

# Breakthrough Advertising Secrets

By Eugene Schwartz

I want to explain what I'm doing here. I have two goals. My first goal is to help you as much as I can.

My second goal is to make myself transparent. This is a mystical experience which we undergo every so often. I don't know whether you've tried it. It's marvelous. If you work with a computer - a good computer, lots of bytes - you can say to the computer, "Solve this problem for me." When it does, you can then say, "Make yourself transparent to me. How did you solve this problem?" Then the computer will then go back every step and show you how it reached its solution.

The computer cannot lie. It doesn't have that circuit built in. We have a very large number of lying circuits built into us. Now what I'm going to try to do is take the lying circuits and move them over here and be transparent. That means I'm going to answer any question, give you all the information I can, completely honestly. And we'll see how that works because that's the only way I can possibly impart anything of value to any of you.

Now, I know you're extremely fine professionals and much of what I say for the first ten minutes is going to be too elementary for you. But I cannot discuss anything unless I go over the very, very, very, very beginning.

Okay. This is a timer. It is the most valuable thing I ever bought in my life. I go nowhere in the world without a timer. Whenever I do anything, I press in "3, 3, 3, 3". That means 33 minutes and 33 seconds. I then press the start button. Now we're going to speak for 33.33 minutes.

Now, why do I do this? Because I don't think anyone can work for a very long period of time without interruption. And if you do, you exhaust yourself too quickly. When a posse used to chase a criminal out West where I come from, Butte, Montana, (very important fact) the horse thief would ride for an hour, and then he'd get off and walk the horse for an hour, and then he'd get on the horse again and ride. And the posse would ride for an hour behind him, get off the horse and walk an hour, and then ride. Why wouldn't the posse go faster?

Because the horse would be exhausted and drop dead. Okay, your mind has a way of dropping dead on you. So what we do is we give it this 33.33 minutes and this gives us room for inspiration to sneak in.

Okay, that's Number One. Number Two is the fact that I come from Butte, Montana. Now, you've probably come from a lot of different places rather than this particular place. I was very fortunate to be born in Butte, Montana. It's a very small town of 30,000 people. I grew up there. I left when I was 15. I live in Manhattan - I lead an extremely sophisticated life in Manhattan. I try never to lose the Butte, Montana in me. Because the Butte, Montana in me is everybody in this huge country of ours.

Now, I don't know how many of you read the National Enquirer every week. I don't know how many of you go to every film that makes over \$100 million and see every one of them. You cannot lose touch with the people of this country, no matter how successful or how potent you are. If you don't spend at least two hours a week finding out where your market is today, you are finished! You will have a career of three blazing years and be finished.

Hers A Summary:

Gene Schwartz's rules of great copywriting are in fact the rules of great marketing and great editorial. And, yes, Schwartz says, these are rules, and I'll expound upon them: Be the best listener you ever met.

Work extremely intensely, in spurts. Never "create"- know the product to the core and combine the details in new ways. Write to the chimpanzee brain, simply, directly.

Channel demand - never sell. Think about what your product "does", not "is"- and demonstrate this.

Make gratification instantaneous. Failing often, and testing big differences, shows you are trying hard enough. "If any writer has set the tone and style for successfully marketing books to consumers, it is Eugene Schwartz. His packages not only sell millions of books for them, but also provide an inspiring model for everyone. No writer in the business can match Schwartz's energy, intensity, and ability to pile

benefits on top of benefits on top of benefits. Two of Schwartz's packages - for Dick Benson's Wellness Encyclopedia and Rodale's Secrets of Executive

Success - have an astonishing 299 separate and distinct benefits to the buyer in the former and 237 in the latter."-Denny Hatch Talk Little, Listen Much So go and get in touch with your people. Don't lose that. Talk to every cab driver you meet. Speak to everyone you can. Be the best listener you have ever met. Talk little, listen much. That is your market talking.

You don't have to have great ideas if you can hear great ideas. Marty Edelson is the owner of Boardroom, Inc., which is a business about the same size as yours: \$100 million a year. He came to me with \$3,500 in his pocket, and I told him I'd have to charge him \$2,500 as a copy fee, which embarrassed the devil out of me but didn't bother him at all. And he said, "Okay, what do we do?" And I said, "Well, we can start it right now. I'm gonna sit and I'm going to listen and you're going to talk." He talked about four hours about this crazy concept of having a thing called Boardroom - a newsletter called Boardroom. And I just sat there like you're sitting there right now, taking notes. And when he said things I just took it down.

And about 30 minutes into it he said one sentence. And I took it down, and then we finished. And I said, "Well, thank you." He said, "When can you have the copy for me?" And I said "about two weeks." He walked out. I went home. My wife takes a long time to make up. While she did that, I wrote the ad. I put in the ad from stern to stern. I couldn't give it to him the same night because he would think it was worth nothing. So I then put it away for two weeks. And in two weeks, I sent it to him and he ran it.

Now, my copy was 70% his conversation. The headline was, "How To Get the Heart of 370 Business Magazines in Just 30 Minutes a Month." It was his thing. It was his idea. It was his conception. It was his vision. All I did was write it out and give it to people. Okay. You must be in contact with your market. You must listen. You must let the ideas come to you. If you don't let the ideas come to you, you're going to rely too much on your own creativity. These are all fundamentals.

The number one rule of success in anything - marketing, football (which I'm going to talk about a lot today), chess, etc. - is work. And

it's so funny. It's so easy to say, "Work, work, work, work, work." But I have to emphasize that to you. I was telling Richard that I have a very peculiar life. I live at home. I have no boss. I've never had one since the second year I was in business. I am a West-Coast person who doesn't relate very well to the East-Coast clock, and so every morning I get up about ten and by 10:30 or 11:00, I'm ready to go to work. I work every single day of the week. I work on Saturdays and Sundays, too. I have never had a writer's block, an editorial block, or any other kind of block. I create 12 to 15 mailing pieces a year. I never have any trouble getting started on them. I work between three and four hours a day. I work extremely intensely. I work in half-hour spurts as I've already told you.

I'll tell you how I manage to get the work combined with creativity. It's very simple. And I have about an 85% hit ratio. That means 85% of the ads I write pay out.

The Creativity Is Not In You... Never Mistake That Now, I am of the opinion that the absolutely most talented copy writer in the world, who doesn't work very much, will be beaten by a copy cub who puts in four times as much work, because the creativity is not in you. Never mistake that. The creativity is in your market and in your product, and all you are doing is joining the two together. And the only way you can get the creativity out of your product and your market is to dig it out. And the only way you can dig it out is dig it out more than anybody else digs it out.

I'm better, result-wise, than many great copywriters, who are better writers than I am, because I work harder than they do - and I can actually see the gaps in their working. Let me explain that. We have what I call the Super Bowl of copy. I use football metaphors, because they are apt, and I hope everybody here understands them. If you don't, I'll translate them into other metaphors, but they work very well for me. Take Rodale. I'm not going to talk about Phillips Publishing at all here. You're great, you're sensational; you're one of the greatest companies I've ever seen. I've studied you intensely, but I'm not going to talk about you because I'm going to talk about other experiences so you can relate the other strange experiences to your own and therefore broaden your scope of creativity.

