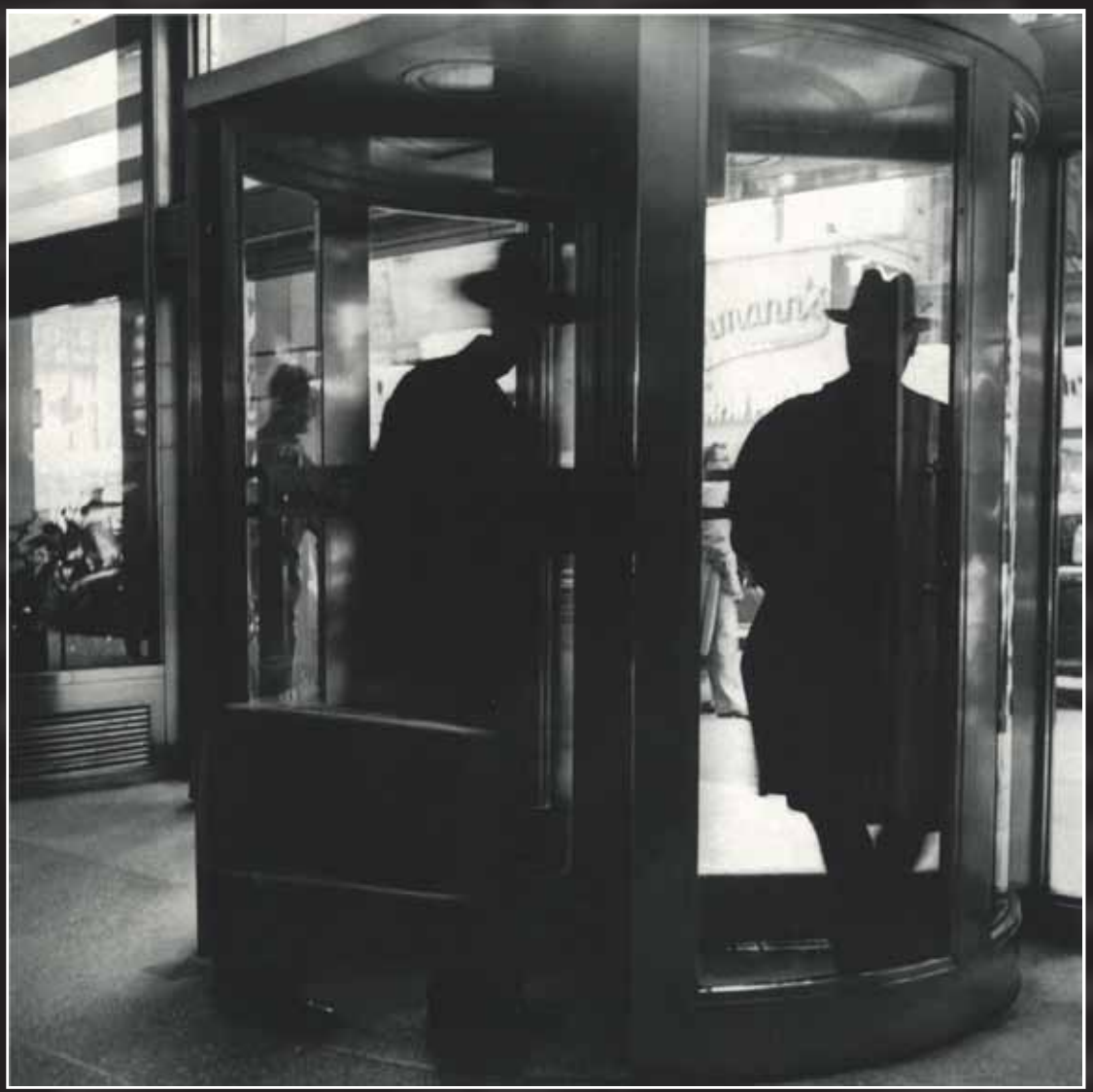
ACCIDENTAL MAGIC

THE WIZARD'S TECHNIQUES FOR WRITING WORDS WORTH 1,000 PICTURES



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ROY H. WILLIAMS
&
CHRIS MADDOCK

PRESS
Wizard Academy Press
Austin, Texas

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Dedicated to the unnamed

Guatemalan boy in whose face

I saw such trust and **hope**

that bright July morning on the

streets of Antigua as I walked with

Eduardo Prado.

ROY H. WILLIAMS

Your first impression of Eduardo Prado is that he would make the perfect Latin James Bond. Your second impression is that he beams enough positive energy to be a Spanish Rick Dees. But it was only after seeing Eduardo interact with Guatemala's poorest people that the third and final image of him peeked over the horizon of my mind.

