



# How to make your words work



What is copy? ..... 01

Insight → empathy ..... 02

The toolkit ..... 03

Writing with AI ..... 04

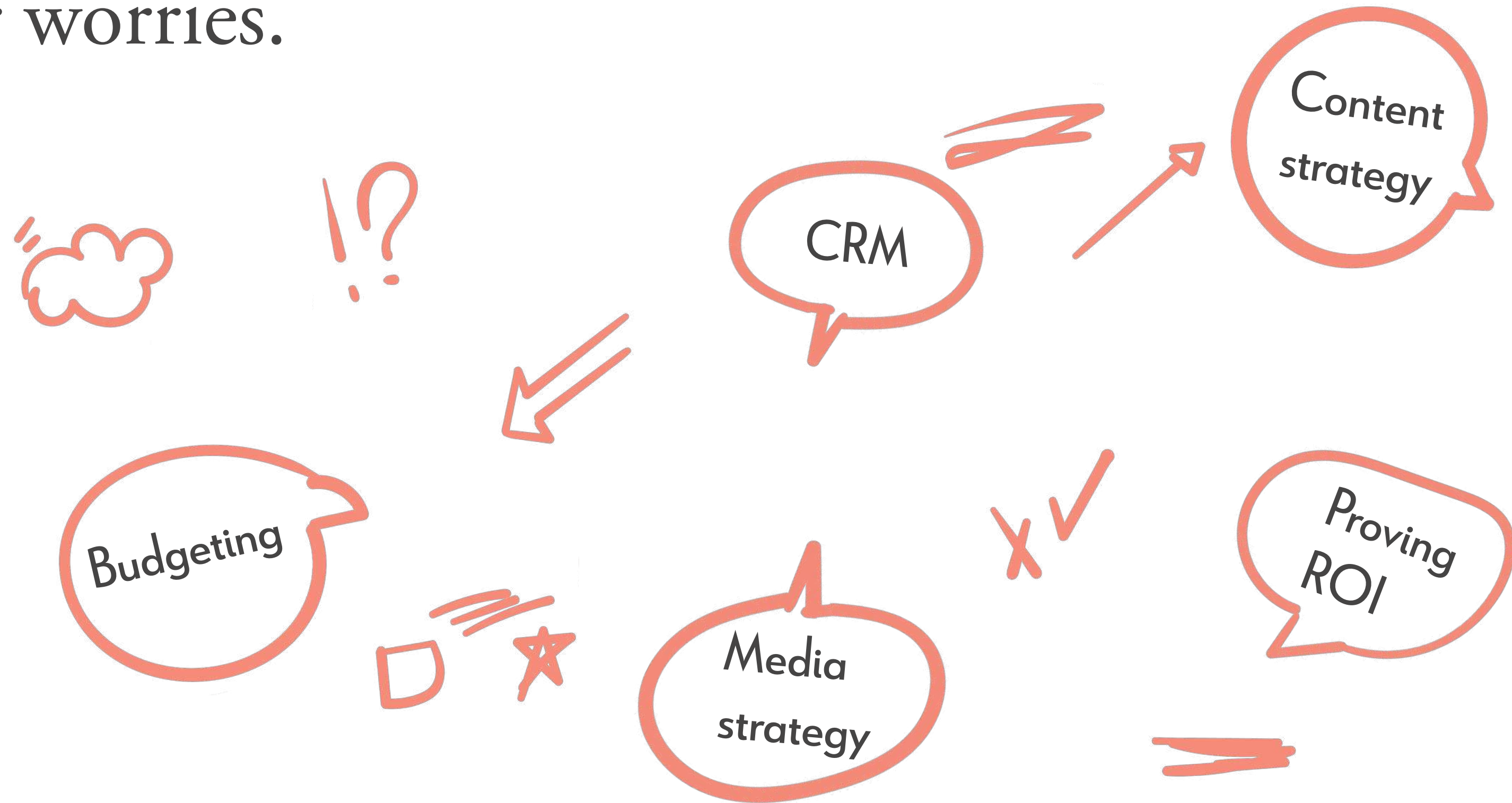


Part 1

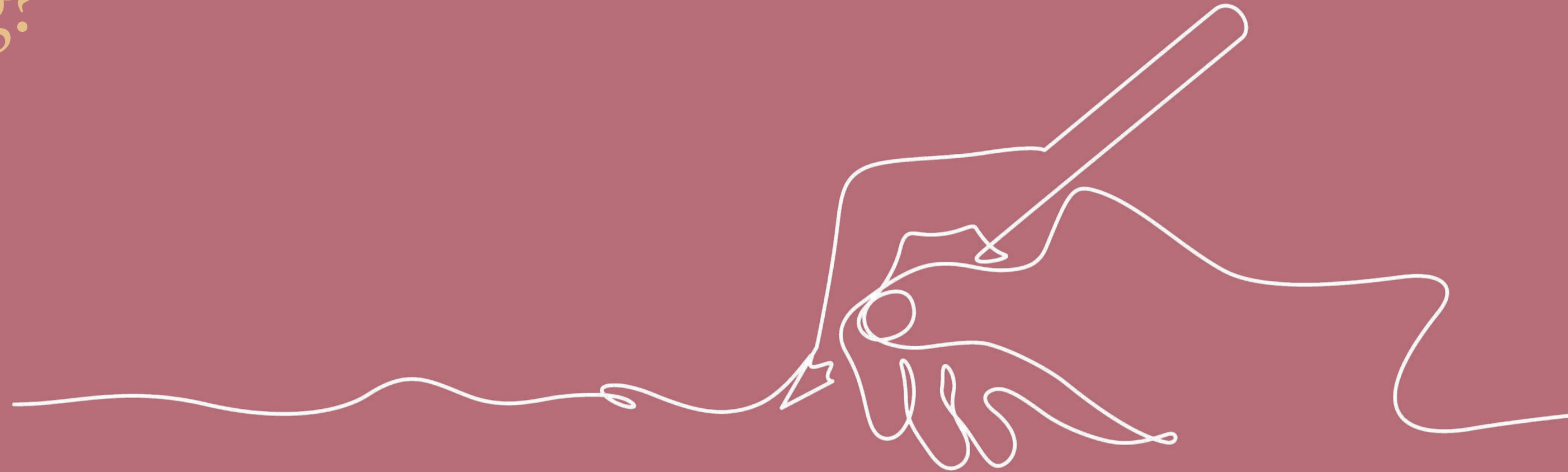
What is copy?



Copy is probably the least of your worries.



What separates copy from other  
creative writing?



Nobody wants to read it.



Copy must win enough **attention** for long  
enough to deliver a message.



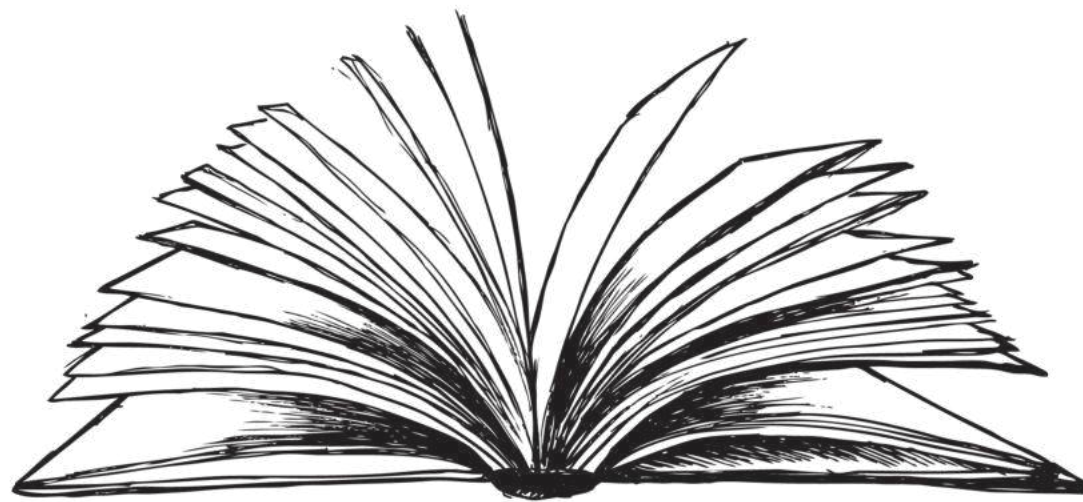
# Is this writing...