Rodale made \$315 million in sales last year. It should come close to \$400 million this year. That's just Rodale Books. A very good company. It's done many innovative things, produces excellent books, etc. They hire two copywriters for every single new book they do. The two copywriters are sent the manuscript of the book, and they write ads. (Now, you can call them mailing pieces or anything else. I call everything ads, because I like to use short words.)

We then submit the two pieces. They are laid out by Rodale's layout department. They send the copywriters a sort of preliminary layout j - then the artist and I talk about it, fix it up, get it right. It's sort of a Super Bowl because these are the highest-paid copywriters in America. We all get lots of money. I have done that four times this year so far. It's not a Super Bowl where it's once a year - it keeps going all the time. And you keep running up against these terribly, terribly, terribly great writers.

To compete in it, I read the Rodale book. Seven hundred pages. Four times. I underline the book so intensely that I get 40 or 50 pages of notes out of those readings. Those notes are then sent out to a secretary and she types up those notes so I get a precise "vocabulary." I then go over the vocabulary and begin structuring an ad. We'll talk much more about that in a few moments. When I am finished, and I am working on the copy, I know more about the book than the editor who has produced it. Because many times at Rodale, they'll come back to me and say, "This is not correct. This is too exaggerated, and I will say, "In combined something from page 116 with 531" and the editor goes back and he says, "Yeah, okay! It can be done!

Finding Those Hidden Desires Find your readers' hidden desires. They are hidden, because your reader doesn't want to really talk about them, but they are in the subculture, hidden culture, under-culture of our civilization. That's why you've got to read the things that people buy. Anything that people buy. Vanity Fair. You've got to read Vanity Fair. You won't know what's going on unless you read Vanity Fair, People Magazine, The Weekly World News. I don't know whether you are advocates of the Weekly World News. You've got to read that because it shows the extent of people's ability to believe.

When you start working on the project, you go to the person who has initiated the project and you listen. You listen two ways. A person in

books and publishing has probably done a lot of words on paper, so you read those. And then, if you can, you sit down with him and you just kind of turn on the tape recorder and you listen, listen, listen. Nobody's going to know more about it than you. Then you listen to people every single day of your life. You're paid to listen. It's a very bad profession. Very lonely profession. Because it gives you almost no chance to brag or talk about yourself. You really listen. Martin Edelson gave me a headline and theme for a whole new series of books which we have not even prepared yet because he said something at lunch the other day.

You listen, you pick up ideas from people. That's where they are. If you get them talking, they will come out. Know The Product To Its Core Because I have to know that product right down to its core in order to get every single sales appeal out of it, I work harder, and therefore I make 85% winners. Okay, I guess the best guys are much better writers than I am. I'm not really that good. I haven't got their flair. Jim Punkre's a hundred times better than I am. So you work. You work, you work, you work. You leave nothing out. No step undone. What the client gives you may be inadequate. If it is, you challenge the client. You have no client but the audience. You really don't care about anything but the market or the process. When I'm finished I send my copy in, he sends his copy in, she sends her copy in, whoever it is.

The ads run. Direct mail pieces are mailed out. And I get a report back from Rodale and they say, "You out pulled Jim Punkre 146% on one ad, and he out pulled you 31% on another." You then get his copy, his mailing piece as well as your mailing piece. You then go over in great detail his approach and compare it with your own approach. It's a very good way to learn. Very humiliating. Very enlightening. I can see where they didn't do enough work. I can see where they lost facts. And the loss of those facts stands out so clearly because I had the facts; they didn't have the facts. Usually, I win. When you are dealing with someone of real brilliance and they do a headline, that's absolutely beyond all belief, then you are going to have a hard time. Probably you're going to lose then no matter how many facts you have. But nevertheless, 70% of the time if the facts aren't there, they'll hurt you. It's exactly as if you don't have a piece of concrete in your building, and it collapses.

These are fundamentals, but they are universally applicable. If you don't get in the facts, you're just not going to do a top job. When you marshaled the facts, you then begin writing the copy. Now, we are specially privileged people. All of us. Because we are working in publishing. And what is given to you is not a product, but words. You've got a constant flow of words that you are investigating. So much of your copy is already written for you. So you start with their copy and your comments and additions and inspirations from their copy, and it's there on these 40-some pages. In your computer, on your screen and you start at the very top and you work your way down sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph by paragraph. It's very easy.

A Very Simple Way to Make Sure You Get Down to Work Let's talk about the value of it being easy. Many very brilliant writers - as well as other workers in all fields, physical and especially intellectual - have trouble getting started. They have what is probably known as a writer's block, which is a Western phenomenon and does not occur much in the East. In Zen Buddhism for example, it doesn't occur at all. Why does it occur here and not occur there? It's very simple. Zen Buddhists about 4,000 years ago invented a very simple way to make sure you get down to work. And to make sure you don't have a block.

What happens when a Zen or a, let's say, me - I'm partially Zen - starts to work? What he does is he takes out the piece of copy, and he calls it up on the computer. That is the vocabulary. All those little quotes. He then takes out a cup of coffee. The same cup of coffee every day. He swirls it around and mixes the sugar. Mixes the cream and swirls it around. Then takes out a pad and a pencil and puts it in exactly the same space. He's not doing anything very much. Then he takes out a little timer - that crazy little device - - and punches in 33:33. I've been talking for 13 minutes so far. I know exactly where I am. Okay. He puts in 33 minutes and presses the start button.

When I press the start button, I can do anything I want. All willpower is dissolved. I can do anything I want as long as it relates to the piece of copy in front of me. I can ignore it. I don't have to touch it. I don't have to look at it. But I can't get up from the desk, and I can't do anything except ignore or relate to the piece of copy. I am not trying to write a wonderful ad. I am not trying to earn an extra million dollars. I am not trying to do anything. I have no goal whatsoever as to what that particular piece of copy is going to do for me. All I know is

that I'm going to work on the copy, and I have no responsibility to the client, the copy, the prospect, the market, myself and my future except to work.

So finally, after a good deal of looking around - I can't get out of the chair now, I am trapped in that chair for 33.33 minutes, I get bored. So what do I do? I start reading down the copy! As I start reading down the copy, the copy says to me, "Oh, hey, aren't I beautiful? Why don't you pull me out and put me on top?" Or, "Why don't you change this phraseology? It's extremely ineptly put. Why don't you put it into advertising terminology?" So what happens is that I begin to get into it. And without about five minutes I am working on the copy, making the ad from the copy. Okay. No block, because I am really not doing very much at that time.

Forty pages is a lot. The computer doesn't like 40 pages. New computers like them better - they've got more bytes. But they don't handle them well, and so we are going to have to start subdividing them into categories. The categories are going to become your letter, your flyer, and in a magalog they're going to become one page - the little sidebars in the magalog, etc. So you begin to sort it out, and you begin to get it. As you sort things out into categories, things leap out at you. When they leap out at you, you capture them at that moment. The computer has a thing called a highlighting device - the bold key - you hit the bold key, and you make them into a headline or a sub-headline. They are the points of contact, the most dramatic points of contact you have with your prospect, with your market.

