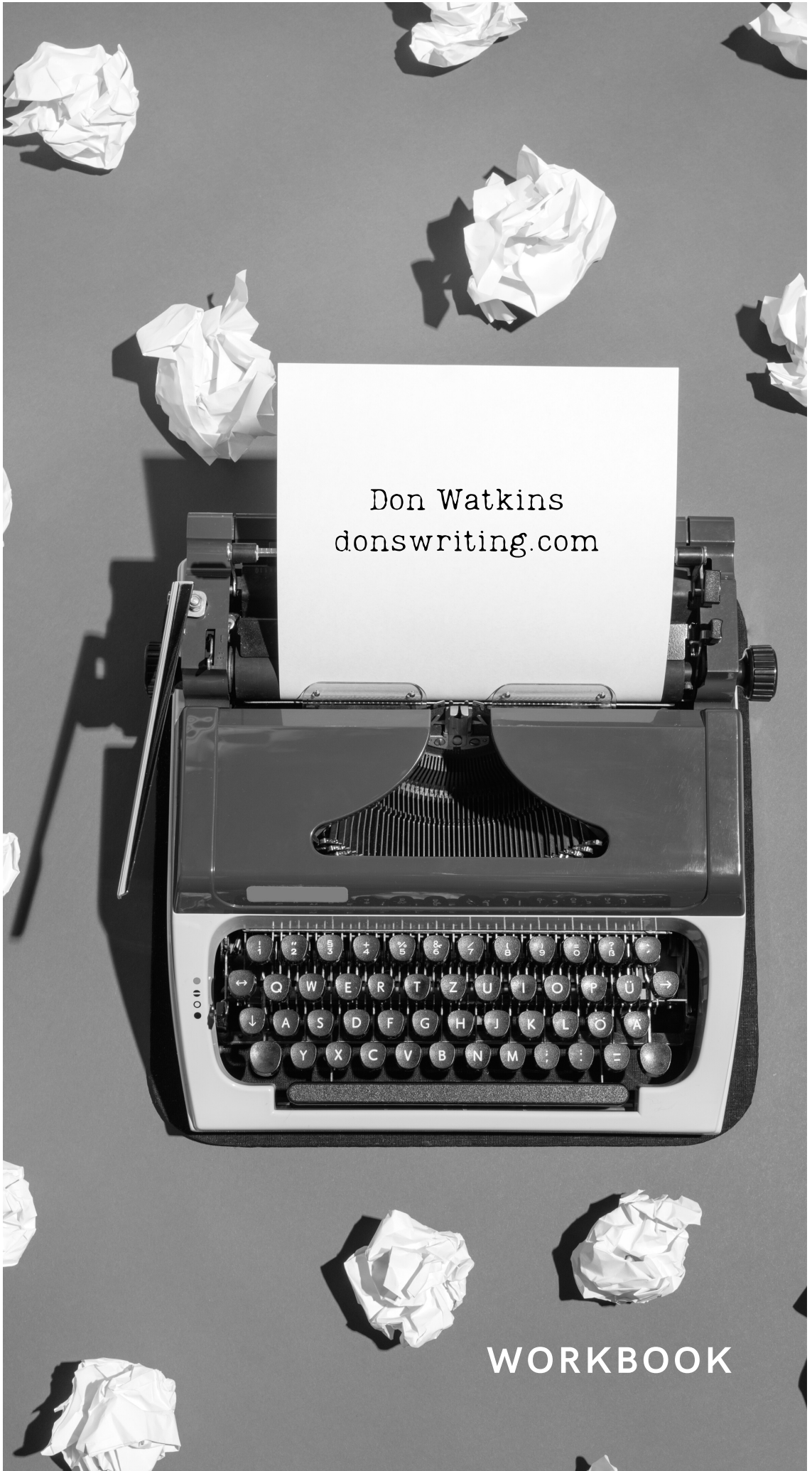# Persuasion Mastery

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Authentic Persuasion

WORKBOOK

Authentic Persuasion Pre-Writing Worksheet

To communicate effectively, you need to be clear on what you think and why it's true—and you need to be clear on what your audience thinks, why they think they're right, and why they think you're wrong.