- Fun enough
- Urgent enough
- Useful enough
- Unusual enough

To earn the reader's attention, when they actively want to ignore me?

Stories grab us by the scruff of the neck, and refuse to let go.

- Stories hold our attention through conflict, character and carefully designed structure.
- They draw us from sentence to sentence, wondering: what will happen next?





A great brand is like a great character.  
It walks, talks and acts consistently.

"You can't speak like that darling! Feh! You whine like a spoiled supermodel with poofy lips."

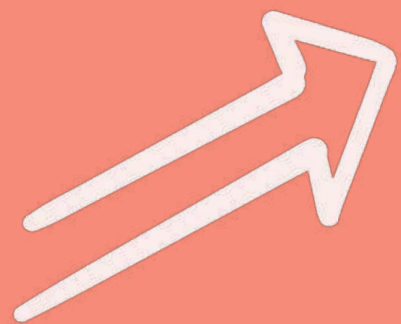
But the reader is the hero. The reader goes  
where few others dare, fights monsters,  
climbs mountains, and triumphs where  
others would fail.





Part 2

Insight → empathy



We tell stories **one-to-one**, in the language of everyday life.

- When did you last read a story that sounded like a peer-reviewed research paper?
- Can you picture the person you're talking to? And the situation they find themselves in?
- When you note down insights, use the kind of language you (or ideally your audience) might use every day.



We're speaking to Gen Z young professionals who require support with their investment strategy.



My reader just got their first job. A year ago they were a student, so now they think they're balling – even on that tiny salary. Investments are cringe to them.



STORYTELLING VISION

What's the one thing  
I want the reader to learn or do?

# 01

Know and love  
my brand

"I've never heard of  
your brand and I  
probably don't care  
about it at all."

# 02

Engage with  
my brand

"I'm just looking for  
useful or interesting  
stuff on the internet."

# 03

Consider  
buying

"I might like your  
brand but I have a  
million reasons not to  
act now."

# 04

Complete  
purchase

"I want to buy from  
you but I need to  
check stuff or  
persuade others."

# 01

"I've never heard of your brand and I probably don't care about it at all."



My words need to be memorable: fun, unusual, surprising.

# 02

"I'm just looking for useful or interesting stuff on the internet."



My words need to be journalistic: tell a story, answer a question.

# 03

"I might have heard of your brand but I have a million reasons not to act now."



My words need to create urgency and offer something great.

# 04

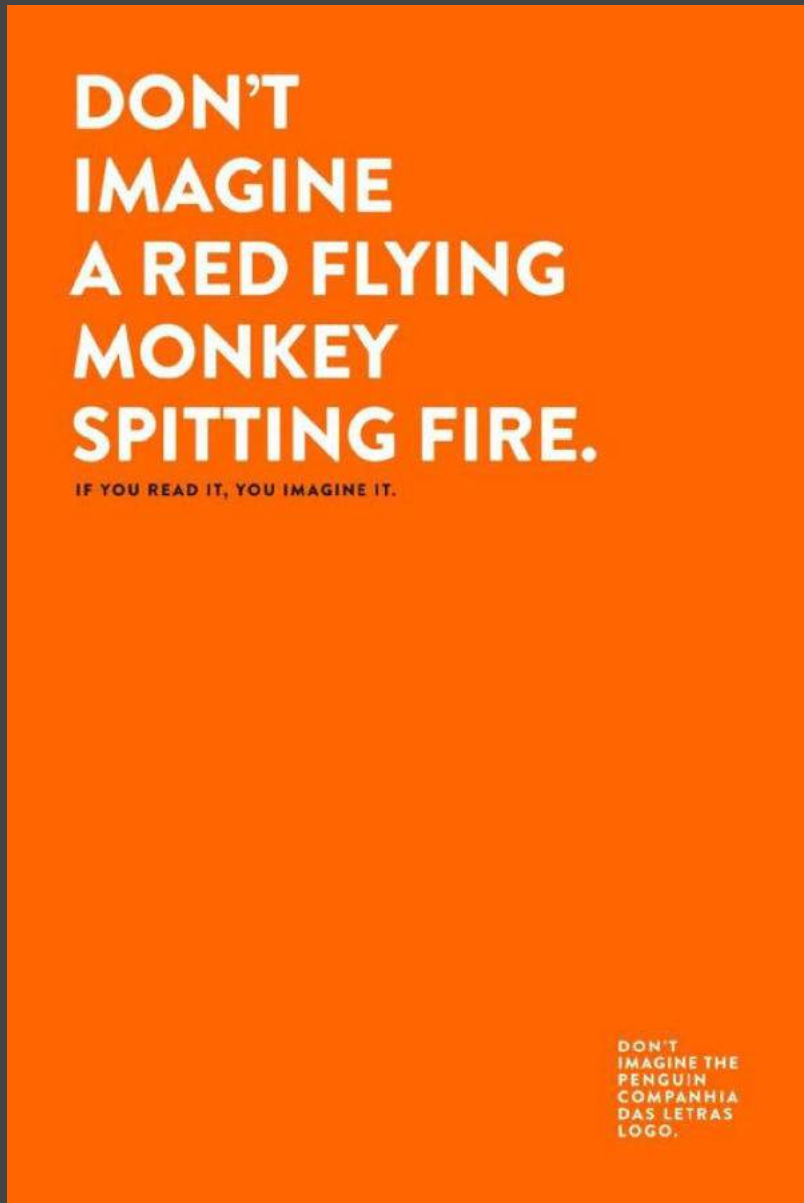
"I want to buy from you but I need to check stuff or persuade others."



My words need to be very clear and provide proof.