I hope you can all see this ad. It says, "Burn Disease Out of Your Body." Crazy. A really wild piece written in 1979. The full, headline is "How Modern Chinese Medicine Helps Both Men and Women Burn Disease Out of Your Body Using Nothing More Than the Palm of Your Hand." Okay. This ad has been running for 14 years now, selling the book, which sold for \$6.95 when it first ran and sells for \$33 now. It will sell more copies this year than it ever did before. And we paid the author well over a million dollars. I wrote it as a special favor for the author because he had done a special favor for me - he gave me back the use of my right hand after I had my stroke. I paid \$125 for the layout. It's as crude as can be. I never thought the thing would sell. Layout, letter, very crude, very small type. A lot of violations. We're going to go over this in some degree of thoroughness later on. I

couldn't get anybody to run it, so I started my own business to run it. And there I was.

How Modern Chinese Medicine Helps Both Men and Women BURN DISEASE OUT OF YOUR BODY Using Nothing more than the palm of your hand!

"How to treat high blood pressure, bursitis and arthritis - and prevent them from degenerating further, or even reverse them - simply by massaging the outside of the legs in a downward way. This pose helps reduce water retention and excess weight.....cures and prevents hemorrhoids, and cures problems of the prostate, such as ...enlargement and cancer.

"Eventually throw your glasses away, and never need to see an eye doctor again, simply by rubbing around the eyes for a few minutes every day. "If one has strong..., they never grow old..."

FREE... INSTANT IMPROVEMENT

By applying the ...faithfully, he regulated his bowel movement, lost 40 pounds, and was filled with new energy."

FREE HOW TO RUB YOUR STOMACH AWAY

"In just a few weeks, she had lost five inches in her waist, hips and thigh area." MAIL ENCLOSED CARD FOR FREE COPY. I got a call from him...and he told me...that he had already lost...his best. "THE SIMPLEST AND MOST NATURAL WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT IS BY THIS EFFORTLESS TWO-MINUTE EXERCISE. "By such apparently simple means, the superfluous areas of the stomach and abdomen are literally rubbed away. MAILER: Instant Improvement, Inc.

PACKAGE: Dr. Chang's Book of Internal Exercises COPYWRITER: Eugene M. Schwartz FIRST MAILED: 1979 The 9" x 12" outer envelope

Okay. "Burn Disease Out of Your Body Laying Flat on Your Back, Using Nothing More Than the Palm of Your Hand" are not my words. They're the author's words. I wrote seven paragraphs of this letter. But I had the ability to let this man speak for himself. And he still speaks to millions of Americans. We are mailing more in January than we mailed for the first eight years of the mailing. And it goes against very, very

strong, strong, strong wonderful copy, including your own copy. And it still continues to do well.

That just about finishes the fundamentals.

After 33.33 minutes happen, this thing goes crazy and rings all over the place. You stop. You push the stop button. You don't do anything from that moment on. If you are in the middle of a sentence you really leave that sentence go. If you lose it, you lose it. That's too bad. You are under the command of something higher than you. It's so funny to use these metaphors. You pull yourself and push yourself back. You stand up. You now have five minutes of compulsory leisure. You are not to create any more! You are not to work anymore. You have five minutes. Now. Coffee low? We'll have to make a new cup. Dog? Play with the dog. Go shave (if you're a man, of course). Okay. You do something.

You see, you have to do something, but you can't work. You have to engage your mind. You have to engage your intelligence. But you can't engage your mind or your intelligence on what you have been doing. Why? Because you are about to create. You have been working until that point. Now you are about to create.

### **How Does One Create?**

Now let's talk about creation. How does one create? How does one become creative? How does one get new ideas? How does one solve problems that are intractable and cannot be solved? That you've worked on for weeks and thrown your hands up in despair? Well, that again is quite simple. We'll take a few minutes on this because it's really so valuable, and it's so much a habit that can become cultivated, and then become rather automatic and give you a statistical proportion of hits. That means new ideas, in this case.

Your conscious mind is actually your focus of attention. The conscious mind is absorbed with what you are paying attention to. I'm paying attention to all of you when I'm speaking at this particular moment. Your conscious mind can only hold about seven memory bytes. That's pretty small, so you have to focus. Your conscious mind is where you focus your attention. It's very narrow. It's wonderful. It's fantastic for working out syllogisms, consequences, etc. It will not create for you.

What is creation? Creation is a lousy word. It's a lousy word that confuses what you really do to perform a simple little procedure. Creation means create something out of nothing. In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth. Okay, only God can do that. We can't do that: We're human. So let's throw creation out, and let's talk about connectivity. What you are trying to do is connect things together. You're trying to practice connectivity. You're trying to get two ideas that were separate in your mind and culture before, and you are trying to put them together so they are now one thought. You want something new to come out, but new doesn't mean it never existed before, it means never joined before. New - in every of discipline - means never joined before.

You've got to trick that conscious mind because that conscious mind isn't big enough to connect all these widespread phenomena. So what you do is you take your conscious mind and you focus it on making a new cup of coffee! That holds it there, and then ideas can kind of bleed into the back of your mind and come into the front of your mind.

The best example is Mozart - a most creative man, who was writing symphonies at six, seven, eight. I don't know whether you saw the movie Amadeus. It shows very truthfully and very well how he wrote. He never, ever, rewrote. He never changed. He wrote his scores in pen and ink. He never changed a note of them. They were always perfect and the highlight of his genius of course, but that doesn't mean a thing.

How did he do it? Well he did it very simply. He composed at a billiard table. He would stand at the billiard table, and he would have a single white billiard ball. He would have a pen and an inkwell, and he would have the score. And he would take the white billiard ball in his left hand while he had the pen in the right hand and he would throw the white billiard ball out against the three cushions. And it would bounce off the three cushions. It's random, how it comes back, to a certain extent. It never comes back exactly at the same place, so he had to focus on the trajectory of the billiard ball until it came back.

When it came back here or here or here, he had to focus on that hand being at the exact right place. Meanwhile, while his conscious mind was over here, his unconscious mind slipped the note back to him and then he had the next note. Every note was a billiard ball traveling. Every note was a distraction. Every note was an addition. You've got

to break out of that conscious prison to be unconsciously creative, which means to connect unconsciously things that haven't been consciously connected before.

My greatest inspirations or creations come when I'm shaving. I am the poorest shaver. I cut myself continually, and I'm always running back and forth between the bathroom and my desk. They are right next to each other because I have to get it down before it slips away.

I'll draw one of my great connections for you. A very successful ad. It says, "71-year-old man has sexual congress five times a day!" Problem? This was a sexual health product. There are many sexual health problems and health products around. Everybody constantly talks about super-potency, etc., etc. They all say you can gain back everything you had. How was that going to compete in a market with a very simple, very crude mailing piece?

