

How to Find Your Writing Voice

Post written by [Leo Babauta](#).

Many of us have gone through a phase in our lives where we searched for who we are, and how to express ourselves. We experimented with different styles, different philosophies, different clothes and hairstyles and ways of showing the world who we are.

Eventually, we found ourselves, and we learned how to express ourselves to others. This search paid off — it means we're able to form connections with other people, and to be ourselves at the same time.

As writers, we must go through the same search — learning who we are as writers and how to express that to others is the process of finding your Writing Voice.

And it means a lot: a writer with a unique voice stands out, and is able to connect with people on a much more meaningful level. People feel they know the writer, and they can trust him.

You don't need to find your voice right away, and it's not an overnight process ... but it's worth the search.

What's Voice?

What is a writer's voice? It's difficult to define, because it's a combination of language, tone, and self-expression, and really these are all perceived differently by each reader. A writer's voice is her personality as a writer.

Think of the personalities of your different friends and loved ones: each person has a set of traits that makes him unique, that makes him fun to talk to and that identifies him as a person (not counting physical traits). What makes your best friend different to talk to than your mother?

It's important to consider that we each have different personalities in different situations. You might be more formal when interviewing for a job, more childlike when talking to your mother, looser when talking to a good friend, commanding when talking to your son. That's true of all of us ... and it's true of when we write. We have different voices as writers, depending on our audiences.

When you're considering your voice as a writer, you have to give thought to your audience as well. Who are you talking to? What are they interested in? How do they normally talk? We all keep these things and more in mind when we talk to people in person, and those who don't have problems communicating with others.

Finding your voice is a matter of finding the right pitch that matches both yourself, and your audience. How do you find that pitch? Think a bit about who you're talking to, and who you are. Then experiment, until you find the pitch that works for.

Who are you writing for?

Sometimes, when you're just starting out as a blogger or writer, you don't know who your audience is yet. So how can you find the right pitch for that non-existent audience?

Simple: imagine the audience you want to have. Who would you like to talk to? That's the audience you should write for — not the 10 people who might already be reading, but the 10,000 who might be reading a year from now.

This imaginary audience doesn't exist, but can be very real in our minds. We can picture them — what they look like, what they read, what their lives are like, what their personalities are like, what enrages them.

If you already have an audience, even better. Talk to them, and find out more about them. Have conversations in comments and on Twitter and in email, form relationships, read their blogs. Be engaged.

As you talk to them, learn to find the right pitch.

And learn to express yourself in a way that you feel is you.

Who are you, as a writer?

You don't know yet who you are, perhaps. Or maybe you do — then you're one of the lucky ones. If you're still learning to find your voice, there are some things you can do to explore.

1. Make a list of the things that express who you are, and what you want to communicate.
2. Mimic different writing styles. Read other writers, and mimic their styles — first you mimic, then you find your own style.
3. Write about things you're passionate about, and let that passion shine through.

4. Add details to posts that make a story come alive — not too many, just the relevant ones, the ones that excite you.
 5. Don't be afraid of feelings, passions, honesty — that's what makes real communication.
 6. Imagine as you write that you're talking to an old friend.
 7. Don't be afraid of humor either — make little jokes, even if not everyone will get them.
 8. Try different writing personas, and write 250 words for each one — be President Obama, Sarah Palin, Kurt Vonnegut, Stephen Colbert, Dave Barry, Seth Godin, Leo Babauta. You'll throw this away, but it's not a waste.
 9. Read your writing aloud — does it sound like something you might say?
 10. Write for 3 minutes — just get going, don't worry about what you're writing — it helps loosen you up.
 11. Write about things you know well, and explain them to someone who doesn't know them well.
 12. Don't be afraid to let go of writing conventions to allow your voice to come through — writing “ya know” instead of “do you know what I mean” is an example. Using italics (sparingly) to show inflection is another possible tactic.
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Use the sentence starters below to write a response to the following question.

28. According to Babauta, what role does the audience play in developing a writing voice?

According to Babauta, audience helps develop a writing voice because,

One piece of evidence to prove audience helps authors write well is,

Another piece of evidence that shows audience plays a role in developing writing is,

Use the sentence starters below to write a response to the following question.

29. How does Babauta define voice? Use two details to support your answer.

Babauta defines voice as,

One detail Babauta shares to define voice is,

Another detail used to explain voice is,

Your **paragraph**, see: **How to Find your Writing Voice**

Explain Babauta's ideas about what makes good writing. Be sure to use details from "How to Find your Writing Voice" when discussing Babauta's opinion.

In your **paragraph**, be sure to:

- Explain Babauta's ideas about what makes good writing.
- Use details from "How to Find your Writing Voice" when discussing Babauta's opinion
- Conclude with a paragraph summarizing your **paragraph**.

Babauta believes that _____ makes good writing.

One piece of evidence from the text to support my claim is " _____
_____."

This shows _____.

Another piece of evidence from the text to support my claim is " _____
_____."

This shows _____.

In conclusion, _____.