

## The Secret to Becoming a Better Writer (Faster!)

Today I want to share with you my secret to becoming a better writer.

I tell you exactly how I went from writing crappy blog posts to getting my guest posts published on Copyblogger and KISSmetrics in less than 6 months.

I didn't have much time for my learning as I was in a demanding job, working almost 70 hours a week. So I had to make each hour of learning count.

Many writing experts will tell you that to become a better writer, you need to write more. And others tell you to read more.

But it's not so simple.

What you really need to do is steal more. You need to learn how to steal.

When I talk about stealing, I don't mean you start stealing sentences and paragraphs.

Learning how to steal means learning to understand the techniques that work and that don't work. You don't steal sentences, but you steal the thought behind it.

And this is a normal process. This is how all creative people work. You don't need to re-invent the wheel. You can build on the work that others have created.

Let's have a look at the things you can steal.

You can steal headline templates, and power words, techniques for writing opening and closing paragraphs, you can steal post structures, and you can even steal your voice.

We often think that our voice is innate and we just have to discover it, but you can piece together your voice by emulating the voices that you like.

We discuss all these different aspects of blogging in the course. In this video today, I want to show you how I use Evernote to create my swipe file.

So this is Evernote.

I'm showing the web version here as I can zoom in to show you what's in my swipe file. I have a Notestack for my swipe file. If I click here, I get to see all my folders. So here is my swipe file.

You can see here the different notebooks I have: Closing Paragraphs, Headlines, Opening Paragraphs, Power Words, Stats and Quotes. I don't use the stats and quotes a lot. But the others I've used a lot in the past.

So let's have a look at the opening paragraphs. Here's an article with 10 different opening paragraphs. But these are all individual opening paragraphs I've swiped. And when you click here you can go back to the original blog post. The URL is always there.

And here's my swipe file with headlines. Here's a PDF with Jon Morrow's headlines hacks. We'll get to that later in the course, but you can see you can upload a PDF, too. And here's one of my own blog posts about headline writing. And here's a selection of headlines I like that I can use to inspire my own headlines.

And lastly, the power words. Again, I have swiped a few articles with useful words. And then I created a list with words that attracted my attention. Again, we'll speak about power words later on.

So this is a tool you can also use. You create your own collection. And that's how you create your own voice. You don't copy things word by word, but you look for patterns, ideas and techniques.

So let me quickly show how to save new paragraphs to Evernote. Here's one of my blog posts, and let's say you want to add this opening paragraph, so you select it. And here you have your web clipper. You have to download that separately. When you click the web clipper, then you get several options, you can swipe the whole article, the simplified version, you can swipe a selection or just a bookmark. So I choose the "selection," and then I choose my notebook "opening paragraphs". Many people say it's actually easier to use tags instead of notebooks. If you want to use tags, you can fill in opening paragraphs here, and that's how you can then find your opening paragraphs in Evernote.

And then all you have to do is click "save." And let's have a look. Here in the notebook opening paragraphs, it's been swiped here.

Below this video you find a PDF with more details about setting up your swipe file. I recommend you do this today or this week so you're ready to build your swipe file.

If you have any questions, just put them in the forums. See you there. Cheers!