

3 Steps for Copywriters to Overcome Fear

By Joshua Boswell



In August of 2005, I sat in my little home office in Clancy, Montana — a tiny town nestled up in the Rocky Mountains, boasting almost 200 people.

I was staring at my computer screen with intense dread and horror. The bank balance on the screen confirmed that I was in deep, deep yogurt. No money. In fact, we were at sub-zero and falling fast.

My brilliant strategy for getting copywriting clients was to send out hundreds of direct-response letters, sit back, and wait for the project orders to come pouring in.

I had already sent out 100 letters, including pre-paid postage reply cards so all my new clients could just drop the project request in the mail. So far, I'd gotten back two cards and both of them said, "Meh ... maybe ... send us some more info."

Not the response I was hoping for.

Now, I was out of money. No money, no printing or paper. No money, no postage. No money, no snazzy direct-response campaign to bring in droves of clients with zero effort or fear factor on my part.

The time had come. If I was going to win, I had to do something else.

My Biggest Fear ... Realized :(

I knew what that "something else" was, but it filled me with dread and terror.

Cold calling.

I had Internet services ... and a VOIP phone line that included free long-distance calling ... and neither of those would be turned off for non-payment for about 60 days.

I had two months to make calls and bring in some clients.

It was that or give up on my writing dreams and go flip burgers at McDonald's and clean dental offices after hours.

Cold calling or cleaning dental offices. To be honest, it was a tough call.

I decided to make the calls.

And, for the next week, I paced around my phone like a lion stalking its prey ... but never actually dialed a single number.

I was in the grips of terror and panic. My Fear was in full force and nothing was happening.

After a week or so, I realized something had to happen. I was now down to 46 days before the death of my phone and Internet and electricity.

I had to do something ...

My Conversation with My Fear (Yes, I Talk to Myself! LOL)

So, I had a conversation with Fear (and note this conversation well ... it illustrates two of the three steps to overcoming your fears ...).

"Look, Fear ... I have 46 days to find a client or my phone gets turned off and my family freezes to death because the electricity gets turned off. I need a client now. Like right now. I told you that I was going to make cold calls, but I was just kidding. What we are really going to do is just make a list of people and their contact number. That's something we've done a million times. We'll just do it again, cool?"

Fear responds,

"Just a list of people and contact info? Sure, that sounds safe enough ... go for it."

I moved from stalking the phone to sitting at my desk and rounding up contact info.

A day later, I had a list of 300 qualified prospects thanks to a database I'd bought a few months before with money I borrowed from my father-in-law.

"Okay, Fear, here's the deal. I have this list. I'm not actually going to call these people, I'm just going to dial their number. We've dialed lots of numbers before."

Fear responds,

"Just dial the number? That's nothing. Go for it."

I dialed a handful of numbers and hung up.

Literally. I just dialed a few numbers on that first day and hung up.

The next day ...

"Fear, now listen up ... I have this list and we dialed a few numbers ... Today, I'm going to say 'Hello' to some people and tell them my name. We've done that a zillion times. Cool?"

Fear responds,

"Yeah, you're a talker. Saying hello and introducing yourself is safe. Go for it."

I've got momentum on my side, so I press the issue a little,

"Oh, and after I tell them my name, I'm going to tell them I'm a writer. You know, we've been doing that at Church and with friends. No big deal, right?"

Fear responds,

"Um ... You're not trying to slip in a cold call on me, are you? Cause it sounds like you might be fishing for business with that whole 'I'm a writer' thing."

So I say right back,

"What? Would I do that to us? No. Did I pitch Bob last week when he asked what I was doing? Nope. I just told him I was writing."

Fear,

"Well, okay. Go for it."

So, for that day, I made a bunch of calls. I left a number of messages (and reminded Fear that most people don't even answer their phones! You don't get much safer than voice mail, right? LOL) and talked to a few people.

Yet, something magical happened when I talked to one guy. It went like this ...

"Hi, my name is Joshua Boswell. I'm a freelance writer. Do you hire outside writers for any of your marketing efforts?"