And I found I could do it by two ways. Number one, I used "sexual congress" which is a very strange way of phrasing this particular act, but which was a very typically American way in the 1890s. And number two, I talked about a 77-year-old man when I'm selling products to 40 - year-old men. I gave the extreme. I did not think of this. I had no idea of thinking of this. It came to me, in fact, when I was shaving. I put it down, and it pulled 9% on the first test!

Okay, those are the fundamentals. Let's go over them again.

The first, most dominant, absolutely incontrovertible and indispensable fundamental is that you work harder than anybody else, therefore you make more money than anyone else. A one-to-one connection. Red Blake - coach of Army, during WWII, a great coach - said the will to win depends on the will to prepare. You gotta prepare. Prepare, prepare, prepare. You got to go over it. And on the sixth reading you'll see the great stuff.

Second is the ability to get to work. If you don't get to work you can't make money. And you get to work simply by using techniques for thinking creatively.

Richard-Stanton Jones: What are some of the techniques you use for tuning in or listening well?

Schwartz: Number one: One hour a day, read. Read everything in the world except your business. Read junk. Very much junk. Read so that anything that interests you will stick in your memory. Just read, just read, just read. Subscribe to Ladies Home Journal Cosmopolitan, Vanity Fair. Get all the very low stuff. Low culture makes big money. Got to remember that! There is your audience. There is the language. There are the words that they use.

Remember, when somebody does a picture, about a kid who gets lost over Christmas, and makes \$300 million, a lot of people like that! If you have to go to that well not once, but twice, and you have to say to yourself, "What makes this reach these people?"

### **Assume People Are Wonderful**

Assume, as your constant assumption, that people are wonderful. You might read Dale Carnegie's book How To Win Friends and Influence People again. That book is one of the greatest books ever written. And everybody should read it every two or three years. The assumption is that everybody you're out there writing to is a good soul. As my father used to say, the sale of the earth. They really want to be nice, honest and successful. They want to be happy. And they want to have friends. And assume that's there and then see what they're very interested in at this time.

When you are at parties - and this is extremely difficult - listen. Sit down and listen. The technique of listening is extremely simple, and most people - 80% of people - don't really practice it. You look the other person in the eye and you say, "Gee, you're wonderful." You say, "Well, isn't that interesting. What do you do?" "Oh, I'm publishing." "Who do you work for?" "Phillips Publishing." "Oh, terrific! What do you do there?" And you sit and you listen and you listen and you listen. And every time they say something, you nod. And memorize specific statements, so you can feed them back to them in the same conversation. In that way, the person goes into a talking frenzy.

He begins to feel very important, very comfortable, very happy and he loves you and he will confide in you. That gives you his inner secrets. I have - pardon me for saying this - but I have had a dinner conversation with a woman I have never met before at which the entire table around us - 12 people - stopped when she said, "I tell you my cervix is no larger than my little fingernail!" This is because people will become hypnotized by their own stories.

## **Write To The Chimpanzee Brain**

All the exposure books. Every single one of them. Barbarians at the Gate. You know, all the ones that said, "These are the way people got away with it." Get that book. Everything that tells you how to be crooked - as an investor I would devour them. People are two-sided. I mean, there are so many ways we can go. You are all chimpanzees. I've got terrible news for you!

There are three kinds of chimpanzees invented by nature: the regular chimp, the pygmy chimp, and this thing called man. Man was the third. He came along a couple of hundred thousand years ago.

So you have three brains! You have a reptilian brain, a mammalian brain and human brain: the cerebrum up here which thinks logically. You don't use the human brain that much in reading copy. You really use the chimpanzee brain in reading copy. You are an animal. When it gets you in the gut, what does that mean? It gets you in the chimpanzee brain. That's why you use very simple and very vivid words when you're dealing with investment copy, I think. In any other kind of advertising I've ever run I used very simple words.

Inside of us we have this hidden chimpanzee. It gives us a lot of trouble. But it provides a lot of opportunities for marketers. The person who buys investment material wants to make a lot of money very, very, very fast. He may logically know he can't do that, but he would love to do it. And believe me, he goes home and presses that TV button and sees right in there. That is your junk reading. Now, he's going to look for the best, most rational and most honest approach possible. But he's also going to have that little sly side of him and you are going to have to appeal to that to sell to him.

## **Copywriting is simple writing**

I also just want to quickly throw that into another dimension. I guess you all supervise or work with the copywriters. And you all write copy. You all speak copy. You're all trying to sell somebody something - if it's only a raise or going out on a date, or having somebody do what you want them to do.

Copy writing - as well as all effective writing - is simple, transparent writing. It is not literary writing. The surest way to know that something is failing as copy is to have someone come in and say,

"God, that was great copy! Oh, I love the ring of that sentence! And that phrase you put in there moved me!" Uh, uh! What happens is that you want them to come in and say, "Jesus Christ, am I in that much danger?" Or, "is there really a way that I can have sexual congress five times a day?" That's what you want.

You are presenting a showcase for your product. Just like a store showcase on Fifth Avenue. You want the person to be able to look through the copy like the person is able to look through the glass in the showcase and see the product inside. If that glass becomes dirty, reflective, or calls attention to itself in any way, you have failed. If you want to write a novel, go write a novel. And I have! But don't write novel copy!

Simple, dramatic, move-gut copy. There's also enormous room for logical terminology in ads. And you should use it continually. But that is logical, terminology and structure. Don't use hard words in ads - words with more than three syllables - unless you want to give a certain flavor at that moment. You've got to be simple. Remember.

### **The Headline Does Not Sell**

Let's get into specifics. This desk here is a good example of what your table at home looks like every day and what your prospect's table at home looks like every day. Here I come in, and I've had a tough day. And I'm pretty tired. And I've got one, two, three, four, six, seven, eight, nine or more pieces of mail. What is my movement when I open these pieces of mail? I go this way and this way and this way, okay? My actual rhythm - and your actual rhythm - is you pick them up like this. You may pick them up like this, and you look. The envelope has ten seconds. You, as a company, as an executive, as a copywriter, have ten seconds. The hand comes up, the hand looks, the hand throws away.

Or, the hand stops. Something gets him. You have ten seconds for your headline to stop that hand from throwing your piece away. So what is a headline? That's very important. And a headline is a very simple device that has a very easy job to do. Except that people make it extremely hard.

The purpose of this headline: "Burn Disease Out of Your Body" - which is the first thing they see in those ten seconds - is to get them to read the next paragraph. That's all it is. Nothing else. It sells nothing. It

confirms nothing. It argues nothing. It establishes nothing about the firm. If it stands by itself it would do nothing in the world, but all it's gotta do is, it's got to get them to read the next paragraph.

Second, how long should a headline be? That's a classic question in copywriting. And, of course, the answer is, "No determined length." The headline depends strictly on how long it gets you to stop the person and get them going.

And the third question is, how many headlines can there be in a mailing piece? And that, of course, is as many as you get on the page and make work.