This fleeting glimpse happened on the sidewalk outside the hotel where Eduardo and I had met only a few minutes earlier. After pausing to introduce me to a young Guatemalan boy, perhaps fourteen years old and obviously quite poor, Eduardo stared deeply into the young man's eyes, placed his fingers on the boy's cheek, and spoke to him very quietly and fervently in Spanish. When Eduardo was finished, the boy smiled softly and nodded with confidence. Eduardo then gently patted the boy's cheek and they parted. In that singularly tender and majestic moment, I was reminded, not so much of James Bond or Rick Dees as of England's fabled King Arthur.

"What did you say to him?" I asked. Eduardo said, "I told him that he was an extremely smart young man and that he had a very bright future and that he should never quit believing in it." After a moment of silence, Eduardo continued, "He is a student in a class that I teach." "What kind of class?" I asked. Eduardo looked at me thoughtfully and said, 'Are you familiar with the saying, 'Give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime?'" I nodded that I was. Eduardo then smiled a tearful smile and said, "I teach the poor how to escape their poverty,"

When Eduardo Prado made me a knight, he was obviously hoping that the Guatemalan people would become very dear to me and that I would do my best to help him help them.

He was right. We are doing all that we can to help. But our motive isn't tied to any appreciation of the knighthood (although I do enjoy signing my name "Sir Roy" once in awhile.) We help Eduardo Prado because I once saw him lay his hand on the cheek of a poor Guatemalan boy and promise that boy a bright future.

We just want to make sure that Eduardo can keep that promise.

Your purchase of this book moves us one small step closer to that goal as 100 percent of all royalties are being donated toward that effort.

Thank you for helping.

I dearly wish you had seen that boy's smile.

Roy H. Williams

PART I

CONCEPTS

Chapters 1-8

These chapters are contributed by Roy H. Williams, theorist behind Wizard Academy. He is renowned for teaching innovative communication skills to CEOs of large companies, small business owners, and journalists around the world. Inspired by great artists from all disciplines, Roy describes how you can incorporate their genius into your writing.

CHAPTER 1

WHERE WILL YOU SHOW YOUR MENTAL MOVIE?

Your body contains nearly 100 million sensory receptors that enable you to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell physical reality. But your brain contains more than 10,000 billion synapses. In other words, you are about 100,000 times better equipped to experience a world that does not exist than a world that does. A person can do nothing that they have not first seen themselves do in their mind. The objective of human persuasion is to cause that person to imagine doing what you want them to do.

Fact and fiction both happen in your brain, which is divided into two main sections called hemispheres. Your right brain is intuitive and subjective. It sees the 'big picture"; it's where you appreciate music and the arts. Your left brain is logical, linear, and objective; it focuses on details. It is the left brain that, through your senses, gathers and stores facts about the world around you.

Each hemisphere of your brain contains a mental movie screen. In your right brain, that screen provides an awesome, 360-degree global vista that extends above, below, and all around you. Watching this mental movie screen is like floating weightlessly in the middle of a vast, translucent bubble with a million glowing scenes bouncing off its inner walls. Warm, dazzling colors reach out to you from each image. Twisting and turning in every direction, you see amazing new things from each new perspective. Unfortunately; your right brain is nonverbal, so you must find the words to express all this within the tight confines of your brain's left half.

The sad little movie screen of your left brain is much too small to reveal anything grand. It shows only flat (two-dimensional), black-and-white images. As if that weren't bad enough, a legalistic little theater manager insists that every complex concept be broken down into its component parts so that they can be examined separately on the left brain's little black-and-white screen.

Doubt is what happens when the security guard of the rational, logical left brain isn't sure whether or not to accept an idea. The right brain, however, is not troubled by such issues. It isn't concerned in the least about the plausibility of an idea; that's a judgment it's happy to leave to the left brain. So when your idea is rejected at the door of the left brain, just knock on

Righty's door; he'll let anyone in. Once inside the mind, your idea can scoot over to the logical left brain on the waterslide of symbolic thought.

According to Dr. Ricardo Gattass of the Institute of Biophysics, all human thought can be classified as verbal, abstract, analytical, or symbolic.

1. In verbal thought, we experience ideas as if listening to our own voice. Using auditory memory, we translate ideas into words. Verbal thought is a left-brain process.
2. In analytical thought, we examine possibilities in a logical sequence. The goal? To see the future. The objective of analytical thought is to predict results. Obviously, analytical thought is left brain.
3. Abstract thought is right brain and is utterly free. In abstract thought, intuition and emotion replace logic as we examine ideas and sensory experiences. The mental images created in abstract thought are unbounded by the physical world and often represent imaginary events.
4. In symbolic thought, we assess a thing from different perspectives. Musical understanding is symbolic thought, as are similes and metaphors. We use symbolic thought to encode and decode associative memories. Symbolic thought bridges intuition and intellect, right brain and left. Symbolic thought is the key that opens both heart and mind.

There is a way to speak to the right brain and a way to speak to the left, with each technique using symbolic thought. In the chapters to come, we'll show you exactly how to do these things.

