MINDSET - Lesson 2:
Things That Slow You Down
TRANSCRIPT

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 Module 1: MINDSET Lesson 2: Things That Slow You Down	Welcome to Lesson Two in the module on Mindset. This is about things that will slow you down as you're attempting to write fast.
 Embrace the Prettiest Ugly Word Ever…	Now I'm going to share with you a very, very ugly word that is a key to writing fast, effective copy. Now you need to embrace it because it is the prettiest ugly word ever.
 DISCIPLINE	It's called DISCIPLINE. Gives you the willies, doesn't it. It brings to mind all kinds of ugly, unpleasant things. But given the choice between talent and discipline, I'll take discipline every time. I'll bet you can list a dozen talented, hot shots who never amounted to anything. And the people who succeed typically have this one key secret. They do the stuff nobody else wants to do – **every day** – even when they don't want to. Thus, even when it's inconvenient, uncomfortable, and painful, you do what you have to do because you need to continually drive your business forward. And it's only by disciplining your mind that you can accomplish this… accomplish what

you set out to do… to write FASTER.

So anytime you sit down to produce copy, consider the slogan "Just Do It" from Nike.

Isn't just a slogan. It's the only thing that matters. For as Yoda said, "do or do not, there is no try."
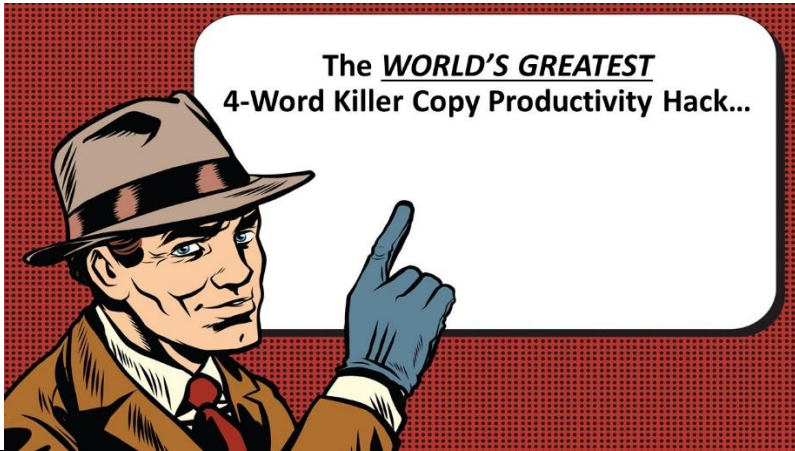
I'm now going to give you the world's greatest 4-word, killer copy productivity hack.

It is the most painful, yet true, 4-word to writing faster that you'll ever see. Guaranteed.

Here it goes…

Stop Doing Other Stuff.

Pretty simple, huh? But crap, is it hard to do!

Especially for me, I love playing the role of Jack of all trades. I love getting my hands dirty. I love diving into the details of websites, tech, image editing, all kinds of stuff.

And that's not including the endless parade of distractions I heartily welcome into my own workday like social media, blogs, YouTube, et cetera, ad nauseum.

I need to embrace this instead:

Stop Doing Other Stuff.

Turn off the phone, shut down the browser, put away the toys, outsource whatever you do that you don't do best.

Just don't do it.

The 3 "NOs" That Will Slow You Down

We'll talk now about the three NOs that will slow you down. Now, my dad was a car salesman and I remember riding down the road and hearing him call out the different cars we saw… like a 67 Buick Skylark. There's a 57 Bellaire. This is a 62 Impala. And he rattled off horsepower, cubic inches, etc. And to this day the best I can do is point out that there are four wheels.

So when it comes to motors and gear ratios and the benefits of one carburetor or another, I am pretty much clueless. I do, however, have a serious appreciation for brakes, except for the brakes that you apply needlessly to yourself when writing copy and I call them the top three NOs that'll slow your writing down to a standstill.

The 3 "NOs" That Will Slow You Down

No WHO

The first no is "**No Who**." This is when you really don't understand your customer.

If you can't walk a few miles or more in their shoes, sweating over what gives them the willies, feeling the sour stomach driving them to despair, that's definitely going to slow you down.

The 3 "NOs" That Will Slow You Down No FAITH	Next is "**No Faith**." If you truly don't believe that what you're offering will make that big a difference in that person's life… If you can't sign on to the project enthusiastically… Then all your efforts to persuade with sales copy will just fall flat.
The 3 "NOs" That Will Slow You Down No GUTS	Finally, "**No Guts**." If you know your WHO and you have FAITH… You STILL have to step outside your comfort zone. You STILL you have to make the pitch FLAT OUT. Have some GUTS. Hold NOTHING back. Because what you're selling is truly transformational to the person you're writing to. It's a tall, cool drink to a parched traveler crawling across the desert. They need it and they need it badly. So have the guts to give it to them. You've got to know that WHO, you gotta have FAITH, and you gotta show GUTS to get that letter done and out the door so we can actually do something good.