In the old days, people used to think that there should be one great headline. One super, marvelous headline that was only words - five words, six words, seven words - that would stop, and everything came out of that. The classic example is, "Why Men Crack." It's a great headline - ruled for years. Three words, and that was it! It is represented by this one. "A 71-Year-Old Man Has Sexual Congress Five Times a Day." Then you begin to realize you got all this paper. You're paying a fortune for all this paper, so why don't you use it in any way you can.

All you want the person to do is pick up the envelope, see what he's got, read it, say, "Umm, that looks interesting - turn it over on the back - there's something on the back - read the back - says, Umm, that looks interesting," and he opens it. So all you're asking him to do is move through your copy. Nothing more. You're not trying to sell. The headline sells the first line. The first lines sells the second line. The second line sells the third line. And the third line sells the fourth line, etc.

There's a tremendous advantage there. There are things that you can say in the middle of an ad which will be believed because you prepared them for it. But, if you said it at the top of the ad, or in the envelope, it would be thrown away. The guy would say, "This is ridiculous, this is insulting my intelligence, I'm not going on. "If you can get him into the middle, if you can get certain facts to him, then he is prepared to believe. And if he is prepared to believe, he's prepared to buy.

There's a headline. Should it be tremendously big? Overwhelming? Not really. This is an envelope. Just take a look at it. What it says is, "If a Disease Is as Crippling as This, Then You Certainly Have To Treat It

With Drugs. Or Do You? Decide For Yourself From the Startling Facts Below." Well, that's the whole headline. It's pretty much that. If they start reading, "if a disease is as crippling as this," then they will probably finish this. And if they do that they will go on to that. If they do that, they will go on to that, they will go on to that. There must be what, a hundred words here? I don't know. And then you turn around "Is Premature Aging the Most Universal Unconquerable of All the Common Diseases Listed Inside? Not at all. For startling, up-to-the-minute evidence that it is not, see inside!"

Okay, this is a dirty envelope - "ugly, as Richard calls it. This is an ugly layout. I've been driving Rodale crazy for over 15 years giving them this kind of envelope. This sold 50 million (five-zero) million dollars worth of books. That's a lot of books to sell on a single folded piece of paper. Why? Because it reaches out and touches somebody, and they're willing to see and pay for these little miracles.

I wrote this to see how much copy I could get for an envelope on a single piece of typewritten paper single spaced. Then I threw it down to the design department. And what they did is they took the top of it which said, "tricks of the trade so powerful they could change your life." And then we gave 20 of those tricks of the trade right there on the envelope. Right there in the headline. "A form of ordinary water that, by itself, can relieve cold symptoms. Page 273." "Simple, do-it-yourself ways to not only burglar-proof your door, but also have invincible windows. Page 159."

This ran as a control for 15 years. When it finally faded out, they went into this, which is prettier. Because it's on coated stock, in color. And this says, "Old-timer tricks do the impossible around your home." So you've gotta learn that a headline doesn't sell. It has nothing to do with selling.

### **Who Are You Writing To?**

You are not writing to a private person. You are not writing to a bunch of people. You are writing to a number of people who share a private want. Remember that. If they don't share the want, they are of no use to you. If there aren't enough people that share the want deeply enough to spend the fifty bucks for a newsletter or \$30 for a book, they are of no use to you.

You are writing to a number of people who share a private want, and you are addressing them as if they were the only person in the world. What is the most powerful word in advertising? Not "free!" "It's "you!" And yet so many times you see "these symptoms appear." How about "your symptoms appear?" What you are talking about is you. The person who has got this piece of paper in their hand and is on the other side of your copy. You, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you. If it doesn't have the word "you" a hundred times, I really don't like it very much.

Now, when you are writing to a public that shares a private want, they may share subsections of the want. And therefore, what the hooks - the promises - are doing is pulling out a subsection and putting it in. I'm trying to pick up five percent in this hook, 10% in another hook, etc. And you've got to have an overall way of getting everybody to read through.

Notice that the headline says, "If A Disease as Crippling as This." Well, that includes arthritis victims, bursitis victims, emphysema victims.

### **Headline Elements: Promise = Intrigue, Mechanism = Emotion**

Let's talk about finding the headlines. We're getting very technical now. Very specific. You have your 40 pages of notes. And you are going through your 40 pages of notes. And you begin to see a picture emerging. There was a book that Rodale had a lot of trouble with. And they kid of figured that maybe they shouldn't have published it. It was a book on arthritis. And Rodale is extremely good - the best in the country, I think, at doctor remedies, hidden doctor remedies. And this book went way off from that because it wasn't written by doctors. And, of course anybody that buys Rodale books, buy doctor remedies.

This was a book about people who cured their arthritis by themselves that the doctors didn't really agree with. 766 different people who had different cures which they found by themselves. How are you going to reach them? So the headline is, "Sneaky Little Arthritis Tricks. Natural Foods and Do-It-Yourself Secrets That Pain-Proofed Over 100 Men and Women Like You."

I figured that these people were sneaking around doctors. And they felt guilty about doing it. Nobody said this, incidentally. It isn't in the book. And the people who went to the doctors or the market for this were still in pain. Arthritis is a very intractable disease, and we haven't

cured to it yet, even though I hope we will in the next five years. So I thought the only way we could do this was "sneaky little" - both words you don't usually use in advertisements like this.

Now, in this particular case, when we said "Sneaky Little Arthritis Tricks," this grabbed attention. Then what's the next step? - What are they? "Natural Food and Do-it-Yourself Secrets That Pain-Proofed over 100 Men and Women Like You."

Notice how it's step-by-step. You grab their attention; you send them into the mechanism. That is the foods and secrets. You send them into the first reward: pain-proof. Then we have these pictures and all these testimonials one, two, three, four, five, six, seven; there were seven quotes from seven of these 776 people. One says, "I enjoyed a total remission of my arthritis." Another says, "I have not had sciatica since 1971." Another said "All symptoms disappeared and have not returned." Okay. What you've got is intrigue in the first part, a mechanism for giving you something you can't get in the second part, and proof in the third part.

You've also got enormous gut emotion in the envelope because of those exceptional pictures that they put. Look at that beautiful woman at the bottom. You can't help relating to her. Look at the man with the little child kissing him at the top. This is what you want. You have this woman. Look at her stride. Very strong. This is what you want. So you have great promise, intrigue. You have a mechanism - a new mechanism that delivers that promise. You have proof that that promise has been delivered to people like you. And you have deep emotion. That's what you need. All of them combined, get the prospect to read.

## **How to Uncover Great Headlines**

Let's about how we build an ad. I'm going to read you this; this is very successful, the second-longest running direct mail piece.

We start with "How Modern Chinese Health and Medicine Helps Both Men and Women." That is the small type above the headline.

What does that do? In the first place, it establishes the point of difference. They're going to be running to about 150 lists; 150 lists all have their own product. How do you establish a point of difference between this product and their product? Especially when it's a book as

old as this one? By talking about Chinese medicine which is ancient, but at the same time it's modern. Most people haven't heard about it, but they're intrigued. We all know how powerful the East is. And both "men and women" is an inclusion headline which looks like an exclusion headline. "Both men and women" means if you're a man you can read this; if you're a woman you can read this. It's very crude, but it works.

