is to get the information down on paper. Introduce your topic. A compelling lead makes the reader want to know more.

The following paragraph supports the theme and transitions to the first section to cover. Each section discusses a specific aspect of the topic.

Moving from one section to another in your manuscript is called transition. After you have completed all the subsections, end the piece. How you end the manuscript depends on the article. A short paragraph summarizing the theme will work in some cases, and a call to action might be appropriate in others.

Once you complete your first draft, it's time to revise and polish the manuscript. "Wordsmithing" the manuscript is where you cut the flab and make the transitions flow from one idea to the next.

Phase 3: Submission

Once you've completed your final edits, make a backup copy. MS Word documents are the standard, and most clients expect your manuscript to be delivered via email or uploaded to the company server.

The last step in the system is to make a note in your submission tracking system that the assignment is complete. Then move on to the next project and start the whole process again. ■



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For Barefoot Writer Club Members Only:

The next Barefoot Writer Club Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, **June 15 at 2 p.m. ET**. [Click here for the link to join.](#)

June Meeting Focus:

Where to Find the Best Insider Tips for a Lucrative Online Writing Career

With special guest **Heather Robson**, Managing Editor of Digital Copywriter
Hosted by Executive Editor **Mindy McHorse**