The greatest teacher who ever lived used symbolic thought in 100 percent of his presentations. His use of simile and metaphor was legendary. He was forever saying things like "The kingdom of heaven [a right-brain, abstract concept] is like a mustard seed [a left-brain, factual concept]

CHAPTER 2

SURPRISING BROCA

When Americans are bored or in a funk, we say we've "got the blues." An Israeli will say she is "meduchdach," while an Italian will be "scoraggiato." A Japanese person calls this feeling "yuutsu"; a German will say he is "niedergeschlagen." The American expression is the only one that refers to a color, yet each of these people is trying to describe exactly the same feeling. The mental image of boredom and mild depression is the same for each of them; they have simply attached different sounds to it. Neurologists tell us that such wordless mental images are the universal language of all humankind.

But if the whole human family thinks in the same language, then why do we speak in so many different ones!

According to cognitive neuroscience, human thought is a speed-of-light progression of mental images, each one a complex composite of sound, shape, texture, color, smell, taste, and mood. Languages are created when different sounds are attached to these mental images in Wernicke's area, a specialized part of the left brain.

Once a word has been attached to each mental image, the whole verbal jigsaw puzzle moves to Broca's area, where the selected words are arranged into understandable sentences. Only after the puzzle is assembled in Broca's area are we finally able to "speak our mind."

When Wernicke attaches the "usual" words and Broca arranges them in the "usual" order, the result can be painfully predictable: "Merlot is more full-bodied than Cabernet." But a little extra effort by Wernicke and Broca changes this boring sentence into an electric one: "Cabernet tastes of sunshine and rainbows, while Merlot is foggy, dark, and Gothic." Now everyone at the table is scrambling to have a taste.

While the speaker uses Broca to arrange his words into understandable sentences, the listener uses Broca to anticipate and discount the predictable. When your listener hears only what she expects to hear, it's virtually impossible to keep her attention.

When speaking or writing, think of Broca as the movie critic who will decide whether or not to walk out on your movie. To gain Broca's smiling approval and win the attention of the reader or listener, you must electrify Broca with the thrill of the unexpected. "More full-bodied" just won't do.

Such language causes Broca to be "niedergeschlagen."

CHAPTER 3

FROSTING

Named after the poet Robert Frost, "Frosting" is the simplest and gentlest technique for transforming drab communication into razor-edged wordsmanship.

The essence of Frosting is to replace common, predictable phrases with unexpected, interesting ones. The goal is simply to surprise Broca with elegant combinations of words.

To better understand Frosting, we'll de-Frost Robert Frost's powerful poem "Misgiving." Compare the language in the de-Frosted poem below with the corresponding phrases in the original, fully Frosted version that follows it.

> The leaves all shouted, "We will go with you, O wind!"
> They said they would follow him to the end.
> But they got sleepy as they went along,
> So they tried to convince him to stay with them.
>
> Ever since they got started way back last spring
> The leaves had been looking forward to this flight,
> But now they would rather hide behind a wall
> Or lie under some bushes to spend the night.
>
> And now when the wind yells at them to come along,
> They answer him with less and less vigor.
> At most they just move around a little,
> But they don't move very fast. Go figure.
>
> I'd like to believe that when I am dead,
> And can finally find out what there is to it,
> And learn all the mysteries beyond the grave
> That I won't be like them ... too tired to do it.

De-Frosted, the story has the feel of those tacky little third-grade limericks, doesn't it?

Journalism: objective, analytical, factual, left-brain writing. The goal of the pure journalist is not to persude but merely to inform.

Creative Writing: subjective, free, imaginative, right-brain, writing; not restricted to the world of truth. The goal of the creative writer is not to persude but merely to entertain.

Poetry: an unabashed effort to introduce a new perspective in a brief, tight economy of words. An attempt tp persuade.

Now let's read the poem as Frost originally wrote it. Take note of the vivid, concise mental images created through Frost's unusual combinations of common words, and how he plunges you quickly into the action with an early verb.

All crying, "We will go with you, 0 Wind!"
The foliage follow him, leaf and stem;
But a sleep oppresses them as they go,
And they end by bidding him stay with them.

Since ever they flung abroad in spring
The leaves had promised themselves this flight,
Who now would fain seek sheltering wall,
Or thicket, or hollow place for the night.

And now they answer his summoning blast
With an ever vaguer and vaguer stir,
Or at utmost a little reluctant whirl
That drops them no further than where they were.

I only hope that when I am free
As they are free to go in quest
Of the knowledge beyond the bounds of life
It may not seem better to me to rest.

Who, then, will teach us to persuade? Who can teach us to transfer an entirely new perspective in a brief, tight economy of words? Is there a writer whose stated goal is to cause us to see things differently?

Ah, the poet.

Poetry is not about rhyming. It is about unusual combinations of unpredictable words that surprise Broca and gain the voluntary attention of the listener. It is about transferring a new perspective.