Then you go to "Burn Diseases out of Your Body Lying Flat on Your Back Using Nothing More Than the Palm of Your Hand." Why is this effective? Because, of course, you'd like to get rid of disease, but how can you burn disease out of the body? And then the contradiction immediately comes up, "Lying Flat on Your Back Using Nothing More Than the Palm of Your Hand." Again, you're not taking drugs, you're not seeing your doctor, you're not undergoing surgery, etc. This sounds extremely easy. So what you've got is inclusion; a very powerful claim and a very easy mechanism.

Now notice what you have given the reader. You have given a great deal of information in three sentences. And the person is now ready to go on. "This may be the most startling news you've ever read. And we are going to let you prove its merits yourself without risking a single penny. It is that different. They're powerful, they're provocative and controversial."

We are going to let you prove its merits yourself without risking a single penny. Thus the guarantee comes to the front of the piece. Once you have said "without risking a single penny", it means you, the publisher, are taking a chance on them, the reader, liking your product. Then you can say it is that different, it is that powerful, that provocative and controversial. If you had said at the front without any preparation, "it is that different, that powerful, that provocative and controversial", it would not be believed as readily as if you say, "I'll put my money on it that this will give you these benefits."

### **Prepare the Ground for Each Claim**

What you've done is you've taken a claim and made it powerful by preparing for it. You must prepare. Again, you have the time to prepare because you certainly don't have to sell now. You've got a whole mailing piece to sell. The more time you have, the more you can sell. "Let us explain. The Chinese do not believe in surgery or medicine for major illness. They prevent such illnesses instead with a series of

mild, almost effortless internal exercises." What you have been relying on is no longer necessary. Surgery and medicine are expensive, dangerous, and painful. Also embarrassing. But the Chinese don't believe in it. They prevent. Instead of treat, prevent. With a series of mild, almost effortless internal exercises. It sounds like fun!

"If you do not have an open mind, please stop reading here, for this letter's about to introduce you to a new, although it is 4,000 years old, a different type of self-healing. Born in China, over 40 centuries ago, it's called Taoist medicine. And we will let the foremost practitioner of it in the Western world, Dr. Stephen Chiang, gave you a brief and startling introduction to these effortless exercises."

"Brief." "Startling." "Effortless." Look at adjectives. Adjectives are where you carry your emotion. Adjectives are gut words. Adjectives are description words. Adjectives are feeling words. Look at your adjectives. Do an adjective check when you've done your copy. Very important words.

You can say something with adjectives and without adjectives and have absolutely two different things. And then Dr. Chiang comes in, and the rest of the entire mailing piece is quotes from the book. Except for one or two sections which I am going to get to next.

Now, he makes extremely powerful claims. All of which are exceptionally pleasant. "Clicking the teeth, as shown to you on page 132, will help tighten the joints in the body and keep the teeth healthy." Now how can your teeth help tighten your joints? This is the precursor of Rodale's "Doctors' Home Remedies", in which we gave these silly little things like putting a tea bag up to your eye to improve eyesight. Twist, twist, twist? The more twist, the more powerful.

"The muscles in the abdomen and body will tighten and become toned and strengthened. Excess water and flesh will be eliminated and the belly is shrinking. And you are doing all this with the palm of your hand."

### **Biography Builds Belief**

Once you have claims this powerful, people are going to say, "Isn't that nice? I don't believe a word of it." You can't make powerful claims unless you can prove them. You have to prepare for them, and you have to prove them. You've got to stop them and make them believe.

So what we had which we didn't have in almost any other ad at that time, 14 years ago, was a little section up here in the biography. Got a great, Chinese face. He's 67 years old; he looks about 40. Great Chinese face.

Well, what do we say about him. I'm going to take a few minutes to read that, because it's very important. "Stephen Chiang, Ph.D., M.D. comes from a family which has practiced medicine for more than 400 years. Dr. Chiang's great-grandfather was personal physician to the Empress Chai Chi and the first ambassador to the United Kingdom. Dr. Chiang has a Ph.D. in philosophy, holds two law degrees and received his medical degree from China, from the Yung Chee University Medical School, where he was trained in both Western and Chinese medicine.

Okay, so we've got his background. Now what has he been doing recently?" Currently he is on the faculty, consulting and conducting classes in Chinese medicine in such universities as University of California, University of Oslo; the United States Health Service Hospital, San Francisco; the University of Oregon; college of San Mateo; Golden West College; center for Chinese Medicine and Continuing Education.

"In addition, Dr. Chiang has given many workshops where I promise you every word of that is read. It's in eight-point print type. It's read, because people want to believe...

### **You've Got to Demonstrate the Product**

Okay, now that you have proof, you've got to demonstrate. Demonstration and proof are extremely powerful. You do this by saying, "Let us give you the simple internal exercise that energizes the heart. This exercise shows you immediately how incredibly simple, how incredibly easy, how incredibly comfortable these internal exercises are. When you receive Dr. Chiang's book to prove or disprove it at our risk turn immediately, without preliminary reading, to page 140."

Important, because you're going to give something they should do with the book. You don't want them to send it back. And also, it sounds very good. It's convincing them. They are now using the book with you in the letter. There you will be shown the exact way to hold your body while energizing your heart. No movement. We'll repeat. No movement is required. All you do instead is this: sit or stand in a

comfortable position with your hands simply extended in front of your chest at the level of your shoulders. Make sure that the fingertips of each hand almost touch. But keep about a quarter of an inch between them. Keep your eyes focused on the top of your fingers. That is all there is to the entire exercise. Nothing else. No further effort. Not even the simplest movement of the body is required. Nothing more. Nothing more to do. Not a single strain in any part of your body. Your heartbeat doesn't rise a single beat. And yet, what happens is this: "The exercise creates a flow of energy."

You have just demonstrated the book. You have taken one exercise, one paragraph out of a 270-page book, and you have said to the person, "Get on the floor and try this. Feel what happens. If you don't like what happens, don't send for the book. If you do like what happens, you have already demonstrated the first part of the book and you can now order and can get everything else."

### **Every Sentence Is a Branch of a Tree**

The ad is built as a mosaic. Every sentence in the ad is built as a mosaic. First you give a proof. You give a claim. You give a mechanism, which is how the claim is achieved. You give a proof. You give documentation. You give demonstration. Every sentence is a branch on a tree. And the words in the sentence as the leaves on the branch. First the branch comes; that's bare outline of the sentence. And then you see out of the branch, the leaves popping up. The leaves give the branch color. They give the branch beauty. They give the branch strength and power because they collect the energy coming from inside. That's what you do.

