

Oh, I
LOVE
your honesty

Meh.

STORYTELLING FOR BLOGGERS

LESSON 3:
Making Them Feel It

LIAR!

OMG
NOOO!

LESSON 3 OVERVIEW

What questions are we answering?

- What are the most important elements of storytelling for **evoking strong emotions**, and really making the reader *feel* it?
- What's “**ground level writing**” and why is it so important?
- Is there such a thing as **too much honesty** in a blog?
- Why is the world so fascinated with **fear, misery and horror** – and is that always a *bad* thing?



HOW TO STOP

Too much? Life intruding? No problem. To halt the course, just unsubscribe from the weekly e-mail. You can rejoin at any time, starting with week 1, by filling out the **START FORM**.

Felt Writing: FAIL



Image: [Allie Brosh](#)

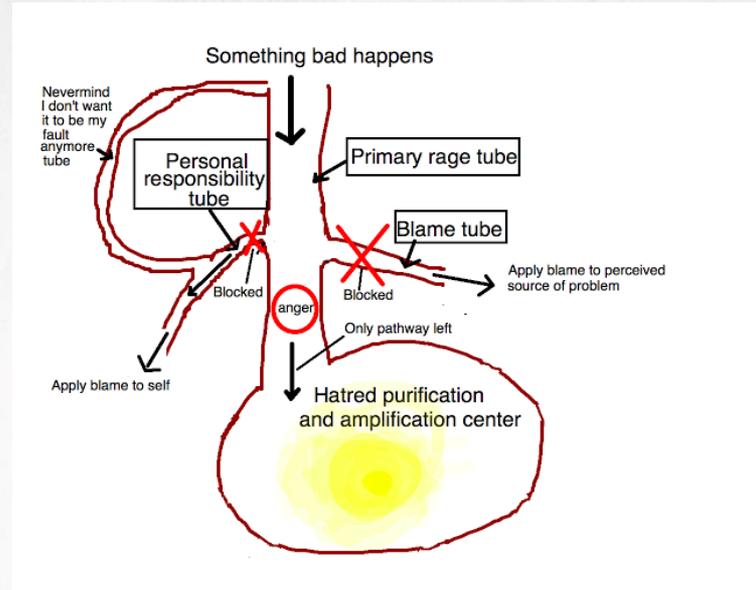
*"I couldn't sleep last night, and today everything was annoying.
EVERYTHING REALLY SUCKS."*

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Felt Writing: WIN



Images: [Allie Brosh](#)

“The little frustrations start to happen more quickly. They ping against your psyche like hundreds of tiny pebbles....

The rage enters your body, but cannot exit through either the blame or personal responsibility pathways. It therefore must travel to the very center of you where it will fester and eventually rupture.”

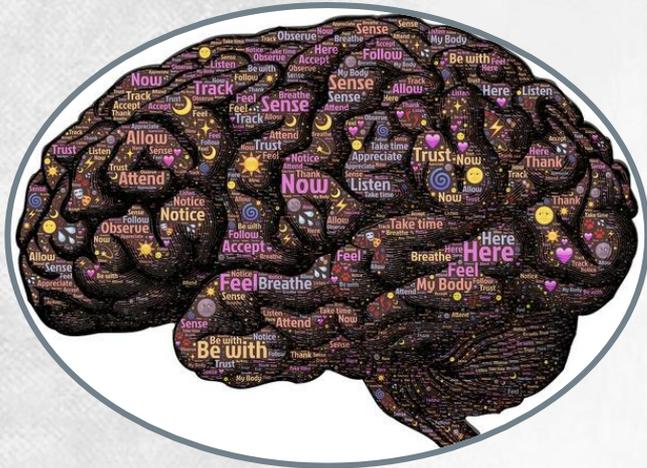
Read her whole post [here](#).

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HOW TO FOOL YOUR BRAIN WITH FELT WRITING



Sight
Sound
Touch
Smell
Taste

Analogy
Metaphor

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“Last month...a team of researchers from Emory University reported...that when subjects in their laboratory read a metaphor involving texture, the sensory cortex, responsible for perceiving texture through touch, became active. Metaphors like “The singer had a velvet voice” and “He had leathery hands” roused the sensory cortex, while phrases matched for meaning, like “The singer had a pleasing voice” and “He had strong hands,” did not.