Here you'll find some of the questions I find most helpful to work through when I'm starting a communications project.

You don't need to go through all of these for every project. That can be overwhelming and paralyzing. Instead, read through these before or during the "thinking" stage or "editing" stage and spend time answering the questions that seem most useful.

Internal Clarity

What do I believe and why?

1. What area in life am I interested in? Why?

2. What's my evaluation of this area of life?

3. Why is that my evaluation?

4. Where did I get this conclusion? Did I discover it, learn it from someone else?

5. What are my reasons for thinking it's true? Are those good reasons?

6. How certain am I of this conclusion?

7. How does my conclusion relate to other things I know? Do I sense any connections or contradictions?

8. What are some examples and analogies?

9. As I reflect on this conclusion, do I need to qualify it or make it more precise?

10. Who disagrees and why?

11. What are their best objections?

12. Do I find those objections convincing? If not, why not?

Audience questions

What does the audience believe and why?

1. Who is my audience?

2. What's their view of me?

3. What arguments have they been exposed to?

4. What do they know that I can count on?

5. What don't they know that I need to explain?

6. What do they think they know that's wrong?

7. What are their strongest values?

8. What values do they have that I can appeal to?

9. What values do they have that might seem at odds with my position?

10. What questions/issues do they expect me to address?

Framework questions

What are the hidden ideas that shape people's thinking on this issue?

1. What methods, assumptions, and goals does the opposition rely on?

2. What are my methods, assumptions, and goals?

3. If stated explicitly, would my audience agree with my methods, assumptions, and goals? If not, what would be required to convince them?

4. What are the key concepts involved in this issue? Do any of them come from the opposition's framework? If so, what can I replace them with?

5. What terminology do I need to introduce to frame the issue properly?

Authentic Persuasion Outlining Worksheet

1. What's my purpose?

2. Who's my audience?

3. What's my subject (the area of life I want to write about)?

4. What's my theme? (What do I want to say about the subject? What am I arguing for?)

5. What's my contrast(s)? (What does the audience believe or what have they heard that I'm arguing against?)

6. What's my argument in a paragraph? (3-8 sentences)

7. Put each sentence of that paragraph on a separate line. These are the high level points of your outline.

8. For each line: Does the audience already understand and agree with this point? If yes, move on to the next line. If no, see next step.

9. If the audience doesn't already understand or agree with this point, write a paragraph explaining and defending this point. Then, put each sentence on a separate line. These are the subpoints of your outline.

10. Repeat process until you have a full outline that makes a clear and convincing case.

11. OPTIONAL: If you can't easily write from the outline, turn each point into a question.

Authentic Persuasion Editing Worksheet

Writing is editing. Your goal is to take the raw material you produced in your draft and turn it into something true, clear, easy to read, and compellingly persuasive.

Everyone's editing process is different. But here are the kinds of questions you'll want to ask before sending your piece out into the world.

Big Picture Questions

1. Does the reader get a sense early on where I'm coming from and where I'm going?

2. Is the choice at issue clear?

3. Is my conclusion clear?

4. Can the reader follow my argument?

5. Is this the best order for the points?

6. Is the argument compelling?

7. What objections would an honest reader raise?

8. Am I missing necessary framing elements? Are there any methods, assumptions, or goals that will prevent the reader from processing my argument in the right way?

9. Have I ignored or conceded the opposing framework?

10. Do I engage the reader's emotions?

11. Do I have a strong motivation? Will the reader feel compelled to read this?

12. Is this easy to read or is anything there anything that will confuse or slow down the reader?

13. Does the piece hold up if I read it aloud?

Line-level Questions

1. Is this point clear? Have I defined the relevant terms? Do I need an example?

2. Is this point true? Have I really proved it?

3. Why am I making this point? Is it necessary to convey my theme? Can I cut or condense it?

4. Have I taken over the other side's language?

Authentic Persuasion Common Framing Elements Worksheet

Goals

Every anti-freedom view is based on the idea that we have an obligation to sacrifice our goals for something more valuable. Freedom protects our ability to flourish, not sacrifice.