Tell the Wise Guy to SHUT UP!

You'll also need to tell the wise guy in your head to shut up.

So this happens when you're writing and this wise guy inside your head is saying stuff like, "No, that's not the right word. I don't like that sentence. I think that bullet point's not very good."

When you write, you're doing battle with this illegitimate wise guy inside your head telling you what you've just written is crap.

Trust me, that little voice knows nothing.

That little voice is the compounded influence of English teachers, critics, other authors, books, movies, every single authority regarding the use of language that you've encountered throughout your life. It's every standard set as to what quality writing means to you, based on what you've read, heard, and seen. And that little voice doesn't want you to crank out killer copy, because it's attempting to put its personal measuring stick to what you write.

But here's the deal.

The only measurement that matters to your copy is, "**Does it work**?" And the only way you can find out is to finish it and send it out to your prospect. So allowing this little voice to kibitz while you write is only delaying the vital assessments that must happen when your copy hits the market.

So ignore it. Totally.
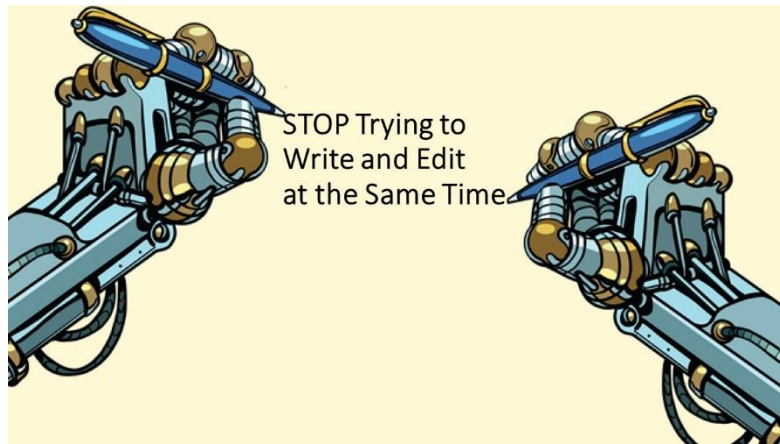
Which means stop trying to write and edit at the same time.

Ignore that editor's voice and instead train yourself to write as quickly, as powerfully, as emotionally as you possibly can. Get the words out. Pronto, let nothing stop you. Get into flow. The faster you do so the more these words will sound like you and nobody else.

And the more you do that, the more effective those words will be.
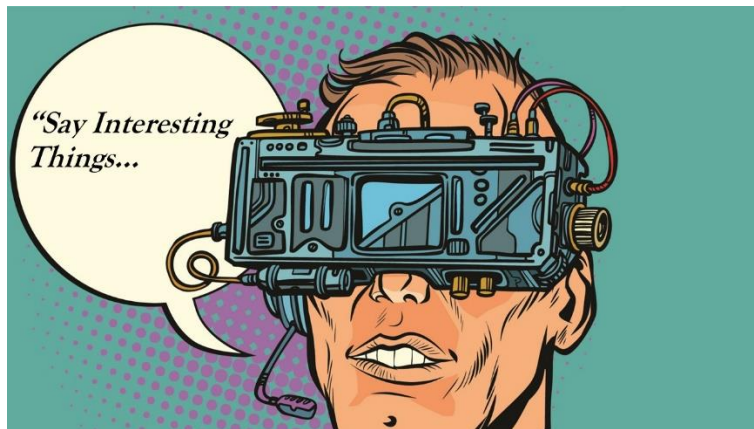
Now, I want to give credit where credit's due. This suggestion comes from Dan Kennedy and it's a gem I found buried deep in a long discussion on some long forgotten topic. In this interview he was asked, "What makes you such a great copywriter?"

And his answer was this:

"I say interesting things…

…in interesting ways."

You want to say interesting things in interesting ways.

This is your emergency antivenom for the number one snakebite danger in marketing: being BORING.

Remember, you have to keep your reader's attention from beginning to end, right from the get-go with a pre-head and the headline… right from the first sentence where you grab him by the throat… right in the murky middle, where it's easy to get lost in features, benefits, and bullets… right down to the wire where you asked for the sale… wrapping up with that final PS.

Every step of the way, make sure you say something interesting to the

reader in as interesting a way as you possibly can.

This is the ONLY point that that editor in your head should be pounding you on when you write and rewrite.

