

RAGHAV SURI

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Table of Contents

ARTICLES.....	2
I HAVE A WRITE TO BE HEARD	2
POSTS	5

ARTICLES

I HAVE A WRITE TO BE HEARD

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August 20, 2025



AI-Generated image of radio scriptwriter and host.
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Some lessons in writing for audio.

While video content is the most entertaining and combines all the art forms: visual, audio, and writing - there's a huge demand for audio-only content.

[A report from Scale Marketing](#) shows that audio streaming platforms and digital radio are getting more popular and billions are being spent to produce audio ads alone.

If you're a professional writer, you've got to consider learning how to write for audio. I've had the opportunity to write audio ads, audio documentaries, and audio plays. I've also directed voice actors to deliver speeches, lectures, and audiobooks.

Here are some takeaways:

1. "Brevity is the soul of wit" as Polonius said and as Shakespeare wrote. Especially for audio ads, you've got a limited time to get your message across. If you've written 100 words, try to break it down to 75. Audio ads vary in length (15, 30, and 60 secs) but the 30-sec option is often the most popular. Try to avoid going above 75 words. Avoid unnecessary long words and unnecessary adjectives and adverbs. Use contractions when possible.
2. Write for actors. As you build relationships with particular voice actors, you'll learn their speaking style. Some will be masters at alliteration, others can strike you with their deadpan humor, while others are poets who would make Chaucer proud. Write to suit their style.
3. For numbers, especially dates, write them as words. 1907 can be read as "Nineteen Seven" "Nineteen O Seven" "Nineteen Hundred and Seven" and so on. Write it out so that the voice actor knows exactly how it should be read.
4. Avoid cliches, jargon, and metaphors unless necessary. Cliches should be avoided at all costs. Jargon and metaphors only if the audience will understand them.
5. Revise your text again and again and again. Read it out loud several times before submitting it.
6. Use tools like [Grammarly Premium](#) (though its no substitute for your own grammar), [Hemingway](#) (to make your writing clear), and [Copyscape](#) (to check for plagiarism).
7. For audio documentaries, be diligent in your research. Create a bibliography page and cite your sources before submitting your script for production.
8. If writing characters that have different cultural backgrounds, accents, idiosyncrasies, make sure they're accurate. Understanding the various Texas dialects/accents before writing about a Texas Oil Baron. Unless its intentional, stereotypes/caricatures of peoples/groups may sound cringey at worst and deeply offensive at worst.
9. Make sure you know the rules about what you can write legally. Can you make a claim about a product in your audio ad? Can you use profanity in a radio broadcast in your particular region? The production team should have lawyers to help you with this but also good to have a basic understanding of what you can and can't write. You should also have an understanding of cultural sensitivity of the target market - something you are *allowed* to write, but it may face backlash from the audience/customers.
10. Create portfolio pieces. If you're just getting started, consider writing audio ads for fictional companies. Or write stories or nonfictional material that interests you. You can hire voice actors through websites like [Fiverr](#) and produce an audio production using tools like [Audacity](#) or [Garageband](#). Use a service like [Soundcloud](#) or [Libsyn](#) to showcase your work. This is how you get your foot in the door.

If you have experience writing for audio, please do share any advice you have below!

You can hear my audio projects (ads, documentaries, plays, audiobooks, speeches) at SuriAudio.com

POSTS



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1w · Edited · 



DO YOU MAKE CONTENT????!!! @#%#%#!%

Ok, now that I have got your attention from that awful headline, please don't run away and keep scrolling. By the time you reach the end, you'll think, "Ah, this was worth the read!"

Working in content creation is the most rewarding thing you can do...at best. It can also be extremely frustrating, most of the time.

Many of us are creative and enjoy writing, making videos, taking photos, or perhaps playing an instrument. But most of us do it as a hobby. Few of us are willing to take the leap and try to make art, entertainment, content creation, whatever you prefer, as a career.

While being a content creator might make you the coolest person in the room, you know it doesn't necessarily make you the most successful. You'll turn heads when you mention you've published a book - but you might feel upset that few have read it.

The reality is that many content creators struggle to make a living from their content. Many quit, and one can't blame or dismiss them.

But does this mean that you should quit? Should you give up if you've been in the game for long but haven't scored a goal?

If you've been working in content creation for at least a decade and you still haven't given up, there must be a reason.

- You can't quit writing to become an accountant.
- You can't stop making videos and opt for data entry.
- You can't start painting houses in lieu of pursuing your graphic design dreams.
- And if you love making audio, you can't really stay silent, can you?

The Bhagavad Gita teaches us,

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions."