The Anti-Freedom Framework	The Freedom Framework
Anti-humanism. Humanity has a moral obligation to sacrifice for God or for nature.	**Humanism.** Our goal should be to maximize human flourishing.
Collectivism. The individual has a moral obligation to sacrifice for some group (the nation, the race, the tribe, the proletariat, all of humanity).	**Individualism.** Flourishing is not something that humanity does as a whole, it's something each individual does. Our goal is for each individual to flourish.
Altruism. The individual has a moral obligation to sacrifice for other individuals (usually on the basis of the other person's greater need).	**Self-interest.** Flourishing requires each individual to pursue and achieve values, not to sacrifice them to those who haven't pursued and achieved values. Our goal is to liberate each individual to flourish without sacrificing himself to others or others to himself.
Equity. Individuals should be as equal as possible, regardless of desert. Those will more (money, prestige, position) should be sacrificed to prop up those with less.	**Desert.** Individuals should get what they deserve, as judged by the voluntary choices of those they deal with.

Assumptions

Every anti-freedom view denies the efficacy of the individual mind. Freedom assumes that we are rational beings able to understand the world and guide ourselves through the world.

The Anti-Freedom Framework	The Freedom Framework
Determinism: We're controlled by Nature/Nurture/Fate/God	Free will: We shape our own lives through our choices
Human beings are irrational and short-sighted	Human beings have the ability to think and act long range
Values come from nature/the group	Values come from individual thought and effort…even when individuals cooperate
Clashing interests	Harmonious interests
Resources are limited/Wealth is fixed	Wealth is created/Resources are potentially limitless

Methods

Anti-freedom views are championed by misrepresenting our policy options. Freedom requires looking carefully at the positives and negatives of all the policy options.

The Anti-Freedom Framework	The Freedom Framework
Conceal coercive elements of anti-freedom policies	Clearly distinguish between the voluntary and the coerced
Truly pro-freedom policies not on the table	All policy options on the table
Semi-freedom policies represented as pro-freedom	Look at all options: free, coercive, and mixed
Anti-freedom fantasies represented as policies	Compare positives and negatives of policy options

Book Design Questions

Purpose: What do you want the book to achieve in reality?

Audience

Audience: Who is your IDEAL reader? (Includes: age, intelligence, sophistication, current ideas and values)

Current state: In what respects is your ideal reader unsatisfied with his current situation (e.g., "I feel clear but my side is losing," "I'm always on the defensive," "I don't understand this issue")

Desired state: How does your reader *want* to feel after reading your book?

Motivation: Why will your ideal reader feel compelled to pick up and read this book?

Content

Choice: What's the choice at issue?

Heaven and Hell Stakes: What will be the negative consequences of making the wrong choice? What will be the positive consequences of making the right choice?

Conclusion: What do you want your reader to see clearly by the end of the book that he doesn't see now?

Contrast(s): What are the most important views you need to distinguish your view from?

Argument: Why will he find your ideas superior to the other options?

Framework

Current framework: What are the methods, assumptions, and goals that are currently preventing your reader from agreeing with your conclusion?

Ideal framework: What are the methods, assumptions, and goals your reader will need to accept in order to agree with your conclusion?

Bridging framework: If any of your ideal framework will not strike your reader as common sense when made explicit, what are more common sense methods, assumptions, and goals that will allow you to establish your ideal framework?

Style

Opinion story: What was the journey you took that led you to the conclusions in this book?

Posture: How should the reader perceive you? (E.g., an expert, a reporter, a peer)

Tone: How should the reader to experience your book? (e.g., fun, interesting, challenging, inspiring)

Market

Models: Which books, if any, are good models for what you want to achieve and in what respect(s)?

Anti-models: Are there books that have tackled similar issues that you don't want to emulate and in what respect(s)?

Title: What title would best capture the attention of your reader and compel him to read the jacket copy?

Methods: How will you bring your book to the attention of your ideal reader?

Hook: In 1-3 sentences, how will you explain what your book is about and why your ideal reader should buy it?

Messages: What are the most compelling 3-5 ideas in your book? (Ideally should be ideas that are surprising yet obvious once stated)