Not trying to please your eighth-grade English teacher with prim and proper grammatical precision, not parsing each paragraph to ensure it delivers the opening point, following through on that thought, and then closing up with an incitement to read on McDuff.

Nope. If you can talk, you can handle the basics, that kind of stuff, well enough to sell.
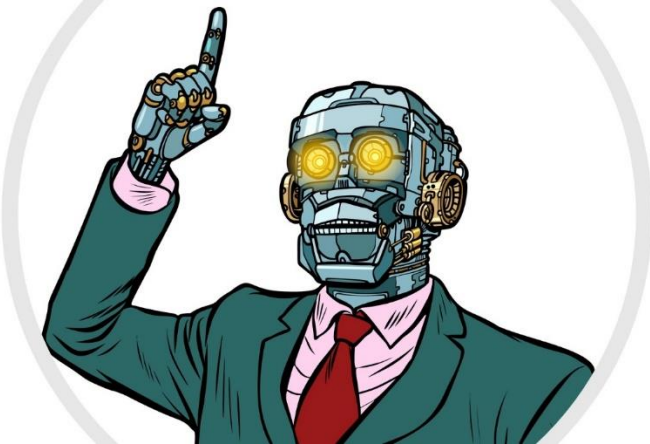
But what you can't ignore is the ongoing clarion call to *say interesting things in interesting ways* that'll keep 'em hooked from beginning to end.

This is a great rule to remember and keep before you always.

Stop Rewriting!

You also want to **stop rewriting**.

Now there's a wonderful quote, attributed to Leonardo DaVinci…

"ART" is Never Finished, Only Abandoned

"Art is never finished, only abandoned."

That artist never wants to put down on the brush. There's always another tweak to be made, dabs of color to blend, shadows to darken or blur…

But you have to pound a stake through its heart sometime.

Stop rewriting.

I'm sure you've thought you should labor over every aspect of your copy, tweaking and adjusting word for word, line for line, from the headline to the subheads, to the bullet points, to find a call for action.

Sure. If you have weeks, months, years to finish.

On the other hand, if you have a hungry client who needs results now, ditch the notion that you are an artist crafting a masterpiece…
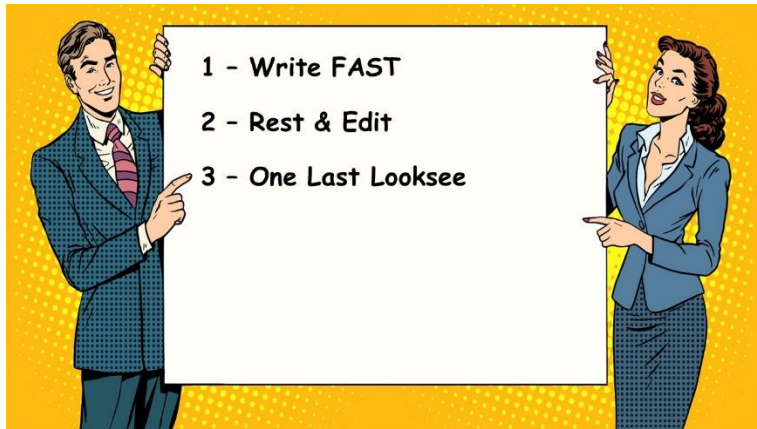

You're Making a Sale

You are making a SALE.

One on one, face to face, laying out the deal, clearly, crisply, with a succinct and straightforward down-to-earth manner. It's the best deal ever. You need this. You want this, grab it now while you can.

Period.

And unless you have the luxury of time for a vast number of rewrites, I would say go for no more than these three steps:

One, write that first draft as fast as you can.

Two, let it sit for 24 hours and then go back through it, looking for typos, misspellings, stuff that reads wrong and just doesn't flow, and then downright mistakes. You know, you got the phone number wrong, etc. Then…

Three, sit on it an hour or so, and then go back one last time, do a final cleanup, touch up as good as you can.

And then be done with it. Ship it.

Now longer letters and sales pieces will require more time of course, but with simple copy, like landing pages, emails, short letters, postcards, whatever, just give it your all as fast as possible, and be done.

Now, the thing is that if you've had this in your mind from the get-go, that you're not going to be rewriting, rewriting, rewriting, this will FORCE you to write better because you know subconsciously you don't have the supposed safety net of endless rounds of edit and revision.

Because the only way to know is DONE.

And as writers it's very common to feel the pressure to succeed with every single piece of copy you write. This is especially true if it's your own small business you're promoting. So, you know, when you sit down to jam on a new bit of copy or an email that has a, "Oh crap, this had better work" aspect to it, I totally get and understand the tendency for your knees to grow weak trying to eke out that final draft.