01

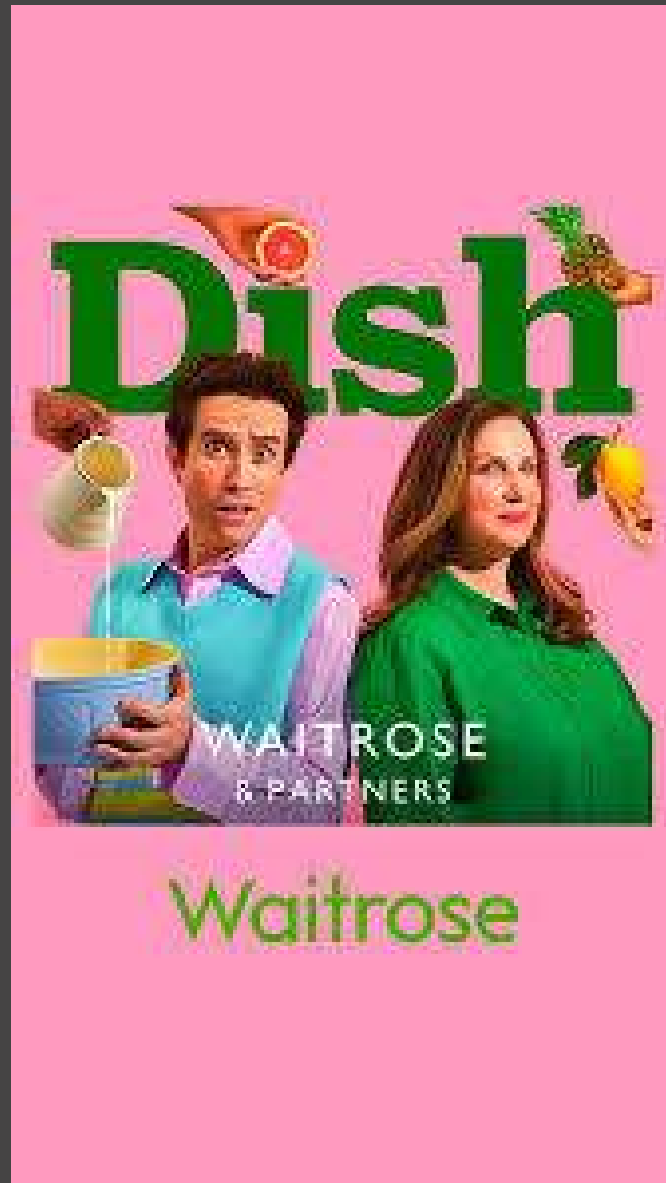
# Advertising



Fun or surprising, emotive

02

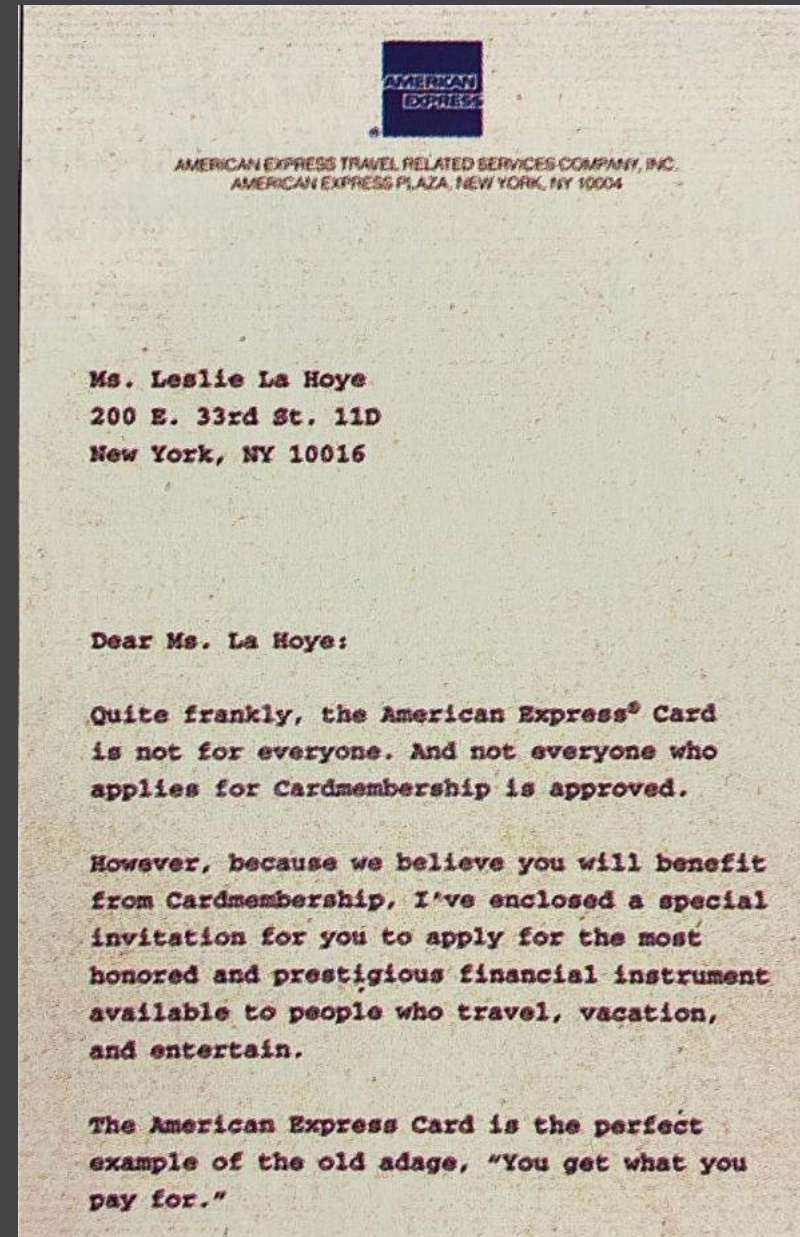
# Journalism



Interesting, useful, no-sell

03

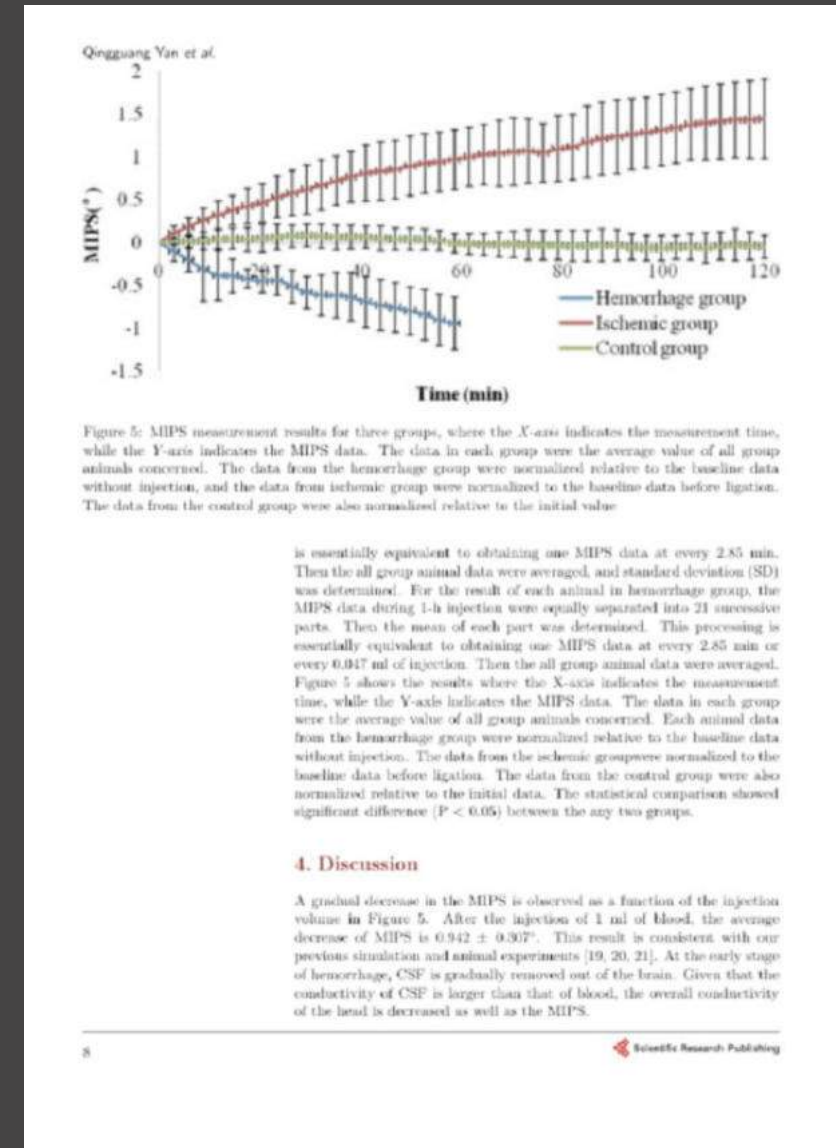
# Direct response



Evocative, persuasive, urgent

04

# Technical



Clear, evidenced, accurate

# Where will I meet my reader?

Email

Research  
report

TV advert

Organic  
social

Brochure

Infographic

Product  
description

Blog

Case study

Instagram  
advert

Landing  
page

## NEVER HEARD OF US

In a land far away, my reader is searching  
for somewhere nice they can take their date  
this weekend.