The simplest way to improve your communication skills is to read a poem a day. Absorb them like daily vitamins and you will soon be free of the disease of verbal predictability.

Exercise: Find something of at least a few paragraphs that you've written, and, without changing the message structurally, replace all the common, predictable phrases with unexpected, interesting ones. Whip a little Frosting on it.

CHAPTER 4

SEUSSING

LIFE magazine, April 6, 1959: "If you should ask [Dr. Seuss] how he ever thought up an animal called a Bippo-no-Bungus from the wilds of Hippo-no-Hungus or a Tizzle-Topped Tufted Mazurka from the African island of Yerka, his answer would be disarmingly to the point: 'Why, I've been to most of those places myself, so the names are from memory. As for the animals, I have a special dictionary which gives most of them, and I just look up their spellings.'"

The technique I call "Seussing" is simply making up your own new words. Do you have the courage to do it? Nothing delights Broca quite so much as instinctively knowing the meaning of a word that he's never before heard. Sitting in the tollbooth of the brain, the ever-watchful Broca hates predictability, but he's always delighted by the elegant unexpected.

Dr. Seuss understood the danger of predictability. Though each of his stories had a moral, he was careful never to start with one. "Kids," he said, "can see a moral coming a mile off and they gag at it." Dr. Seuss allowed each story's moral to develop on its own. Never was it forced or contrived. When a writer is surprised by the ending of his own story, and by the moral message it contains, you can bet the reader will be, too.

Another function of Broca's area is to attach imagined actions to the words you and I call verbs. Since Broca guards the door leading into the imagination, it only stands to reason that verbs are more important to persuasion than nouns, words that are attached to persons, places, and things in Wernicke's area at the other end of the brain. Seuss somehow knew this intuitively. In *Pipers at the Gates of Dawn*, Jonathan Cott describes meeting a seventy-six-year-old Dr. Seuss in July 1980 and discussing with him the work of Kornei Chukovsky, a Russian children's poet who in 1925 wrote a book about how to win and hold their attention. One of Chukovsky's strongest suggestions in the book was to "avoid using too many adjectives and, instead, to use more verbs." Seuss emphatically agreed.

Likewise, the good doctor understood that to win the voluntary attention of young children (the world's most inattentive audience), he would need to enter the realm of the illogical, non judgmental right brain first, then proceed to the rational, logical left. Dr. Seuss books proceed from the simple premise that children will believe a ludicrous situation if it is pursued with relentless logic. "If I start with a two-headed animal," said Seuss, "I must never waver from that concept. There must be two hats in the closet, two toothbrushes in the bathroom, and two sets of spectacles on the night table. Then my readers will

When they read to me poems that have been taught to them in school ...they have been taught hackneyed lines, absurd rhythms, cheap rhymes. There are times when I could cry with disappointment.

- Kornei Chukovsky

accept the poor fellow without hesitation and so will I."

Will you dive – splash! – into the right brain before swimming over to the left? Are you paying close attention to your verbs? Do you have the audacity to moon predictability by using a word that's not official? Seussing, like pepper sauce, is powerful. A tiny bit adds zip to even the blandest of dishes.

Seuss up your writing; use a word they've never heard.

> "Mrs. Sloan!" he called out at last. After another minute, the innkeeper leaned out through the kitchen door.
>
> "Oh, my; there you are," she exclaimed, wiping her hands on her apron. "I was just making tonight's soup."
>
> 'I'm sorry to bother you, but I wanted to give you back the keys to your car. Thank you."
>
> "Think nothing of it." She took them and threw them into a **battered metal** cash box just below the liquor bottles. 'Now, what can I get you to drink?" She **lumbered** behind the bar, filling the space **like a battleship in a canal.** [**Frosting, Frosting, Frosting**]
>
> 'I'll have a ... " Hal stopped, unable to **squeeze** [**Frosting**] the words out of his mouth ....
>
> "Oops, I hear the soup boiling over." She turned and fled, with a certain **rhinoceroid grace** [**Seussing**], into the kitchen.
>
> — From chapter 38 of *The Forever King*, by Molly Cochran and Warren Murphy

CHAPTER 5

BEING MONET

Blurry, bright, Impressionist paintings aren't about details or accuracy. In fact, Claude Monet said that he hoped "to capture the first impression of an image; that moment before the eye or camera focused." He said he was striving for "instantaneity."

In 1869, Monet was painting at La Grenouillére when he realized that shadows are not just black or brown but are influenced by their surrounding colors. He further realized that the

color of an object is modified by the
light in which it is seen, by
reflections from other objects, and by
contrast with juxtaposed colors.

Likewise, the meaning of a word is influenced by the surrounding words. The

color of a word is modified by the
light (context) in which it is seen, by
reflections from words near it, and by
contrast with words juxtaposed to it.