This is a challenge as we want to see the results of our work. But notice the first part - our work is our duty.

If you've been in content for this long, it must mean that it was your duty to create content. Keep going, and you never know what will happen.

I began writing content for a friend's startup. Later, another friend asked me to write content for free for a tech forum's newsletter. But this built a portfolio and eventually helped me land a gig at a ghostwriting firm. That built more social proof and helped me land a gig at another content creation firm, where I worked for 5 years.

I've published books, produced audio productions, and written ad films. There are hits and misses. But no matter how many times I miss, you can't get me to put the darts away, as the bullseye never leaves my sight.

So, keep going, will you?

Now, stop reading this and start working on your next content masterpiece!



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Some books on writing I recommend:

On Writing by Stephen King

This is the OG book on the life of being a writer and how to craft an excellent narrative. If you've been interested in writing short stories, novels, or any other type of fiction, you must read it.

For copywriting, read The Brilliance Breakthrough, The Boron Letters, Scientific Advertising, Advertising Secrets of the Written Word and The AdWeek Copywriter's Handbook.

These are all great books that'll teach you the secrets of copy and how language shapes and persuades us.

On Writing Well by William Zinsser is crucial to learn how to improve your writing style, regardless of your medium.

If you're interested in writing fiction or telling stories, I've felt that video games are a great art form to teach narrative.

I wrote Grand Theft Auto San Andreas: A Writing Masterclass on how the classic video game can teach you how to write narrative stories, create characters, etc.

You can read it below



https://lnkd.in/dbTJ_EDS



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3w ·



Dadaji (paternal grandfather): Engineer

Pitaji (father): Engineer

Beta (son): Prompt Engineer

The traditions carry on!



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Keep going. Never give up. One day your time will come.

You are the Bernie Taupin that an Elton John is looking for!



Ram Ranjini and 1 other



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Whatever work we do, we ultimately do it to pay the bills.

But for creative professionals, there's the additional desire of having our work recognized.

Even if we aren't recognized or known, it's the work that should be appreciated. Getting recognition is like receiving a generous tip on top of your salary.

As a teenager, I loved playing the video game Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. As a teen, the fun was all that mattered and was a great escape from the stress of school - and an excuse to delay homework!

Ruling over Grove Street was far more important than calculating the square roots of numbers!

When I rediscovered the game as an adult, I appreciated the story and the characters - and the sheer hard work and dedication of the artists involved.

My appreciation for the game led me to write "Grand Theft Auto San Andreas: A Writing Masterclass." In my research, I learned more about the talented voice artists who brought the characters and story alive.

Two voice actresses who did an exceptional job was Cynthia Farrell who voiced Catalina (reprising her role from GTA III) and Jodie Shawback who voiced the fictional radio DJ Sage on Radio X.

Neither of these actresses had huge stardom. But their work remained appreciated by the game's loyal fans.

Years after she recorded Catalina's voice, Cynthia Farrell learned about how popular the character was and that she had a fan base she didn't even know about.

Almost two decades after the game's release, she was interviewed for the first time on The VOC Podcast to discuss her experience and career.

<https://lnkd.in/dbHAPHhV>

I recently listened to the late Ozzy Osbourne's great song "Hellraiser" on YouTube, and was happy to see so many comments thanking DJ Sage for introducing the song on Radio X in the game.

Jodie Shawback had also done her first podcast interview almost two decades after the game's release on the Apartment 303 podcast to discuss her career and playing DJ Sage.

<https://lnkd.in/dmCveCVt>

Keep making great art - you never know who'll love it, even after all these years!

https://lnkd.in/dbTJ_EDS



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1mo · A small circular icon with a speech bubble and a lock, indicating public visibility.

You can use Copyscape to confirm if something is written by AI.

You can write something on your own, affirm that it's your own, and then trust yourself to confirm that it was written by a human.



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All Hail Chat GPT.

But remember, only Run DMC is the King of Rock - there is none higher.



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Del Boy and Rodney found a rare butterfly which they felt would make them a fortune - until Denzil accidentally killed the butterfly.

Del learns that Freddy the Frog had buried gold bullion at sea. But he isn't going to dive to find it and neither is Rodney.

They failed and failed again. But they never stopped trying. And as Del Boy constantly affirmed "He who dares wins" and "This time next year, we'll be millionaires"

Years later, Del finally meets his partner Raquel's parents. Raquel's father is an expert horologist and realizes that among Trotter's Independent Traders pile of junk is a rare watch - which he suggests they sell via auction.

Del and Rodney heed his advice...and the rest is history.

Moral of the story? Don't give up - keep at it and one day you'll reach your goals and achieve your dreams.