Part 3

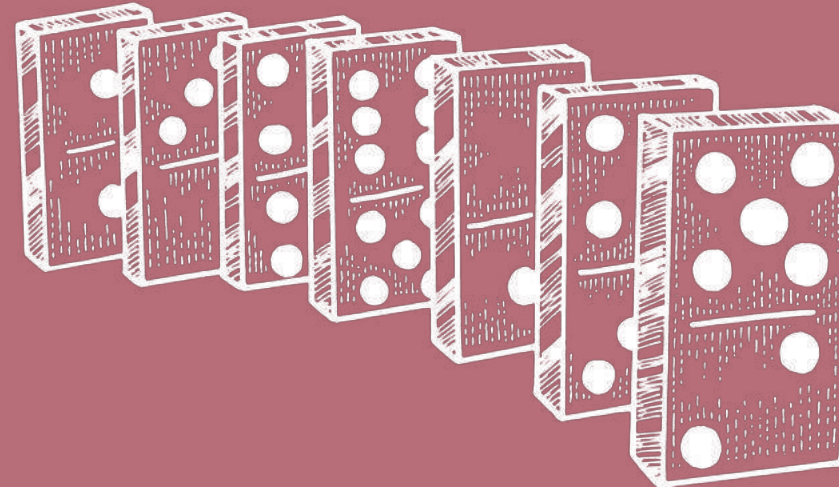
# The toolkit



#1

Order is everything

Advertising



Direct response

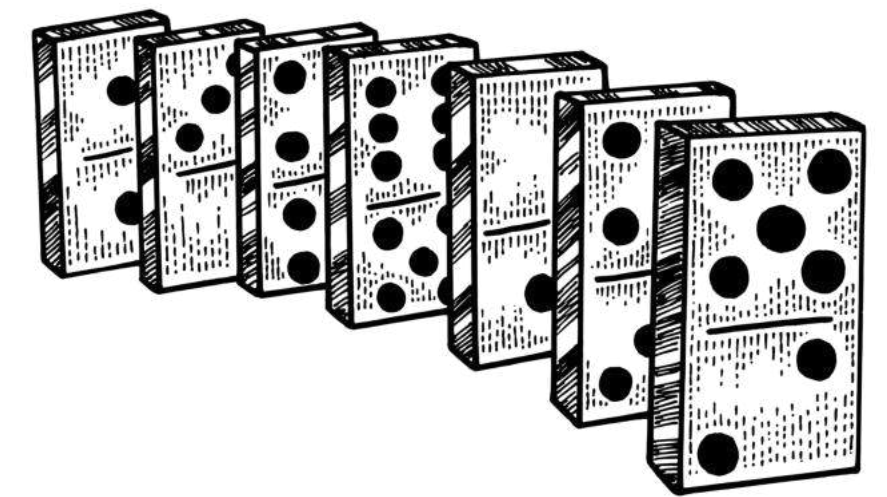
# Try our networking platform for marketers

You can start making the right connections in just a few clicks — and it's **free for two months** if you sign up now with this link.

New research from December 2023 shows that the breadth of a marketing professional's social network was the single most influential factor in their earning potential. And those connected via our platform **Ifluize** were in the top 2% of performers worldwide.

You can earn up to twice as much, twice as fast as a marketer — if you make the right connections in your first two years.

It'll help you say "sayonara" to slow career progression.



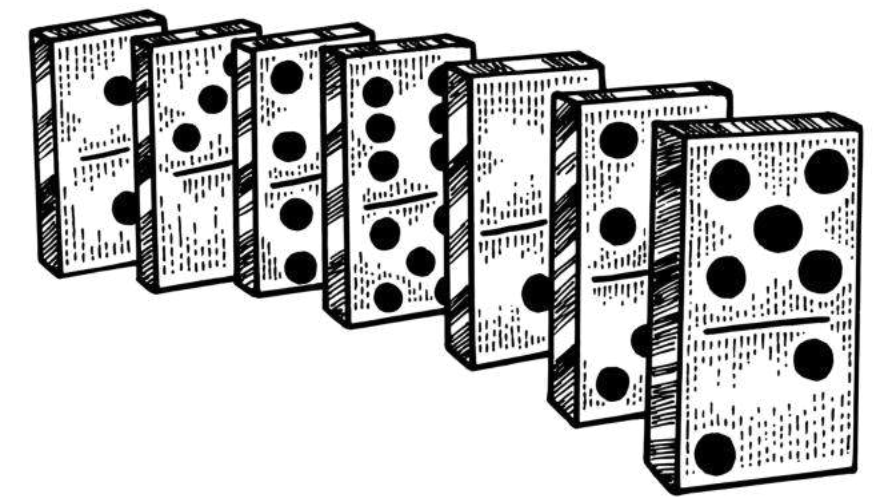
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You can start making the right connections in just a few clicks — and it's **free for two months** if you sign up now with this link.

Try it now.



# For stories, start in the middle of the action

*In medias res, if you're being fancy*

## **WHEN CORPORALS OUTRANK GENERALS** By Dave Trott

---

In 1943, the Soviet army outnumbered the German army about three to one.

The Russians were sweeping everything before them.

They were led by the unbeaten Field Marshall Zhukov.

They smashed their way towards Kharkov.

Kharkov was held by the Germans under Field Marshall Manstein.

Manstein had masterminded the blitzkrieg, conquered Europe and beaten the French and British.

Hitler told Manstein he must hold Kharkov at all costs.

Manstein disagreed, he wanted to use the tactic every football fan knows: the counter-attack.

He wanted to abandon Kharkov and lure Zhukov, to follow him.

Then, when Zhukov had outrun his supply-line, Manstein would attack from behind.

#2

A smile in the mind\*

Advertising



Journalism

Great minds  
like a think.

The Economist

# Turn benefits into playful ideas

I have a networking platform for marketers. I want to make young marketers aware of this platform, when they've never heard of it before.

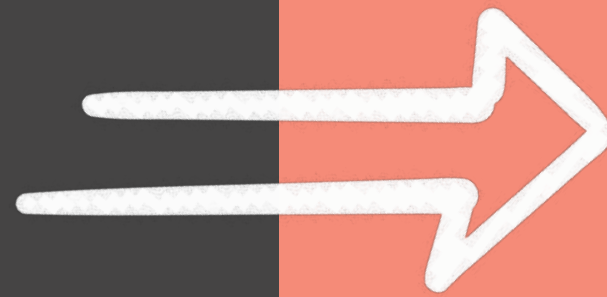
We're offering quick career progression. What might that mean?