"Why, yes we do! What kind of writing do you do?"

After dozens of people telling me no ... and after Fear being comfortable with nothing happening ... suddenly, all heck broke loose in my mind.

Fear came online with a roar,

"What is going on here?! You said nothing would happen and now this guy is telling you he hires writers. You're not ready for that. You can't write tech stuff. New ground. Not safe. EJECT!"

And what I did was ... hang up on the guy.

I literally hung up on the first person who told me they hire writers and wanted more info!

It took me about three seconds to process what just happened.

Then, I got mad.

"Listen up, Fear. I don't care what you say, I'm calling that guy back and I'm sending him some information. We need money and that guy could hire us. So sit down, shut up, and chill. We are going to be just fine."

And with that, I took charge, called the guy back, and ended up sending him my Info Packet.

The rest is history. Fear learned that cold calling was safe and I got focused on my dreams and stopped listening to Fear. Nine months later, I'd made over \$103,000.

Let's take a deeper look at what is happening here and give you simple system for replicating this process ...

Step 1: Crystal Clear Vision

Most people have a really hard time overcoming their fears because they don't know exactly where they are going.

When I ask coaching students of mine how much money they need to make to live the lifestyle of their dreams, they say things like, "Oh, around \$80,000 to \$120,000 a year."

That is a range ... not a target.

The mind works on exactness and clarity.

So you need to know exactly what you want. Not sorta. EXACTLY.

I suggest that you write down detailed answers to these three questions:

1. Why do I want to be a writer?
2. What pleasures and joys will I gain by living *the writer's life* ... and if I don't do it, what pain will I experience?
3. How much time and money, exactly, do I need to have coming in to live that life and enjoy those benefits?

If you have exact answers to these questions, you will have lots and lots of emotional ammo to combat Fear.

But, let's be honest ... lots of really motivated people have failed at some point in their lifetime.

So big dreams and motivation are not the only thing you need. This is where Step #2 comes into play ...

Step 2: High Definition, Safe-Step Plan

I took a long time (and went over my word count just for you!) to give you a detailed insight into my conversations with Fear. I did that because I wanted to bring clarity to a very powerful process for you.

The process involves creating a high-definition plan that includes lots of little, tiny, really safe steps.

Whenever I feel great fear, I know I'm trying to do too much all at once. So, I take the task and break it down into smaller tasks. Eventually, I can always get to a tiny step that feels safe for me to take.

In this case, I had to go to the super simple steps of:

1. Finding name
2. Finding contact information
3. Dialing number
4. Saying hello
5. Introducing myself as a writer
6. Asking if they hired writers
7. Sending information

Notice that Steps 1-5 are ordinary and things I've done many times in my life. Steps 6 and 7 are not so ordinary, but packaged with other safe steps. This makes the whole process feel okay ... at least better ... to my system.

The pattern here is this:

Known (safe) ? Known (safe) ? Known ? Known ? Known ? Slightly Unknown ? New

As you face fears, realize that it is nothing more than your mind, emotions, and feelings saying, "Hey! We are on new ground here and that could be unsafe. Don't go there! Eject!"

The key is to stay calm and use tiny steps to reprogram the reaction.

After a while, I found myself looking forward to making calls. I got really good at them. They were effortless and rewarding.

Once they were labeled as "safe" in my system, instead of my Fear (subconscious) working hard to stop me, it started working hard to keep me going. The whole engine reversed itself and I took off like a rocket.

The same thing can happen for you.

Your fears can become your greatest allies.

Now, what about Step 3?

This is the granddaddy of them all.

You see lots of people are motivated.

Lots of people have great plans and know what to do.

But, the sad reality is that, well ... lots of people don't do what they know they should be doing.

Then what?

That is when you turn on Step 3! It changes everything ...

Step 3: A Winning Team

You can know exactly what you want and feel really motivated to get it ...

And, you can have an amazing high-definition plan that you just know will work ...

And still do nothing.

Listen to this very carefully.

You. Will. Never. Do. It. Alone.