<https://lnkd.in/dA8JGA7s>

[#dreambig](#) [#latebloomers](#) [#delboy](#) [#rodneytrotter](#)
[#onlyfoolsandhorses](#)



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If novellas were written

like LinkedIn posts

like this, without paragraphs

then novellas would become novels

novels would become epics

and epics would become so long that an Andy Warhol film would be
jealous of them!



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The excellence of your products and services will ultimately determine your brand's reputation.

Excellent tailoring by Paul Smith and Ozwald Boateng is why gentlemen flock to Saville Row in London.

The excellent performance of an iPhone and MacBook Pro is why Apple Stores are always packed.

The excellent pastries such as Burek sa sirom (pie with cheese) is why a small bakery called Ljupče in Belgrade always seems to have a long line.

And people flock to Good Burger, because it's the home of the Good Burger!

Perfect your products/services and you'll reach your PR, marketing, and branding goals much faster!



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Em dashes don't tell me you used ChatGPT. Em dashes are just fine and worthy of your respect.

It's the constant use of "in the annals of..." and "indelible" that are overused by AI writing tools!



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It's been 15 days and 7 hours is how we'd normally talk.

But it's more attention grabbing when we hear:

"It's been 7 hours and 15 days."

Likewise, you could say "since you went away" if you're talking about a lover who left.

But it's more powerful when you say:

"Since you took your love away."

First you say, "I can see whomever I want" and then you say "I can eat my dinner in a fancy restaurant"

This shows that noTHING Compares 2 U rather than noONE Compares 2 U.

Her ex-lover can't be replaced by anyone else ("whomever") or by anything else ("dinner in a fancy restaruant.")

Instead of saying you've been crying, it's so much more powerful to say:

"Nothing can stop these lonely tears from falling"

This is why Prince was a brilliant songwriter as well as a performer. It's no surprise that Nothing Compares 2 U sung by Sinéad O'Connor is continuously ranked as one of the greatest songs ever recorded.

If you want to make your language more poetic and bring out emotion, this is a song to listen to again and again. Nothing Compares 2 It.



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As a writer, particularly if you're writing for performance (speeches, screenplays, plays, monologues, etc.) you can find inspiration anywhere.

All writers should try to be as well-read as possible.

But performance writers can also seek inspiration from music, cinema, video games, and live entertainment.

I remember in 3rd grade I was learning Roman Numerals, wondering where was the practicality in learning this outdated numerical system!

And then, almost 30 years later, Kendrick Lamar hits us with:

"Roman Numeral VII bae, drop it like it's hot!"

Moral of the story?

Learn from anyone and anything.

  David Murray and 7 others



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People who love words, sometimes are averse to numbers.

The English major hated taking mathematics in school.

You want to write copy, press release, blog posts.

You DO NOT want to prepare balance sheets!

But understanding numbers is crucial for mastering rhetoric.

"We raised a lot of money for charity" means NOTHING.

"We raised \$4 MILLION in ONE WEEK for the charity" will convince others to donate to the same charity.

Understand how numbers affect emotions and how they persuade others to improve your rhetorical argument.

In the wonderful French film "The 400 Blows" young Antoine Doinel is told by his mother that Algebra isn't an important school subject but French was crucial - else, how would he write letters?

Yet, the name of this wonderful classic film has a number, doesn't it? 400 Blows is far more effective than "The Many Blows!"

https://lnkd.in/dn_EC-Rk



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Imagine reminiscing about the good times.

And then remembering that the one of your best times was "7 years ago."

It'll fill you with nostalgia.

But, it's even more effective if you remember that the best times were "7 summers ago."

The summer, especially when we're young, is perhaps the most comforting season. When the sun is out and we can go out all day. When we have a break from school and our studies.

Replacing "years" with "summers" makes a huge difference in affecting one's mood. A simple word change can alter the mood and effectiveness of a sentence or phrase.

As Morgan Wallen sang: "Does it ever make you sad to know, that was seven summers ago?"



Morgan Wallen - 7 Summers (Acoustic)

youtube.com



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4mo · A small circular icon with a globe, indicating the post is public.

One of the best ways to practice your writing is to keep a notebook and write in it everyday.

Many professional writers will ensure they write daily, aiming for at least 1K-2K words.

If this sounds too much, you can start small.

If you're unsure of what to write, just keep a diary.

End each day writing about what you did. Or start each day writing about the previous day.

Even if its mundane, it's practice. Overtime, you'll develop the discipline of writing - the first step to writing for a living.



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When reading, make sure you watch out for euphemisms.

Language is often used to manipulate us in the most sinister way possible.

Just as we sometimes have to be on our guard around certain people, we also have to keep a watchful eye on words.