### **You Channel Demand**

I find as a personal phenomenon advertising to be an extremely easy discipline. It can be very hard if you work at it too hard. It can be very easy if you flow along with it. What are you doing when you market something? You are not creating demand for a product. If you think that you are creating demand for your product, you've doomed yourself to a lifetime of hard work and failure. You can't create demand for anything because demand is too large for you to create. The demand has to be out there. The demand has to exist before you even walk into the picture. Think of yourself as an atomic scientist. You find a tiny thing called the atom, which has got enormous, enormous, enormous stored-up, locked-in power, and you find that if

you take two atoms and bind them together, you can release the power. That's what you're doing.

You've got a market out there that wants security in retirement. You've got a market out there that wants alternative healing outside of the pain and embarrassment inflicted upon them by the medical profession. But they want the authority of a doctor. What you are doing is you are taking that demand from every one of those persons, individual people, private people who comprise that market. And you are simply turning it or focusing it or channeling it onto your product. That's all! It's so much easier. If the demand isn't there, no matter how great a copywriter you are, you are going to fail.

You cannot create demand. You can only channel demand. Demand is there. Demand is enormous. The bigger the demand, the better your ad is. You are getting in a boat and letting the stream carry you. Just don't think that you can paddle up against the stream.

### **The Associative Process**

Lorna Newman: I have a question. This comes back to the vocabulary of the list of quotes. When you look at the product, do you only pull the product to make the list or do you add from elsewhere as you go along?

Schwartz: Copywriting, of course, is an associative process. The list becomes an associative stimulus list. And as you go down through the list, you'll get ideas! Okay, you hit the end of bar twice, that gives you a space, and you write it in. Now, you may want to disassociate your own ideas from the quotes, so you can put your ideas in bold, underline, italics, anything else. The more disassociative ideas you get, the more chance you have of getting a stronger ad. But, you will find that authors are not writing copy; they are writing text. Their vocabulary is different, and their entire conception of what it means to write is different.

So you come up with a paragraph about half a page long. A real big paragraph. And you'll see this great idea in there. So make it bold and write a headline. That's a wonderful way to do it. Write a ten-word headline. That makes you condense the thought, and makes you search for advertising terminology to parallel the thought.

When you get through doing that, don't read what you've just written. It's not worth reading. Just keep going. Now, what you want to do, is get yourself into a creative frenzy. Like a feeding frenzy. You want to get the ideas flowing so thoroughly, that pretty soon you're not condensing what he or she has written, but pretty soon you are coming up with entirely new concepts that will apply.

Here's an example:

You remember Gecko? In Wall Street? Let's say that he's kind of burnt in your memory and you're selling an investment letter, and you remember something he said at the trial, on the stock market. And all of a sudden, that idea is floating there, that image, Gecko, and here is the investment letter you're working on. And as you're doing this pulling and condensing headlines out of the text you're given, all of a sudden, you get something from that, and Gecko suddenly joins. It fuses. Like an atomic reaction in your mind. And you have a powerful line to sell your product.

Then, when you're through with everything, go away for a day, and come back. Then, you judge. Always remember, incidentally, that you cannot judge. I've been doing copy now for 35 years. I've sold millions and millions and millions of things. What does my experience allow me to say about the power of an ad? What does your experience allow you to say about the power of an ad before it's run? Absolutely nothing!

You must remember that. You don't know anything about how an ad is going to pull. The only way you can tell is to get a test cell.

I don't believe in focus groups or anything else. I think they're wonderful, but they don't give you an indication. Sometimes the things that they think you should throw away are the things that really go. Only the test can decide. All the previous experience in the world tells you nothing - because you are introducing something absolutely new.

And that leads to the next thing, which is, "Go for the touchdown pass." In football, if you are behind by six points and you have 30 seconds and you're on your own 20 (and that means you have to go 80 yards), and they've got everybody except the coach facing you on the line, what you do is you fall back. The quarterback falls back, he sends out the ends and everybody else as fast as they can, and he throws a 60-yard pass. If you catch it, you win; if it drops, you lose. When you're in that situation, go for the touchdown pass. The only

way to be a good copywriter is to get great results. To think of yourself as going for the breakthrough. And nobody can tell its power until the orders come in.

Always think statistically. You do not work with words. Think in terms of percentage points. That's what you should do.

### **Freshness Difference**

Lorna Newman: Our controls run dry. A good control for us runs a year and a half to two years. We've never had a 17-year-old control. Why is that?

Schwartz: There are two things. Number one, your new format in selling in direct mail, the magalogs, is a very powerful format. Ergo, you are getting enormous numbers of people using the same format. The more people that use your format, the more dangerous for you, because after a while, the person who gets your piece is having trouble distinguishing it from others'. And, of course, the mathematics are now known, and so even small companies realize that they can do it. That presents a constant challenge. Number two, I specialize in "ugly." I'm the lousiest layout man in the world. I do ugly layouts. Why do I do ugly layouts? Because beauty looks much the same. It has a very narrow definition. Ugliness is randomness, which means that it's spread out. So there are a hundred different ways to be ugly and only two or three ways to be beautiful. So, the ugly thing in a world of beauty stands out.

Estee Lauder discovered that. Twenty years ago, when Revlon was just knocking them dead with this four-color printing and then everybody else came in, Helena Rubenstein, etc., Estee herself said, "Well, if we run four-color, we're gonna look like everybody else. Nobody's going to be able to tell us. How about sepia?" And she got a series of sepia ads that were stunningly beautiful but completely different. And when you open the magazines there, wham! There is Lauder.

So yes, the life of controls is probably shorter, and you are just going to have to innovate faster.

### **Think About Your "Does" Product**

Question: Supposing we have a strong control that we think we have exhausted the market for. The message itself is strong. How much will a format change help?

Schwartz: You can get 20%-30% extra pull. That may not do it.

Let's think about it in a different way.

Take your product. Let's say it's got some pictures in it, and graphs. Maybe just plain type. It's eight pages. That's your physical part. That's all there is. Nobody in the world is going to buy that, though. Nobody in the world cares about that.

Now let's push that physical product aside and let's get into the functional product. Functional product is what the physical product does for you. You've got a product there that does a certain number of things for you. Never think of what the product "is." A horse is an animal with four legs. It doesn't do anything for you. Think of what the product "does." When you define something with a "does," it becomes a functional definition instead of an academic definition; a dog that runs up and licks your face when you come home every night.

Your functional product - your "does" product - has immense number of "doeses." You have been tapping one specific strain of those "doeses." And that's been successful for you. But, you have pretty well exhausted that strain of "doeses." You have to go into the other "doeses." And that gives you an entire new mailing piece which may reach the same audience but from a different direction.

In my book, Breakthrough Copy, I give 27 different ways that you can "do" a product. Let's take one of them right now. If you are talking about money-making, why not bring in an audience? What does the product affect besides you? Who's going to look at you when you do this? We ran an ad for flowers 20 years ago that sold so many flowers we exhausted nurseries. And what it said, was, who ever head of 17,000 bloom from a single plant? We said, "When you put this into the Earth, and you jump back (quickly), it explodes in flowers. And everybody in your neighborhood comes and they look. And people take home blooms because you've got so many you could never find a house big enough to put them in. And you've become the gardening expert for the entire neighborhood.