- You'll never be the one getting the tea
- Your colleagues will think you're sleeping with the boss
- You'll be a stupidly young CMO ←
- You'll be the youngest person at the 5\* hotel



What we want the reader to understand:

You'll be a stupidly young CMO



How we make the reader feel smart:

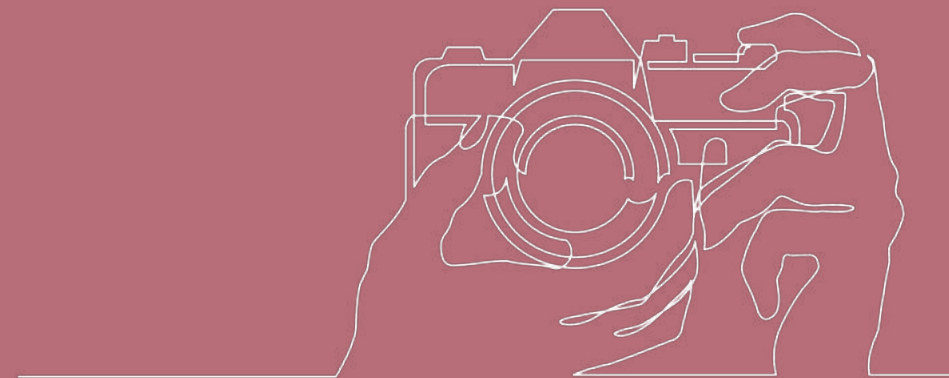
"Slay" said the CMO

Salary says CMO.  
Skin says intern.

#3

Can you picture it? Is it active?

Advertising



Direct response

Journalism

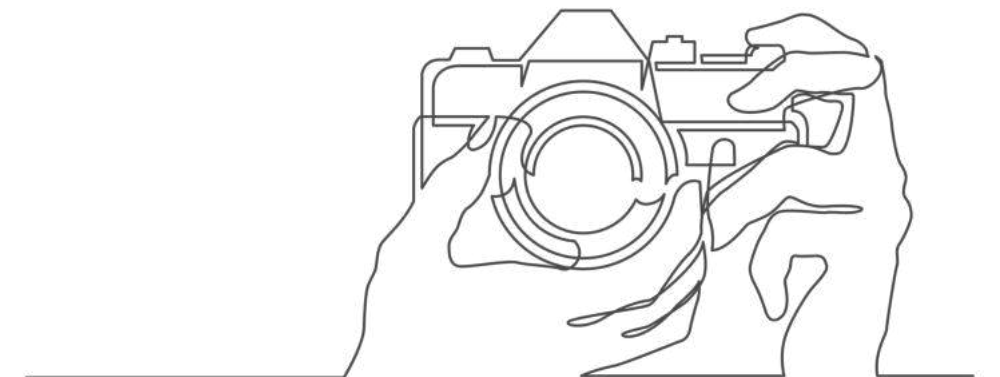
We've been given back the coat that years of evolution took away.

There was a time when people could walk around wearing nothing on our bodies.

But that was quite a while ago.

Sometime many years ago, people became creatures of the indoors. The hair that covered our bodies was gone, and in its place came garments.

Due to our small brains, man's earliest attempts at outdoor clothing were, needless to say, somewhat basic.



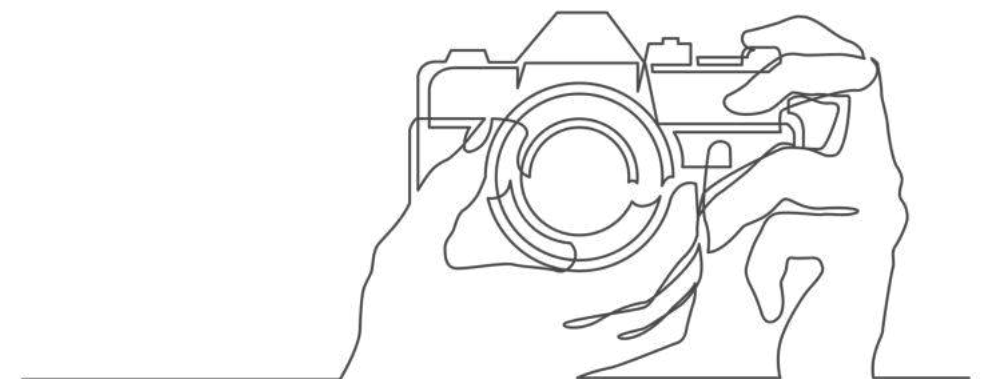
Timberland gives you back the coat  
four million years of evolution took away.

There was a time when Man could venture into the wilderness clad in nothing but the coat God gave him.

But that was quite a while ago.

Sometime during the Lower Paleolithic Era, Homo Erectus became a creature of the great indoors. The thick hair that once covered his entire body was gone, and in its place came a man-made imitation.

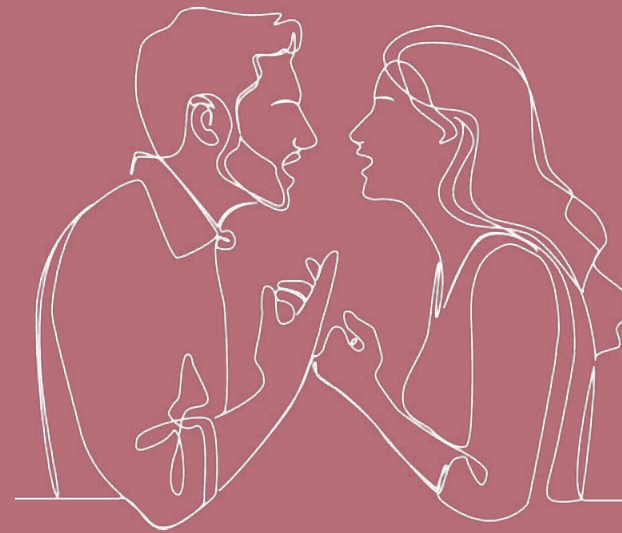
Hampered by a brain the size of a walnut, man's earliest attempts at outdoor clothing were, needless to say, somewhat primitive.



#5

Is there **tension**?