Learn to read between the lines and understand the context.

Sometimes, you have to know the writer/speaker and their viewpoints to truly understand what they're writing/saying.



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How do you improve your writing and speaking - if you don't have any formal training?

One of the first steps is to build your vocabulary.

Malcolm X only had an 8th-grade education. It was when he was in prison, that he began reading the dictionary - which helped him in his writings but more importantly, in his speeches. He developed a reputation as a powerful speaker - who inspired others and also struck fear in his opponents.

While reading the dictionary, he also understood the subtext behind words.

"White" was described as "honest" "fair-dealing" etc.

Whereas "Black" had negative connotations - "foul" "hostile" etc.

His community was the "Black" community, and they faced discrimination from the larger "White" society. It was due to his extensive reading and vocabulary-building that he became such a powerful speaker - one who still influences American politics and thought today.

<https://lnkd.in/dRDPy-n2>



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Ideas are great and as a leader, you definitely have great ideas to share.

However, before sharing your ideas - you must realize one harsh truth:

No one cares, unless you have power.

We didn't tune in to Steve Jobs famous keynote speeches because we liked the look of his turtlenecks. It's because Apple is a rich and successful and Steve jobs was a powerful and formidable leader, who commanded respect.

Many countries produce a rich culture, art, and philosophy that we might all benefit from. But we ONLY listen to the countries that have power.

English originated in England, but today, American English holds more weight than British English.

Why?

Because America is a more powerful country.

American English matters more than British English.

A country must develop hard power, before it can influence the world with its soft power.

Before you push your message or your brand's vision to the world, focus on making yourself/brand wealthy and powerful. Then, start sharing your vision.

As the eminent Hindi poet Shri Ramdhari Singh Dinkar wrote:

क्षमा शोभती उस भुजंग को जिसके पास गरल हो,
उसको क्या जो दंतहीन, विषरहित, विनीत, सरल हो |
Forgiveness suits the cobra who has poison,
What about the one who is toothless, venom-free, humble and simple.

Become powerful, and your ideas will influence others.



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If you want to influence others - you must have a command over your language. Whether you're trying to attract clients or manage a team, you'll only succeed if you can influence others with your words.

What's the best way to master language - especially if you need to write/speak for a living?

Of course, the obvious step is to read as much as possible and practice your writing.

But understanding language doesn't only have to come from books, news articles, blogs, copy, speeches, debates, etc.

Song lyrics are also a great way to understand how language works. The poetry, the subtext, the assertiveness that influential people display can be taught through song lyrics.

How do you convince people to think for themselves? Do you just say: "think for yourself!"

Or did the late Heavy D put it better when he rapped (from "We Got Our Own Thang"):

"In this life I strive for improvement, be your own guide follow your own movement."

What about teaching professionals to assert their independence, and how they should attract others to them - rather than chasing after people?

Once again, Heavy D rapped (same song):

"Don't clock anybody, let 'em all clock you. Don't be down with anybody let 'em all be down with you!"

While you don't have to mimic his style, and it may not be appropriate for certain corporate settings - if you want to stand out you have to express yourself creatively.

As more writing is generated by AI, the human touch will be in greater demand.

You can't be vanilla.

Leave that to the ice cream.

Your rhetorical style has to be unique.

The substance makes them stay, but the style makes them approach.



Heavy D & The Boyz - We Got Our Own Thang

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



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One of the best ways for entrepreneurs to influence others and build a solid client base is simple - customer relationships.

To have a legacy business, you can't treat your client relationships as transactional. They must feel personal.

You like making small talk with your barber/hairdresser. Likewise, the tailor who asks about how your family is doing, seems like the best person to stitch a bespoke suit for your sister's wedding.

The language you use when talking to your clients makes a huge difference. Friendliness, courtesy, mentioning their name, being positive - all contribute to ensuring a successful long-term relationship with them.

#Influence #Influenceza #Communication



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"I learned classical Spanish, not that strange dialect he seems to have picked up!" quipped Basil Fawlty when his wife Sybil asked why he couldn't understand their Spanish waiter Manuel.

"Fawlty Towers" is full of so many hilarious misunderstandings due to the language barrier between Basil and Manuel.

Like when Basil is curious about a female guest who isn't permitted in the hotel, and Manuel tells Sybil that he is "crazy about girl."

Or when Basil tells Manuel "there is too much butter ON THOSE TRAYS!" and Manuel corrects him: "No señor, not 'on those trays' - uno, dos, tres!"

But intentional mistranslations can also be deceiving. They change the way we think and they often manipulate us into looking at a culture, religion, country, symbol, company, person, group, in a negative and even hateful manner.

