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Love Thy Reader | About Donor Communications | *from Tom Ahern*



If you had more money ... you *could* do more good.
If you do better communications ... you *will* have more money.

Like what you're reading? **Receive** your very own free copy!

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JUST 4 days left...

My 2 NEW DVDs remain
ON SALE through July 4...

**"Writing for Results"
& "Case for Support"**

Just released:

2 "Master" DVDs by Tom Ahern. In-depth information, [click](#).

Recently discovered....

A treasure trove of nonprofit help

[Nonprofit Hub](#): "We're part of the [Digital Community Foundation](#), an organization that offers [grants](#) for state-of-the-art nonprofit websites." Sounds good to me. And I LOVE their [blog](#). Want to see some terrific nonprofit websites? See this [post](#).

Garr Reynolds...

An amazing blog re: telling stories

I was on Amazon, looking at books on presentation when I ran across Garr Reynolds, author of [Presentation Zen](#). The Amazon reviews made it clear that Mr. Reynolds' blog is worth reading. [See](#) for yourself.

Best of Future Fundraising

"Trust me, kid. This is worth its weight in gold."

6 true things

I love how-to books.

They are tools. They are assistants. They are mentors and demystifiers. I have hundreds in my office, as you can see. (*Welcome, by the way!*)



I love the generosity and courage you find in the best how-to books. Superbly accomplished individuals faced the screaming threat of the blank page, yet intelligently shared everything they knew about their

Now...

"Pixar's 22 rules of fundraising"

Guest blogger Andrew Rogers [re-purposes](#) the [22 Rules of Storytelling](#) from Emma Coates, a story artist at Pixar. Did we ever talk about putting "the fun" back in fundraising?

From the master...

Jeff Brooks on Newsletters

I don't think I'm out on a limb when I say that Jeff Brooks knows more about successful donor newsletters than anyone else in the Milky Way. In June he did a presentation for NDOA in Seattle, and he's posted it online, on [Prezi](#). It takes a few seconds to load. Then start clicking the FORWARD arrow. If you haven't seen Prezi before, it's a lot more fun than PowerPoint. There's no voice. But the slides are pretty obvious. And you'll get plenty of great advice and data. Did you know, for instance, that newsletters mailed in envelopes raised 254% more revenue than newsletters that are self-mailers?

Join me?

:) **LinkedIn:** 879 connectns
:) **Twitter:** 771 followers
:) **E-news:** 7,054 subscribers
:) **Facebook:** 170 friends

Working on....

Case for a hospital cancer center.
Case for the Progreso Latino Fund. Case for the Women & Girls Fund. Training for Community Legal Aid. Comms for Help Me See. Direct mail for Sharp.

What's new on [SOFII?](#)

Need a good idea RIGHT NOW?

Then review this freshly updated [list](#) of SOFII's **latest** exhibits. SOFII stands for the *Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration*. This big-hearted, mostly volunteer, London-based nonprofit collects and annotates

craft ... with humility, wit, even tenderness and abundant mercy for us yearning and ignorant readers.

Great how-to books are a gift to the world; an art form, in my view.

Here are 6 things I've learned from my faves...

----- #1 -----

Page 98, Jeff Brooks, [The Fundraiser's Guide to Irresistible Communications](#): "...through close observation, fundraisers have discovered three '**Design Laws**' - practices that, if we follow them well, encourage our fundraising messages to bear fruit. Those laws are: 1. Make it plain. 2. Make it corny. 3. Make it obvious."

----- #2 -----

Page 2, George Smith, [Tiny Essentials of Writing for Fundraising](#): "So let me say it loud and plain - this is the Age of Bullshit. For we live in the first age of **Verbal Predictability**. For the very first time in recorded history *you know what someone is going to say before they say it*." Neuroscience has an answer, by the way. But that's in a different book.

----- #3 -----

Page 97, Susan M. Weinschenk, Ph.D., [100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People](#): "Imagine you're at a cocktail party. You're talking to the person next to you. It's noisy, but you can screen out the other conversations. Then you hear someone say your name. Your name ... quickly came to your attention." I.e., this is why we strive to personalize stuff. There is **MUCH wisdom** in *100 Things* (it's a series).

----- #4 -----

Page 31, Joseph Sugarman, [Advertising Secrets of the Written Word](#) (out of print; Kindle edition): "If the purpose of all the elements in an ad is therefore to get you to read the copy, then what we are really talking about is reading the first sentence, aren't we?... [And] if the first sentence is so important, what can you do to make it so compelling to read, so simple, and so interesting that your readers - every one of them - will read it in its entirety? The answer: **Make it short.**"

----- #5 -----

examples of **SUCCESSFUL** donor communications from around the world ... and then gives you **FREE** access. I'm there often.

Could they take the heat? Well, they came into my kitchen...
Enter a GALLERY of FRANK critiques ... solely for your error-avoiding, idea-stealing pleasure

Brave people send me samples of their donor comms, for a **free, nitty-gritty** - and **public** - critique. Find out exactly what they did wrong or right, and learn from their mistakes or victories.
Available as [downloadable PDFs](#) with pop-up comments. I won't be critiquing for awhile in 2013, due to other commitments.

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Where will Tom speak next?
Check upcoming events on Tom's international [speaking CALENDAR!](#)



Ourhouseinfrance.com

[My blog](#)

[My website](#)

Page 107, Donald M. Murray, [Writing to Deadline](#): "Lively writing often results from finding the point at which the people or the issues **in the story are in conflict**. [But we] look for the information that fits the stereotype and forget to search for the moment of tension at which the particular energy of the story is released." Journalist Donald Murray won the Pulitzer Prize. This is the only book about storytelling you'll probably ever need to read. Sample chapters: "Asking the Reader's Five Questions," "How to Write Without Writing," "Learning from Yourself."

----- #6 -----

Page 6, Jerry Weissman, [Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story](#): "They mistakenly think for the audience to understand *anything*, they have to be told *everything*. That's like being asked the time and responding with complete instructions for building a clock." I worship the ancient marketing gods. Jerry W. is one: a TOTAL TRUTH TELLER. This is the best "case writing" book I know ... and it's not from inside the fundraising world: that's its strength.

Now...

YOUR TURN

(Yes, you ... my beloved readers and contributors.)

I could go on much longer with advice and excerpts from my favorite, most admired, most useful how-to books ... but *should* I, I wonder?

Please: You decide. You're doing me a favor.

I have no stake in this. I'm just curious. A. Is anyone still reading this newsletter by this point? And B. Is...? Well, something else. To do with ice cream.

Send me an email (a2bmail@aol.com) with **YES** or **NO**. Simple. Love you. *Thank you*.

Back issues of this newsletter? [Here...](#)



New designs all the time....

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for the wordy wise.*

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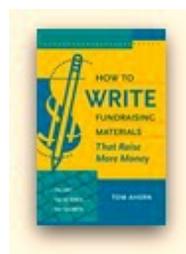


How to create fundraising materials
your donors will love and respond to.



How to write a case for
support. Read the Kool-Aid.

[See what Amazon reviewers say...](#)



How to write fundraising
materials your donors will
love.

[See what Amazon reviewers say...](#)

'Til next time...
donor communications
true believers!