Monet considered black to be the total lack of color: 'Though shadows are darker than surrounding colors, they still contain some degree of color. Therefore, shadows are not black." As a result, Monet virtually eliminated void, empty black from his palette of paints.

When Monet minimized his use of black, his remaining colors sprang to life.

Light radiated from his canvas.
Reflections became luminous.
Contrasts, magical.
Images, worth million$.

Likewise, to speak Monet, you must eliminate empty; void 'black words" from your sentences. Light will radiate from the words remaining. Persuasion will become luminous. Results, magical. Refine this, and you will own a talent worth million$.

The fundamental principles of being Monet:

1. Ignore the details.
2. Exaggerate the color.
3. Remove the black.

It's not about making perfect sense. It's right-brain language, impressionistic and dazzling.

> I was born and grew up in Baltic marshland
> by zinc-grey breakers that always marched on
> in twos. Hence all rhymes, hence that wan flat voice
> that ripples between them like hair still moist,
> if it ripples at all. Propped on a pallid elbow,
> the helix picks out of them no sea rumble
> but a clap of canvas, of shutters, of hands, a kettle
> on the burner, boiling - Lastly; the seagull's metal cry.
>
> — Opening lines of "A Part of Speech"
> Joseph Brodsky; Poet Laureate of the United States, 1992-1996

CHAPTER 6

POWER MONET

Perhaps the definitive writer of "Monet" in our generation is the great Paul Simon. To all who would follow him into the electric wonderland of literary Impressionism, he offers this advice:

> If you want to write a song about the moon, walk along the craters of the afternoon when the shadows are deep and the light is alien and gravity leaps like a knife off the pavement. If you want to write a song about the heart, think about the moon before you start, because the heart will howl like a dog in the moonlight and the heart can explode like a pistol on a June night. So if you want to write a song about the heart and its ever-longing for a counterpart, write a song about the moon.
>
> Hey, songwriter, if you want to write a song about a face, think about a photograph that you really can't remember ... but can't erase. Wash your hands in dreams and lightning. Cut off your hair, and whatever is frightening, if you want to write a song about a face. If you want to write a song about the human race, write a song about the moon. If you want to write a song about the moon ... if you want to write a spiritual tune ... then do it .... Write a song about the moon.
>
> — Paul Simon's advice to writers in "Song about the Moon," from his album *Hearts and Bones* © 1981, Warner Bros. Records

You should go buy this CD if you don't already own it.

CHAPTER 7

FRAMELINE MAGNETISM

Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1965, Hilldale Elementary School, Mrs. Shelton's second-grade class: One by one, we march to the front of the room to recite the poems we've written. It's Reggie Gibson's turn. "Spider, Spider, on the wall. Ain't you got no smarts at all? Don't you know that wall's fresh plastered? Get off that wall, you dirty ... (long pause) spider." The class explodes. Mrs. Shelton is not amused. Reggie Gibson has discovered frameline magnetism.

The edge of a picture is called the frameline. When an image extends beyond the frameline, the viewer's imagination reacts by filling in what was left outside the frame. This phenomenon is called frameline magnetism, and it's a powerful tool that has long been used by the world's great photographers, videographers, filmmakers, and illustrators to engage the imagination of a viewer.

"Talk low, talk slow, and don't say too much."

- John Wayne's advice to actors

The first time I ever used verbal frameline magnetism was in an ad for my first client, Woody Justice. I had written almost verbatim what Woody had said to me on the phone in a moment of frustration. Then, looking at what I was holding, I saw the core of a powerful radio script that would become a true pouring-out of Woody's heart to the public. I didn't want to shatter the intimate moment by jamming the store's address and phone number into the ad, so I persuaded Woody to let me leave them out. At the end of the ad, when listeners were expecting the predictable blah, blah, blah of a store address and phone number, they heard only a moment's pregnant pause, then Woody saying off-mike: "Okay, I'm done." And that was all.

Radio listeners were stunned by what wasn't there. Although it's been well over a decade, people in Missouri still talk about that ad.

That which is not spoken often speaks the loudest.

CHAPTER 8

BEING PERFECTLY (ROBERT) FRANK

Robert Frank is generally regarded as one of the greatest photographers the world has ever seen. In his legendary photo book, *The Americans*, Frank captures the unposed reality of 1955-56 America with such ruthless clarity that collectors now bid tens of thousands of dollars to own just one of his vintage prints.

At the drive-in theater, Robert Frank would be in the car behind you, aiming his camera through the windshield to capture what it felt like to be at a drive-in movie at sundown. At the political rally; Frank wasn't interested in the practiced smile of the up-and-coming politician, but would take his photos from behind the man in a way that made you feel the pressure that was on the candidate and sense the energy in the air. At the opera on opening night, when all the other photographers were crowded into "the one good spot to shoot from," Robert Frank would be down in the orchestra pit, letting you see what the conductor was seeing and making you feel what the conductor was feeling.