Advertising



Direct response

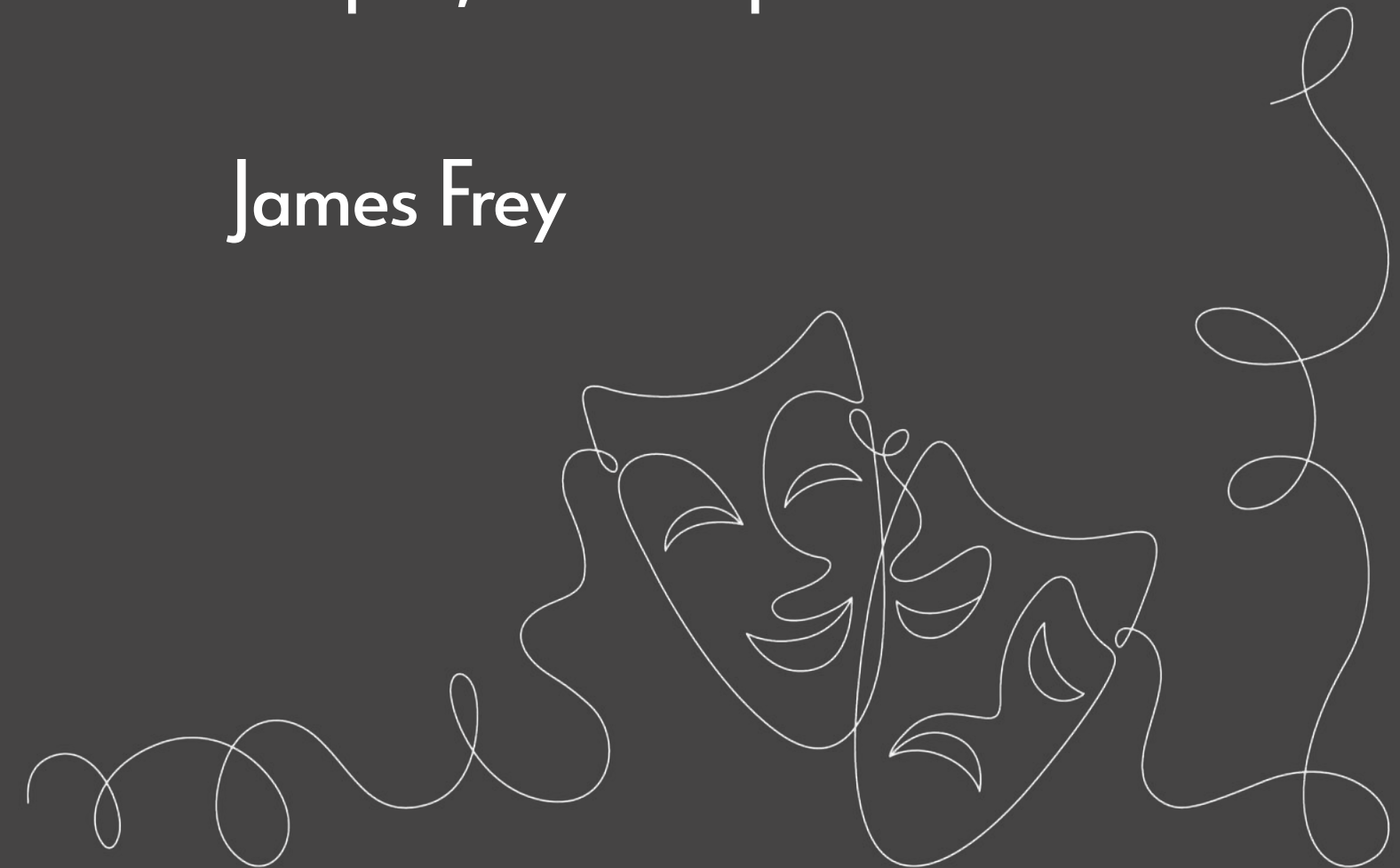
Journalism

"All drama is conflict. Without conflict, there is no action. Without action, there is no character. Without character, there is no story."

Syd Field

"The greatest rules of dramatic writing are conflict, conflict, and conflict."

James Frey



# The first eco-friendly, fully sustainable adoption agency

"During my time as a volunteer at a charity shop, I observed a number of second-hand toys arriving at the store.

These pre-loved toys came with cherished memories and sentimental significance. They were gifted with care.

These toys have a vibrant life, and their stories could be preserved forever."

*"The toys come with a lifetime of stories, memories, and love."*





# The Story of Loved Before

## The first eco-friendly, fully sustainable soft toy adoption agency

"Several years back, during my time as a volunteer at a charity shop, I observed the influx of second hand toys arriving at the store.

These pre-loved toys, often handed over with cherished memories and sentimental significance, were carelessly cast aside, sometimes relegated to becoming dog toys or, even more dishearteningly, destined for landfill.

It became evident to me how the love, the vibrant life, and the stories of these eco toys were at risk of being lost and forgotten in an instant."

*" A lifetime of stories, memories and love, just thrown away "*

How does your brand  
want the world to be?



How is the world different  
from your brand's ideal?

#7

Are you using neuroscience?

Advertising



Direct response

# Social proof

Show your reader that other people love your stuff.



**BRITISH AIRWAYS**  
The world's favourite airline

# Confirmation bias

If your reader agrees once, they want to continue agreeing.

We would be the first to say that a mother's own milk is the best food for her baby.  
And the DHSS share our view.  
For it was they who, in 1977, defined the composition of mature breast milk and then in 1980 proposed specific

# Scarcity

Your reader is hard-wired to want stuff that's in short supply.

**Dear Ms. La Hoya:**

**Quite frankly, the American Express® Card is not for everyone. And not everyone who applies for Cardmembership is approved.**

#8

Could you cut anything?

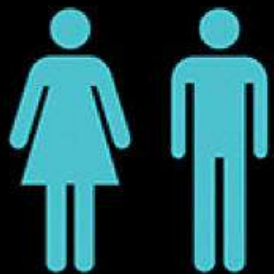
Advertising



Direct response

Journalism

Dear  
Sir/Madam,  
Why do Sir  
and Madam  
always come  
in that order?



Yours,  
Laura

Laura Bates (St John's College 2004), founder of [everydaysexism.com](http://everydaysexism.com)  
[cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge](http://cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge)

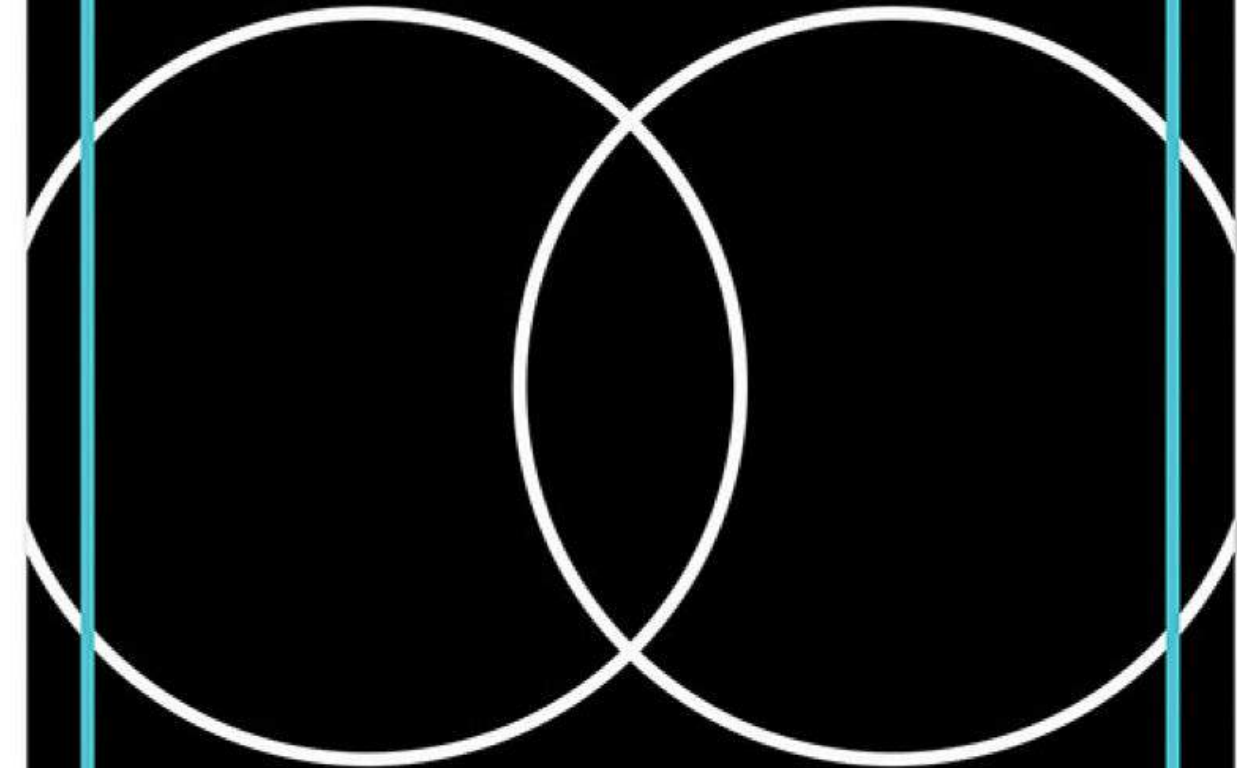
Dear Samuel,  
Saw some  
nice daffodils  
today.