Researchers have discovered that words describing motion also stimulate regions of the brain distinct from language-processing areas....

The brain, it seems, does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life.”

Annie Murphy Paul, “[*Your Brain On Fiction*](#),” New York Times.



Honesty: FAIL



“Welcome! And congratulations! The course is guaranteed to make you a six-figure blogger with millions of fans in a matter of *weeks*, and don’t worry, there’s **absolutely no work required!** Hard work is for losers, and THAT AIN’T YOU. Am I right?”

Honesty: WIN



“Building a successful blog is *hard*. There's a lot more to it than simply creating a blog and writing your first post. For starters, readers won't show up just because you're writing. You have to tell people about your work if you want them to care.

But a lot of what it takes to build a successful blog is **just being good at showing up**. Over and over. For a long, long time.”

– [Belle Beth Cooper](#)

HOW TO WIN HEARTS WITH RADICAL HONESTY

What would happen if you were completely honest?



1. People will stop speaking to you.
2. People might think you're going to kill yourself (because everything you write will read like a suicide note).
3. People will think you're crazy.
4. You'll frighten people.
5. You'll entertain people.
6. People will trust your advice.
7. You'll become free [*to speak your mind, to sound like yourself, to truly **help** people*].

– James Altucher, "[7 Things Happen To You When You're Completely Honest.](#)"

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Anatomy Of An **Emotionally Broken Story**

High Altitude: sweeping statements, glossed-over details, plot completely drowning out character, all human experiences summarized, stereotype plotting.

+

Dishonest: lying – or deliberately holding something important back from the audience for the author's own good. (Note: as a writer, you're totally allowed to mislead, deceive or delay reader gratification/enlightenment if it makes the *story* work better, because that's serving the reader. That's fine. DO that.)

=

Tired, lifeless, untrustworthy, lazy, clichéd, lacking spark, lacking warmth, devoid of personality – and the absolute worst storytelling sin of all....

REALLY, REALLY DULL.

EMBRACE THE **HORROR**



WHAT?

Things going wrong. Plans going awry. The holes we fall into (emotional, vocational, actual holes in the ground) on the way to where we want to be. Pessimistic? Toxic. Struggling but hopeful? **BINGO.**

WHY BLOG ABOUT IT?

Audiences know that life isn't perfect, so you sound honest – and we're all weirdly drawn to things that scare us. (See: horror films, *Game Of Thrones*.) And readers will only care about your victories if you struggled to get there.

WHY ARE WE DRAWN TO BAD STUFF?

Nobody's sure – although it may be a survival mechanism, from a time when being able to imagine the worst ("if I climb down this tree, that sabre-tooth tiger will eat me") was an evolutionary advantage.

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THE TRIAD OF TRUST



FELT
WRITING

+



HONESTY

+



STRUGGLE

=

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

which builds massive amounts of

TRUST

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Assignment 5

Write Something Emotionally Disruptive

I know. That sounds dramatic. Well – yes, it *is*.

This lesson is all about how to engage the emotions of your readers – by making them feel your writing, by cutting to the emotional truths of what you're writing about, and by showing them some kind of struggle they can really care about...

So now it's time for you to make such a piece of writing (700 wds minimum). It doesn't have to do *all* of the above – but it has to try to **evoke an emotional response**, using any of the storytelling methods I've outlined, and any others you can come up with.

Make them laugh. Make them cry. Make them gasp in awe or horror, or shudder in empathy, or make their eyes go wide as you blow their *mind*.

That's half of the assignment. The other half is **publishing it, publicly**. Ideally on your own blog, either now or soon. But do it somewhere where other people can read it, including people you don't know. Strangers are the ultimate test of your storytelling skills. So **go make them feel something**.





**THANK
YOU**

**AND WE'RE DONE
WITH LESSON 3!**

All the feels!

See you next week!