Robert Frank was (1) unusual in his selection of an angle, (2) economical in his inclusion of detail, and (3) a master of frameline magnetism. Isn't it interesting that these are precisely the same three techniques that Ernest Hemingway used to become one of the most respected novelists in history?

Speaking of the unusual angle, or perspective, from which he typically approached a story; Hemingway once said, "In stating as fully as I could how things really were, it was often very difficult and I wrote awkwardly and the awkwardness is what they called my style. All mistakes and awkwardness are easy to see, and they called it style."

In his photographs, Robert Frank excluded all but the barest and most necessary elements. Likewise, Hemingway's writing style was economical, using simple words to create detached, impersonal descriptions of action that captured the scene precisely Simple details in black and white, no romantic exaggeration. Like Frank, Hemingway was deeply concerned with authenticity His goal was to provide readers with the raw material of an actual experience.

Here's how Hemingway described frameline magnetism: "I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it under

"Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use."

- Ernest Hemingway

water for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn't show."

Principles of Being Perfectly (Robert) Frank

1. Choose a revealing angle. Put the reader/listener/viewer on the scene.
2. Select your details sparingly. Include only what's interesting. And barely that.
3. Put the known "under water."
   Never tell the reader/listener/viewer anything he already knows or can figure out for himself

To write Robert Frank is to communicate in the fewest words and from the most interesting perspective. It's how to speak to the left brain with accuracy and clarity without being boring.

WIZARD ACADEMY DEFINITIONS

Frosting: replacing common, predictable phrases with unexpected, interesting ones.

being Monet: speaking impressionistically, rather than precisely, by using poetic exaggeration and overstatement and selecting words according to the intensity of their associations, or "color." To speak in incomplete sentences due to the removal of "black words." Being Monet might be thought of as radical, accelerated Frosting.

instantaneity: engaging the imagination with a vivid and electric first mental image (FMI).

black words: words that do not contri bute toward a more vivid and colorful mental image (but, and, that, therefore, etc.)

Daguerre: a derogatory term, used to describe a style of writing that is factual, tedious, and colorless. Most acildemic writing is "Daguerre."

Robert Frank: a style of writing that is accurate, but very selective in its inclusion of detail, and that approaches the subject from an unusual angle.

putting it under water: editing or deleting information under the assumption that it is already known to the listener.

PART II

APPLICATIONS

Chapters 9-16

These chapters are contributed by Chris Maddock, the Wizard's first assistant. Professor Maddock explains how to say more, and say it better, in fewer words. His notes are taken from lessons taught at Wizard Academy. They are the instructional pieces used by the students to create the magical literary snapshots you will experience in part III.

CHAPTER 9

WRITING TO THE INTUITIVE

I enter REM sleep at the exact velocity necessary for the movie camera in my head to project coherent images. My brain is replaying scenes from the 1990 Cannes Film Festival Winner, *Wild at Heart*, directed by weirdo-genius David Lynch. The images are fuzzy, and my brain fast-forwards past Cage and Dern's middling acting, past the scenes oversaturated with color, past the stiff violence. Milliseconds before I awake, the real meat of my mental stew becomes clear. With hyperdigital clarity my brain focuses on an image: full frame, a flame ignites the anxious end of a cigarette in a crackling hiss that sounds like a bonfire. If you've seen the movie, you remember. Lynch uses the cigarette lighting over and over, like a page break, or the Superfriends' logo when the announcer says, "Meanwhile, back at the Hall of Justice .... "

Lynch's cigarette lighting is just a little thing that doesn't fit, and it takes one completely off guard. Yet at some insane, subpsychological level, it does fit. The creative, intuitive right side of the brain kicks in and says, "Yeah, man!" at the same time the strictly intellectual left brain is asking Lynch to clarify things.

I saw *Wild at Heart* once, over ten years ago, on a date with a girl I hardly knew, and I remember the constant cigarette lighting perfectly. My brain understands. Roger Ebert's does, too. But he doesn't know why: "I don't think it is a very good film. There is something repulsive and manipulative about it, and it has the flavor of a kid in the schoolyard trying to show you pictures you don't feel like looking at. I was angry, as if a clever con man had tried to put one over on me."

I betcha Roger always looked at those pictures. And remembered them. Because before Roger was paid and applauded for being a mainly left-brained critic, he was a mainly right-brained kid.

CHAPTER 10

KEEP'EM CURIOUS

(sfx: sound of machines. Gets louder)

(guy's voice)

All right, Jack, let's have a look-see .... C'mon .... There ya go. Okay; you're spinnin' now, baby. Oh, you're blindin' me, uh huh.

(slowly)

Yeah, now get ready for the big gear shifter .... Focus on the lineup.

Show me the bigJ. Flash me across the road, Jackie P.

(excited)

I'm feelin' you, babe!