How do I know this?

Because every great success story, in every category of sports, business, marriage, finance, etc ... has one common theme.

A team. It has never been done without support from a team. And every team has a coach.

And, you won't be the first one to break the mold of human history.

Think about Michael Phelps. Swimmer extraordinaire and the most decorated Olympic athlete in human history.

After his first five gold medals, was he really driven for more?

At 10 gold medals, he already held the record for the most golds in the history of the world ... So any sane person would have been happy, right?

But, for some reason, he pressed forward. He currently has 23 gold medals! More than twice the number of any other athlete in the world.

How'd he do it?

Bob Bowman, that's how. Bob Bowman is his coach and together they drove each other to amazing heights.

When I hit my second year at around \$130,000, I could have been super comfortable for the rest of my life, just maintaining that income. It is enough for a nice lifestyle, even with 11 children.

But, I knew I could do more.

And I tried. I wanted more. So I really tried.

But the next year barely saw any progress upward.

It was then I hired a coach — RC Peck.

That was October 2008, the same month the Great Recession began. Companies were dropping like flies. Marketing budgets dried up. No one was hiring.

Yet in that environment, I doubled my monthly income in just three months. Then again, before the end of the year.

What made the difference?

A team.

It's as simple as that.

Why is a team so powerful?

A team does two things for you ...

First, a good coach and fellow team players are not emotionally attached to your fears and baggage. They just want to help you win.

We all have pet habits and emotions that suck our time and kill our success. A good coach will recognize those things. He or she will help you to see things rationally and move past baggage and barriers.

In short, a team helps you do the things you know you should be doing.

Most of what RC Peck taught me and had me do ... I already knew. I must have said a zillion times ...

"Yeah, I know ... I know!"

And he would say, "Ummm ... I'm happy that you know all this, but you need to start doing it."

He was right and he helped me implement.

The second thing that makes a team so powerful is this ...

High-leverage secrets.

A coach and fellow teammates offer insights on how to do things faster, easier, and more profitably.

The reality is that there is a secret sauce to most things ... there *are* shortcuts ... there *are* systems and processes and strategies that pros have that average bears don't have.

And those kinds of leverage points make all the difference.

Inside the world of copywriting, the same principle applies. I have seen writers struggle for years with very little results ...

And I have seen people like Jake Hoffberg land huge clients in just a few months after starting. (He just won AWAI's Annual \$10K Challenge ... and in his first year, he made \$140,000!)

The difference is leverage. Knowing the secrets behind making things work.

Jake said this about his success ...

"In Joshua's program, I really felt like I was making progress. I got specifics like a rate sheet, contracts, and how to get hired. It gave me a lot of confidence. One year after I got my first paid copywriting project, I had made \$140,000."

Another student of mine, Dr. Eric Buensuceso, an optician in Phoenix, Arizona says this ...

"Working with Joshua has been instrumental in getting my copywriting business off the ground and running. I now have three clients and counting in just three months — with more on the way. Thank you Joshua, you continue to inspire and motivate me to make my copywriting something I can be proud of."

These kinds of results are possible because both Jake and Eric joined a team that helped them do the right stuff and implement high-leverage secrets.

Today, there is an opportunity for you to join that same team.

I want you to enjoy the same success as Jake, Eric, and hundreds of others have experienced being on my team.

Curious how it all works? [Check out the details here ...](#)

I've also recorded another video for you ... You can learn more about Step 3. Check it out!

[Watch Streaming Video](#)

If you have any comments on breaking through or finding your winning team, post them in the comments below so we can help.

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1 Response to "3 Steps for Copywriters to Overcome Fear"

I am so thankful for the info you shared about the fear of "Cold Calling"it is one of my own.

However, my biggest fear is "what people think of me". I let what my family and close friend's opinion, (or what I think they are thinking of me), stop me in my tracks. I actually do that with everything I'm doing. Can you help me overcome this fear.

Again, Thank You So Very Much; Cheryl

Guest (Cheryl A McDaniel) – over a year ago

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