Yours, William

William Wordsworth (St John's College 1791), poet and friend of Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
(Jesus College 1794) [cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge](http://cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge)

Dear World,  
I've had an idea  
for a diagram.



Think you might  
like it/love it/both.  
Yours, John Venn

John Venn (Gonville & Caius College 1853), logician and philosopher  
[cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge](http://cam.ac.uk/YoursCambridge)

Dear Sir/Madam

Why do the forms of address Sir and Madam always appear in that sequence?

Yours, Laura Bates

Dear Samuel,

I saw some nice golden daffodils this morning.

Yours, William  
Wordsworth

Dear World,

I've had a great idea for a new diagram.

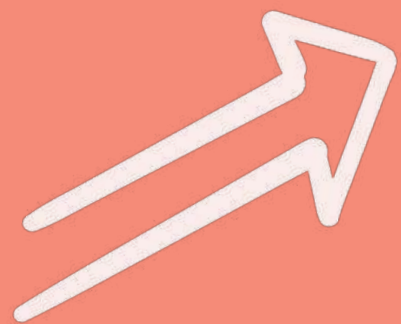
Think you might appreciate it/really appreciate it/ both.

Yours, John Venn



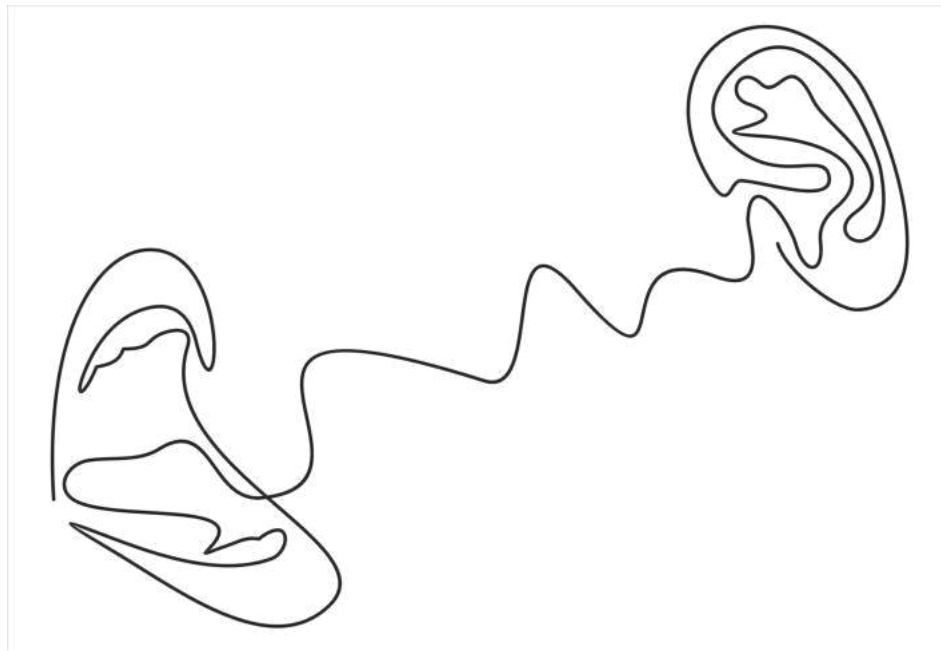
Part 4

# Writing with AI



If you don't enjoy what you write,  
nobody else will either.

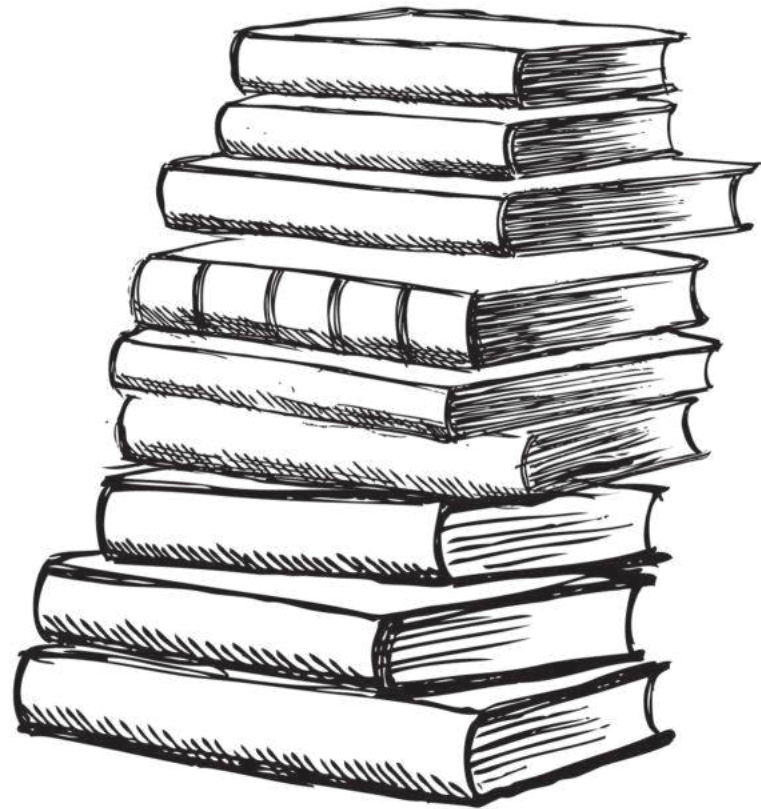
- AI writing gets mechanical very easily.
- But 90% of writing has nothing to do with putting words on the page.
- Bring yourself to the work. Listen to what you've written or what AI has created.
- Where do you smile? Where do the words move you? Where does an idea get you excited?



## AI AS WRITING COACH

"You're a world-class advertising copywriter. Tell me what I could improve about this social advert."

AI is a madly powerful thesaurus,  
that responds to your idea.



- Ask AI to help you create playful territories for headlines:
  - "Give me 10 crazy or exaggerated scenarios that might result from a marketing networking platform that speeds up career progression."
- Get material to develop your idea, once you have the spark you need for a headline.
  - "Give me 20 phrases that only a Gen Z would know."
- Improve writing much faster by asking things like:
  - "Give me 20 more specific and nuanced ways of saying 'to go'"

01

# Advertising

**DON'T  
IMAGINE  
A RED FLYING  
MONKEY  
SPITTING FIRE.**

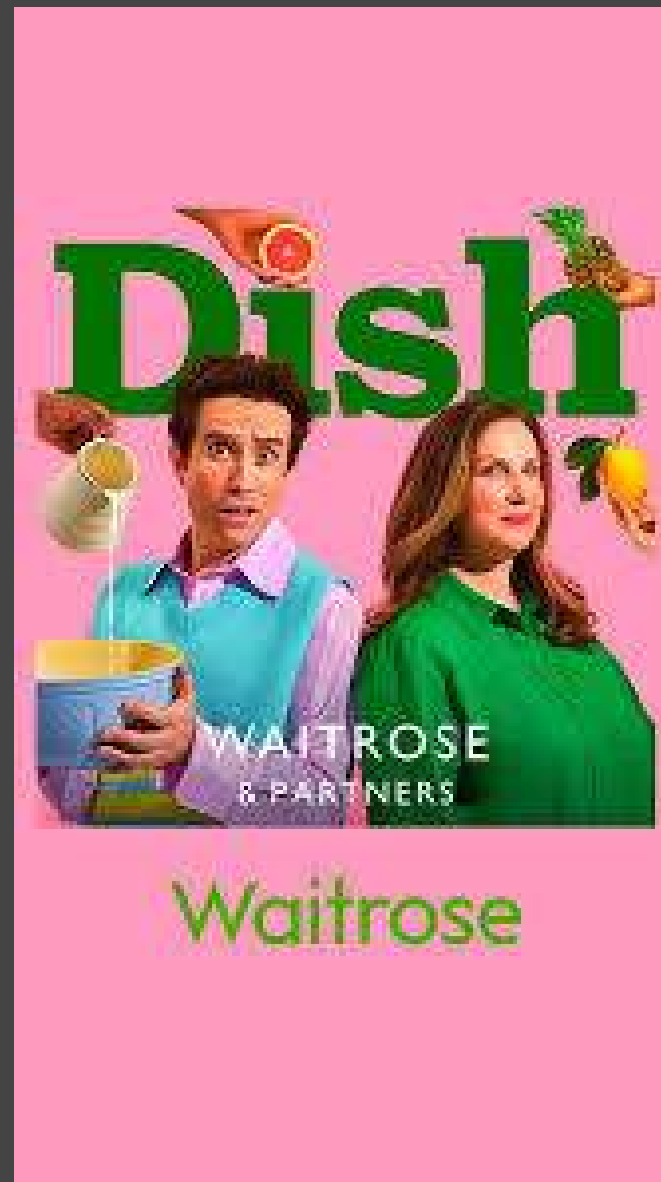
IF YOU READ IT, YOU IMAGINE IT.