But remember, the only way to know is with DONE and **finishing is beautiful**.

Finishing is beautiful because it's the only way you know.

When you're writing, you can't get hung up on any kind of judgmental attitudes about degrees of success or failure, because there really isn't success or failure in any kind of cosmic sense, especially with marketing and writing sales copy and headlines and landing pages.

There's not success or failure.

There's only results.

Now your results may exceed what you'd planned on and hoped for, or your results may fall short. Either way, there's incredible value in getting your results quickly, and then using them as ammunition for your future copywriting projects, your future campaigns, and your future promotions.
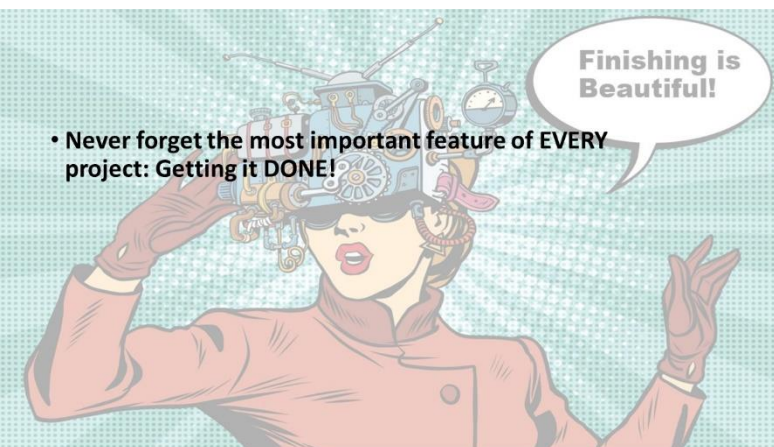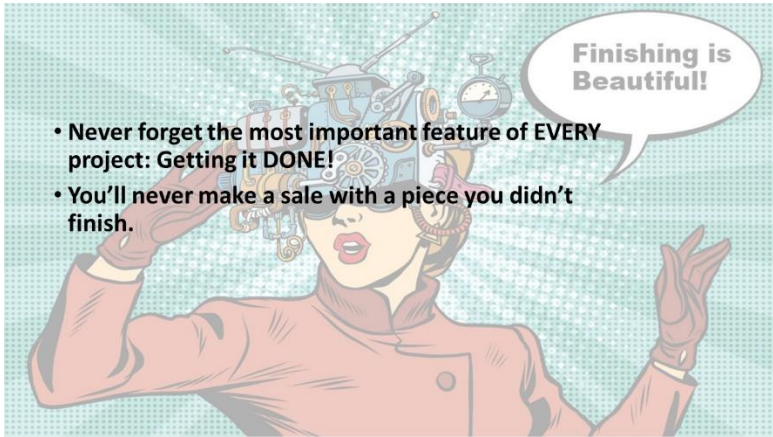

And the only way to get that data is to push all your worries aside while you write and focus on DONE.

You must never forget the most important feature of every project is getting it DONE.

When I worked at Microsoft, we had long, detailed specifications for products that listed every single feature that went into the product before it shipped. And it had priorities for each feature. We had to go through a very rigorous process of which features to include and which ones might be abandoned at the end because we realized it was important to get the product done, to get it out there into the market.

	So get your sales letter out there, measure what happens, then build on those results to learn and make improvements as necessary. Your small successes will lead to bigger paydays. Let the chips fall where they may but give every piece of copy your very best effort and focus on DONE.
	Because you can't make a sale with a piece you didn't finish. It just sits there and gathers dust. It's not working for you. It's not working to build your business. It's not working to make changes in people's lives that they need and want and desire. It's just sitting there. Get it done.
	Now anyone can complete a project to 90%. And this was one of the key lessons I got at Microsoft as a project manager. It's a very easy process to get to 90% on projects where they fail. But what's tough is that final 10%. To get it to the finish line, to drag the project, kicking and screaming across the finish line to get it out the door. Most projects fail because they can't get through that last 10%. They find reasons to stop. They find reasons to abandon ship.

Get Into Ship Mode	You must get into what we called "Ship Mode."
	You must get into a mindset that "I am going to finish this product. I'm going to finish this project, I'm going to finish this copy come hell or high water."
	Because as I used to say, in my old days of Microsoft, if you don't ship it, you can't sell it.
We WILL Finish On Time!	So develop the mindset that you WILL finish on time.
	You will write that piece of sales copy. You will write that postcard. You will write that letter. You will write that website. You will write that email.
	You will deliver it to your customer and you will change their life… and you will do it by getting it done and out on time.