Here's an example



<https://lnkd.in/d-KQCP6S>



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One of the most fascinating essays written in the early days post-Cold War was Samuel Huntington's "The West and the Rest" published in 1997.

In the essay, he discussed how there would be a clash of civilizations, which he also elaborated on in his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" published a year earlier.

He discussed how as the West asserted and pushed its values to be universal, other emerging powers would do the same.

The essay and book are predictions on what we see today. In our globalized world, different civilizations are asserting themselves. Some are saying that their way is the right way, whereas only one (Indian civilization) advocates for pluralism.

Just as entrepreneurs/corporate professionals have to talk back to defend their brands, entire civilizations also use language to assert themselves and fight against the forced universalism that globalization brings.

Here's how it workds:

Influenceza

A Language Guide for Creating
and Understanding Influence

Influenceza

raghav-suri.ghost.io



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Language has often been the tool to challenge narratives and to stand up against tyranny.

Frederick Douglass advocated for an America without slavery in his writings and speeches. In doing so, he also had to stand up for the principle of free speech - most notably in "A Plea for Freedom of Speech in Boston."

Swami Vivekananda spoke at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, where he cleared the West's misconceptions about Hinduism and India, but also called out the West for sending missionaries rather than genuine aid to assist the poor in India.

Look around the world today and you'll see how language is still used to talk back.

Whether you're an entrepreneur or corporate professional, you'll eventually have to deal with negative publicity. You'll need to know how to talk back to defend your company and your vision.



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Some of the best speeches appeal to emotion - and in many cases, emotion wins even over facts! We are emotional beings first, rational/empirical beings second.

However, to convince the most discerning audiences you need to back up your claims with data. It's not good enough to say that your "startup is doing well."

Potential investors want to see results. They want the numbers: what is your revenue? Have your profits increased in the past year? By how much? What is your market share in your industry?

Learning how to incorporate data in your speeches, writing, reports, etc. is crucial to influencing others.



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The choice of words used influence how we think - whether we realize it or not, and whether it's good or not.

Why is it that the Indian Subcontinent is called South Asia? Is it simpler or is it an attempt to erase the native Indian influence on the culture and traditions and legacy of the Indian Subcontinent?

At a recent trip to a supermarket in Bengaluru, I saw that a section of Indian food was called 'Ethnic Food.' It made me recall at a trip to a supermarket in Miami a few years ago, the Indian food (and other non-western foods) were in the 'Ethnic' section. Isn't all food ethnic food?

Why is it that President Ronald Reagan said: "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the Government, and I'm here to help."

Because he clearly knew, that 'help' in this context meant 'hinder' rather than 'support.'

Next time you read or hear a message, pay close attention to the choice of words and how they're used to manipulate you.



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One mistake that entrepreneurs and corporate professionals make when communicating is to write/speak using complex language.

After all, it's been ingrained in us since our school days. We had to memorize complex vocabulary words in our English classes and you almost felt compelled to use words like 'plethora' when 'excessive' will do just fine.

But when you communicate to others you've got to get your point across. Complex language, poetry, verbosity has its place. But in business communication your message needs to be clear.

George Orwell understood this and emphasized it in his essay "Politics and the English Language." Dr. Thomas Sowell also wrote about the importance of clear language in his "Some Thoughts About Writing."



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How does an entrepreneur or corporate professional influence others—it all starts with one's command of language.

The most influential entrepreneurs and professionals know how to use words intentionally. They know what words to use and which ones to avoid.

They know how to use clear language and tailor their speech and writing to a particular audience.

But they don't stop there. To influence others, you'll also need to know when to use data to emphasize your argument. You need to understand the importance of creating context by recalling current events and even history.

You also need to know how to talk back—as negative publicity is a reality of doing business.

In today's world, it's not enough to have the skills or the strategy. You need the message. Influence starts with how you speak, write, and connect.



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Nothing can be more frustrating than having something to say, but not knowing how to say it

Of course, this assumes that late pizza deliveries aren't a regular part of your life.

But you have a message you want to spread to the world, and you don't know how to articulate yourself.

How do you convince someone to think as you do? How do you change someone's mind? How do you win over an audience in a debate?

You need to learn how to influence others.

You'll have to improve your writing and speaking, and you need to know what makes them effective.

Do you trust medicine with a catchy name? Or the one recommended by "EIGHT out of TEN doctors."

How can you convince others that a particular ideology is good? You can reflect on history and give examples of the results of when that ideology was adopted versus when it was rejected.

All of these are strategies for using language to create and understand influence.

You need to catch a dose of Influenceza.

Influencezabook.com