DON'T  
IMAGINE THE  
PENGUIN  
COMPANHIA  
DAS LETRAS  
LOGO.

"You are a world-class advertising copwriter..."

02

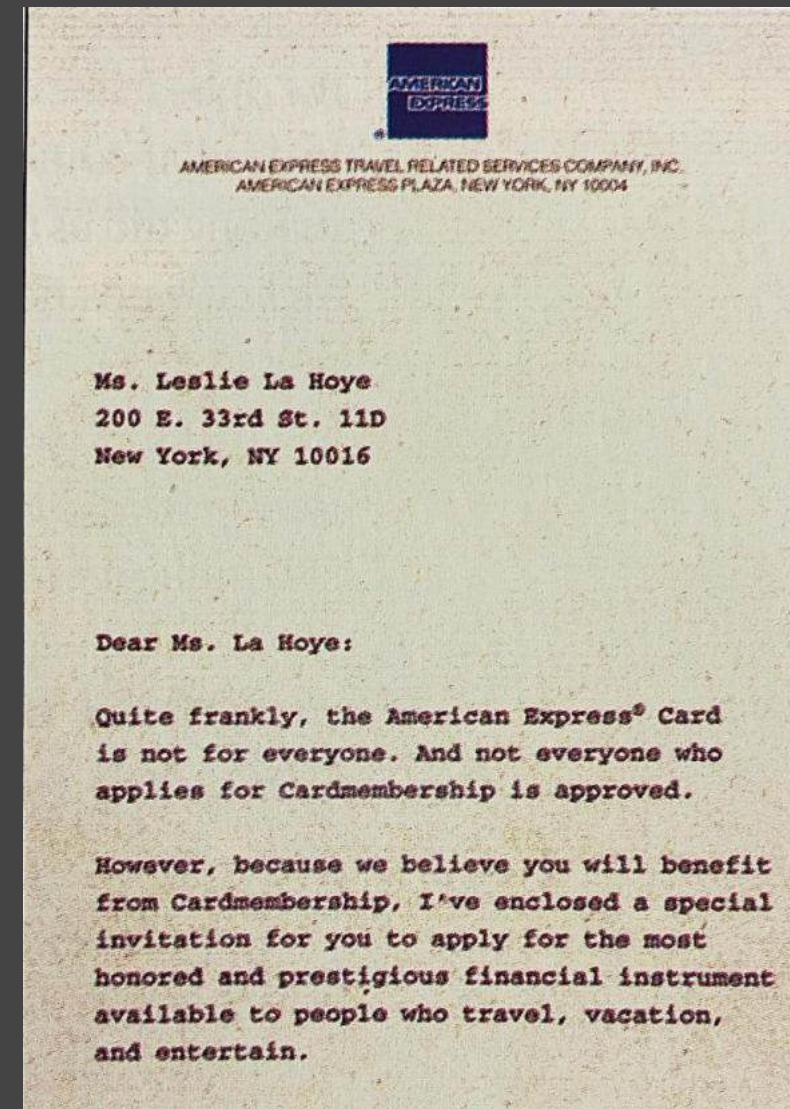
# Journalism



"You are a world-class journalist..."

03

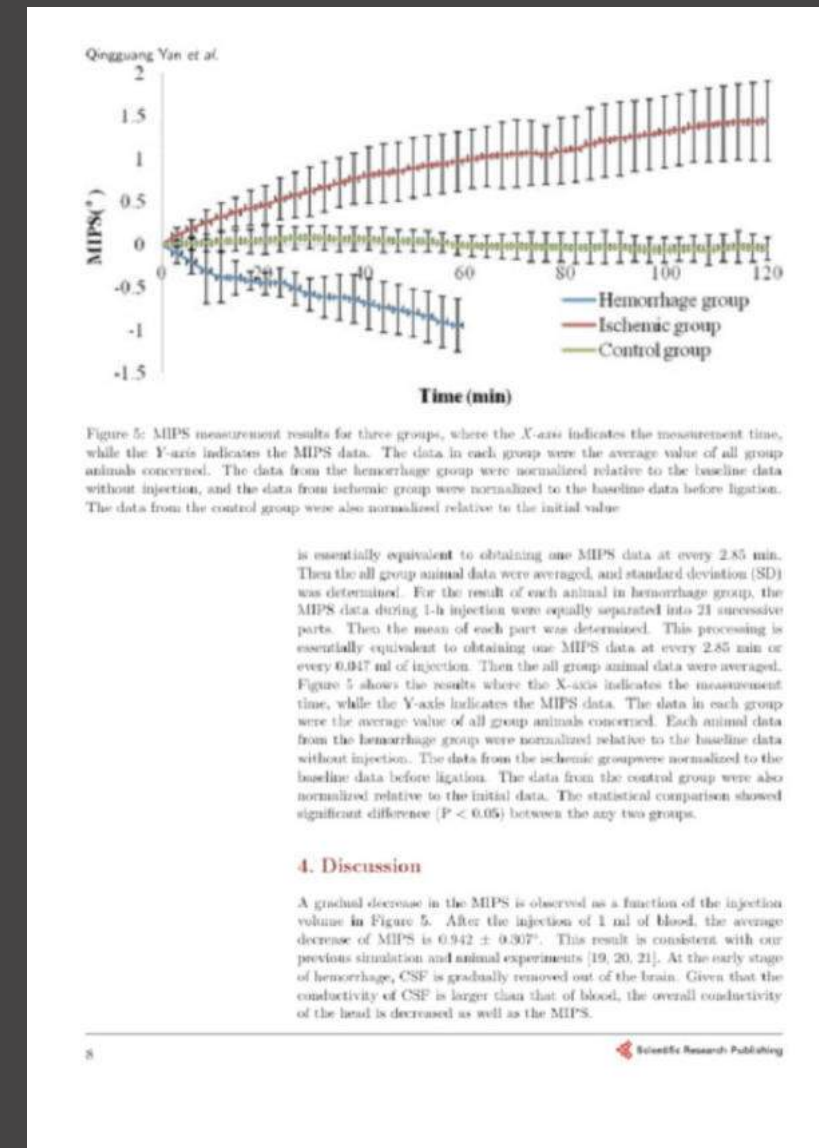
# Direct response



"You are a world-class direct response writer..."

04

# Technical



"You are a world-class technical writer..."

*Liquid*  
SCRIPT

Thank you