(machine starts to slow)

Oh, well, excuse me. Hey; it's you, Cherry. I didn't know you were interested in playin'. Hmm. Okay; then. Make me a free man. You're lookin' good, girl. How about a peekaboo from YOU! That's it .... You make apples jealous. Now, put the brakes on it, hon. There you go. Big daddy's gonna be makin' some pie tonight! Cherry! Cherry! Cherry! Cherry!

(machine comes to a stop)

YES! Haaaaa! I won .... Hey; hand me another bucket. Hello? Me. Winner here. Ha ha!!

(sfx: ding ding ding: change flows)

ANNCR: The hottest slots anywhere. Clearwater Casino ... where the REAL casino action flows.

In almost every Academy; I ask, "What was the last movie you paid to see twice?" It was probably a movie like this ad. One that made you curious. One that was interesting even though you didn't know exactly what was happening until the end of the movie. In fact, in an ad like this, written by March 2001 graduate Kelly Bridges-Studer, not knowing makes the initial monologue all the more interesting. Broca's area of the brain is called to full attention because everything that's happening is unexpected, novel, and therefore intriguing. The next time you heard this ad, you'd turn up the radio. Wouldn't you like people to turn up your ads?

CHAPTER 11

WHAT BROCA WANTS

Our last Academy Notes gave you an intriguing, compelling example of Moneted writing. This prompted several of you to ask for an equally commendable Franked piece. I found dozens that warranted mention, but this one, written by November 2000 graduate Shelby Reddick Branzanti, is particularly interesting:

> I love big houses, high ceilings, big bay windows, leaded glass. You know ... the kind that cry, "I have money." Many would say that one who thinks this way is pretentious ... puts himself above everyone else. Okay. That's me. I *am* better than everyone else. When I put my mind to having a house like this, I always get my way. I visualize the French doors, the openness and space that money creates, and I know exactly how to get inside. It's easy. A quick cut, a flick, and I'm in. Yup, I love the kind of house that yells, "I have money!"
>
> Chubb Security Systems. 1-800-88CHUBB. When you're not home, they are.

Exactly like the Moneted ad, much of what makes this Franked ad so interesting would also make most clients and ad writers nervous: you don't immediately know what the ad is about; the company is mentioned only once, and at the end to boot; and there's no "close" or call to action. The ad doesn't sound like an ad. In fact, there's a chance the first time a listener hears this ad he won't know exactly what's happening. But you're not nervous. You know that the next time this ad comes over the radio or TV; the listener or viewer will turn up the volume. You understand that if you have a solid, long-term presence, ads like these will not be completely digestible the first time. You know that this is a good thing.

CHAPTER 12

AN IRRESISTIBLE MYSTERY

In *The Crossing*, National Book Award winner Cormac McCarthy brings his young protagonist to the hut of an old Mexican man to find out how to capture a wolf:

> The boy said that the wolf of which he spoke was in fact herself a shewolf and he asked if that fact should figure in his strategies against her but the old man only said that there were no more wolves.
>
> Ella vino de Mexico, the boy said.
>
> He seemed not to hear. He said that Echols had caught all the wolves.
>
> El señor Sanders me dice que el señor Echols es medio lobo es mismo. Me dice que él conoce 10 que sabe el lobo antes de que 10 sepa el lobo. But the old man said that no man knew what the wolf knew.
>
> His breath had gone wheezy from his exertions. He coughed quietly and lay still. After a while he spoke again.
>
> Es cazador, el lobo, he said. Cazador. Me entiendes?
>
> The boy didn't know if he understood or not. The old man went on to say that the hunter was a different thing than men supposed. He said that men believe the blood of the slain to be of no consequence but that the wolf knows better. He said that the wolf is a being of great order and that it knows what men do not: that there is no order in the world save that which death has put there.

We've spoken about making things irresistible by adding a bit of mystery. Mr. McCarthy understands this instinctively. He knows that more than 90 percent of his English-speaking audience will not literally or completely understand the Spanish passages above. Yet to leave them in Spanish puts us in the mind of the boy; who also does not know whether he understands or not. It is obvious that this obliqueness is intended; McCarthy takes pains to explain certain things in English, yet clouds others with his Spanish. It is little wonder I'm reading the book for a second time.

Is this a tactic that would work in your radio, television, or print ads? Quizas usted debe darle un intento!

CHAPTER 13

SHOWING AND TELLING

Good writing should show, not tell. This is true whether the appeal is made to the intellect or the emotion. Intellectual ads that tell by making unsubstantiated claims lack believability:

> The new Italo Monza 5 is the fastest, most agile European sports car ever.

So you say, the listener thinks, unmoved.

> The new Italo Monza 5 rockets to 60 miles per hour in 4.3 seconds, faster than a Porsche 911, and its lateral acceleration can produce an overwhelming 1.3 g's.

Geez, that's a fast, agile car, the listener realizes.