Multi-blossom plants had been selling fairly well before, but we brought the audience into copy as actors within it. So get another "does." There are all kinds of doeses. Just redo your product.

### **Is "Instant" Credible?**

Stanton-Jones: Your company is called Instant Improvement. And all of the ads that I've read of yours promise improvement that is almost instantaneous. Also, in your Retirement Letter package that you are developing for us now you say, "Invest 45 minutes a month." But in our area, to demonstrate a result often takes months or even years. Your copy says, "No, no. It is instantaneous." Do you think that this is credible?

Schwartz: I have a different view of your product this moment from this discussion, I think, than you did. I think what you hired me for was to give you a different view and infuriate you. Let's go back to my little Change piece. The Chang piece sells a book. Now you can't prove the book until you get the book. Ergo, there is no instant benefit.

Well, that's not true! I took an exercise from the book and I said this is the way you (the reader) proved the book. Practice it a second.

Remember, your selling piece is always part of your product; disconnected from the product and sent out advance of the product. It is the functional product that it includes, not the physical. In each issues of Retirement Letter you've been giving instant gratification. You've been telling people that these are the three top bank stocks; there are the three top insurance stocks; this is the way to buy annuities; something XYZ annuity fund. That is instant gratification.

You have two powers in your present format. Number one, you have something that I call camouflage which means the first time a person picks up your magalog they think this is a magazine. That power being diluted at this time. The second is you this incredible power of demonstration. Demonstration is form of proof which takes place at the present moment. The person picks it up. He looks at it. I'm talking about your pieces now and he says, "Yes! I can prove this! You are giving instant gratification just as you have been giving instant gratification for years.

You have this incredible, strong, proven, product. It has all kinds of unique advantages nobody else has. It's been around for 20 years. It's

never had a losing year. You've got 200,000 people who subscribe to it more than anyone else in the world. The man has an extremely powerful credential list. All that is there. But then, it's dealing with an incredibly sensitive subject: retirement. And the fear of being a failure at retirement. That's the worst fear any older person has. And what I tried to do and I'm not sure I could do it or I'm not sure you have accepted it, or I'm not sure it will pay off, is I try to make your benefits absolutely instantly accessible in ways that you have not made them before, by inventing a series of forms for you that the person simply sends in. And then I can give an extremely threatening headline and put an extremely great promise as its cure at the same time.

Almost anything that we do as publishers can be made instantaneous. And people believe them. They are extremely powerful because nothing feels better than being proved right. And if you give them something that they can prove, they will really love it. That's what I'm trying to do. I think everything is instantaneous.

Bob King: When you think about it, there is only instant gratification in the present tense. No one goes to, say, medical school and says, "Gee, what I'm gonna work hard for ten years in school so I can be a doctor. "Instead, you think about "Why do I do that today? Why am I doing that? "I do it because it feels right to me today to do that. If it didn't feel right, there's no way you'd work in the dark for ten years. So I think that you're constantly doing things that give you instant gratification. And really all the gratification really is in the present tense.

Schwartz: Very true, and very profound.

### **Think In Decimal Points**

Copywriters should be completely conversant with statistics and returns. The worst thing you can do to your copywriters is to separate them from the returns of every list and every test and every cell. Copywriters who write copy for the sake of copy and words alone are doomed to failure. If you keep your copywriters away from their results and their comparative results on every single test, they're not going to do very much for you.

Boardroom sends me thick packages of results. And I will spend three or four or five hours going over the results in detail for them. I think of

myself as a person who creates 20% difference in returns. And I like decimal points. You've got to get those results. You can't know something from the outside. You have to know it inside.

### **1st Sale Must Build the 2nd Sale**

Stanton-Jones: There's a piece of the puzzle that doesn't quite fit for me at the moment. And all the things that we do are trying to build toward the second sale. Does that violate this idea of instantaneous, miraculous change and improvement.

Schwartz: All mail order is dependent upon the second sale. Nobody really makes money on the first sale. You can, but it's an awfully strange way to run a company. If you get too much profit on your initial mailing, you immediately expand it to lists which are not doing quite as well, so that you can get more names and sales. When we sell books, we would very much love to have the people absolutely delighted with the book, because with the book comes a brochure advertising the next book! So our second sale is there. And we mail them every month. So our carrier is much like your carrier. Your newsletter is a carrier for further advertisements. That is so for us, too.

### **Why Infomercials Work**

Think of television. In 1949, our agency bought time in that new medium called television, on ABC, on a half-hour program. We didn't know how to fill it so we wrote a program a day. How do you write a program a day? The only way you can write a program a day is to take the product and translate it into the program. There was a program called "The Answer Man, which was a regular program. People sent in questions; he answered them. So we decided, let's take the product - a piano course - and let's ask questions about the product for the entire 30 minutes, and then sell the product in the one-minute middle. And so we said, "Can my kid play? Can a five-year-old kid play? Can a five-year-old kid without arms play, etc.?" And we turned out one program a day! All talking about piano courses. Well, we didn't know it, but we invented the infomercial! Okay. We sold so darn many piano courses. And why did it work? Because we were demonstrating the product on the air.

Television infomercials really sell, but they also demonstrate. Everybody should get a copy of the slicer commercial! The slicer is a

demonstration. That is the product. And what is coming across the mail in your package is not the physical product, but the functional product. Demonstrations are sending the products to the person.

### **Selling to Current Subscribers**

Newman: Our editors write special reports, and we sell them in inserts. It's not as spectacular copy. Mostly because we write it. Do you talk to subscribers differently from prospects, do you think?

Schwartz: I would test it. I would get the copywriter who wrote the promotion copy to write some of the subscriber follow-ups. Have them use the same copy. And see, whether it pulls more. If you have not tested it against another approach, perhaps you're losing an opportunity.

Unknown: Every 'don't' is an opportunity. Just remember that. Now, it's an opportunity which is slippery. You may fall flat on your face because if you test another newsletter to the newsletter that you're selling, you may cut your renewals done. So you've got a two-stage test. Number one, what does this pull now? Number two, does it hurt renewals later on?

### **Are You Failing Enough?**

Stanton-Jones: We recently had an experience where we used a well-known magazine copywriter with many soft-offer controls for magazines. He wrote us a package that did terribly. What's your advice? Do you think that that type of copywriter cannot work in our field? Do you think soft-offer copywriters can never work on hard-offer newsletters? Or is there a way to work with them differently?

Schwartz: I can give a few theories. Number one, maybe he just didn't have any rapport with your particular product at that time, and he missed. Number two, perhaps he's going for the jackpot. He tried harder; you took a bigger chance. It's very discouraging to work something that pulls within four or five percent of another offer. Then something's wrong. You're not taking enough of a chance. If you are running tests which are giving you small improvements, and if you are not running enough tests that are really flopping, then you are not doing your job.

Copywriters are crazy. And you want them crazy. They go for the big kill. And I would rather flop badly and succeed greatly than I would coming in with that little five percent boost. A very good copywriter is going to fail. If the guy doesn't fail, he's no good. He's got to fail. It hurts. But it's the only way to get the home runs the next time.