Likewise, ineffective emotional ads fail to create a credible reality when they tell instead of show. This is especially true of poorly written, second-person, "experiential" ads:

> You put your fingers on the grip of your new Big Eagle Driver. You're confident in its solid, balanced feel. Eyeing the windblown fairway, you're nervous, but excited. You swing. As the ball plops down dead center, you feel like the happiest golfer on earth.

Yeah, you've brought me to the golf course, but that wasn't me... I wasn't feeling those things.

> You grasp your new Big Eagle Driver. Your fingers fall softly, naturally into grip. Your first practice swing fluid and effortless. Your heart slows, then your breathing. Somehow, the windblown fairway seems bigger today. You take a last, long breath. You swing. As the ball plops down dead center, you look at your partner and say, "Hey, Buddy, how you feel about playin' 36 today?"

Mmmm, sounds like the Big Eagle Driver will give me confidence, and in the end make me a happier golfer.

To show is to be patient. To show is to have faith in your ability and faith in your audience. Do you have faith yet?

CHAPTER 14

THE RHYTHM OF YOUR WRITING

What's the rhythm of your writing? If you can say what it is, that's a good thing. If you can't because you're aware that it varies, that's even better.

The ads you compose contain a finite number of words. As we've discussed, there are several tools you can use to extend meaning, aura, and feeling with the same number of words. Words with robust associations do just this. So does the rhythm of your writing. The most powerful writing matches its rhythm to the feeling and scene it intends to create. If you aim to inspire an excited, fast-moving feeling in your listener, do so with the rhythm of your writing:

> Suddenly you're racing through a tunnel of trees blurring past in streaks of varying green on a rail of smooth rubber. Knees and feet and arms and body melded to the purring cycle pouring its happiness into you and the countryside about.

Notice how kinetic verbs, lean nouns, and scant punctuation breathe energy into this passage — all without the help of a shouting voiceover.

With a different rhythm, you can make your listener feel relaxed and sleepy: "Beyond the porch and up the draw a bit, you see the aspens quake like thousands of reverent pews in the near distance. Green, gold, green. Your neighbor-birds converse only in hushed murmurment... often, it seems, choosing a lull of wind and its matching calm to share their thoughts." Abundant punctuation and descriptives, along with close attention to detail, help slow the rhythm and lend a sense of restfulness.

Be aware of the rhythm of your writing. Test yourself. Pick a mood and try to match it with your diction. Do so, and your ads will become magical.

CHAPTER 15

HOW TO COLOR YOUR WRITING

You've tried to help your listener fully realize the actions and emotions in your ad writing: more showing, less telling. Yet sometimes you fail to impart enough of an experience. You find yourself wanting to tell the listener exactly how to feel.

Relax. Robert Frost can help.

> The shattered water made a misty din.
> Great waves looked over others coming in,
> And thought of doing something to the shore
> That water never did to land before.
> The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,
> Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
>
> – from "Once by the Pacific," by Robert Frost

Frost resists the impulse to tell the reader that this is a rather ominous scene. But by coloring his poem with nouns and descriptives that carry scary, portentous associations, he enables the reader to visualize and more deeply experience the scene.

To do the same, first choose an emotion or feeling to communicate, such as nervous excitement. Then think of some words or phrases you associate with that feeling: anxious, waiting, white-knuckled, hesitant, cold sweat. Now incorporate these into your writing:

> You step into your waiting car, failing to ward off the thought: "My first house." The seatbelt clutching your shoulder: "My first house." Engine hesitant, tires chirping, you drive white-knuckled through a cold sweat of rain toward a place you've been waiting to come home to your entire life.

Voila! Color your ads with emotions. Enliven them with words fat with association. Don't just paint pictures – give rides.

CHAPTER 16

WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

The ad writer is a blindfolded oddsmaker who begs attention from a man with no ears. Listen to his question: "Of what will I write?" He hears a remembered whisper: Write about what you know. "I know about my client's business," he says. But pen to paper produces ads about the business and not about the customer. "So what do I really know about the customer?" The same thing a poet or painter or novelist knows about his audience: their humanity; failings, and lots of little everyday things that make them smile. "But what does that have to do with the product or service?" Exactly.

> Good writing is true writing. If a man is making a story up it will be true in proportion to the amount of knowledge of life that he has and how conscientious he is; so that when he makes something up it is as it would truly be.
>
> – Ernest Hemingway

Poignant truth punches the listener in the stomach because mental BS is more repugnant than the real thing. Unpolluted truth is like smelling salts to Broca's area of the brain: the careful but silent negotiations for personal space on an elevator; the change you hear in your friend's voice when he finishes talking to his boss and turns to his beloved. Cheers, "The Road Not Taken", *Full Metal Jacket*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* aren't about bars, decisions made in the woods, war, or the Mississippi River. You can find their magic happening right outside your door.

''Doesn't finding a nugget of truth require a comedian's vigilance, a movie director's eye for truth? Doesn't it require risking something?"

You answer.