

Why I write philosophical e-booklets and what the reader can expect

Let's face it: my great book oeuvre will never exist. At least not before retirement. The need to put a roof over my head and food on the table by working in my own direct mail fundraising agency takes precedence over art and showing the world how smart (I think) I am. I just don't have it in me to sleep in my car like an aspiring actor for a goal that's probably pretty laudible in the first place.

No to mention that I actually love my job.

The order book, so to speak, is full and for the foreseeable future I'll only be coming up to gasp for air, catch enough sleep and look to my health and fitness on the weekend. Don't get me wrong, as a Stoic I am content because I contemplate the much worse alternative: having no work and starving (actually: having to give up my business and go work in a cubicle as an employee — which is almost as bad). But as content as I may be able to meditate myself into being, the fact of the matter is: I won't get any book-length writing done. Ever.

But let's even be more honest: writing direct mail copy ain't cutting it anymore as a writer. Because these days it's simply secondary to planning and organizing campaigns. That's the way of the industry. And not enough for two reasons:

A. Writing as therapy

Yes, you heard right. If you are a reader-writer type, linguistically wired kind of person, writing is a great way to defeat your inner demons. I was recently able to put an ugly (and by ugly I mean waking up some Tuesday night 15 years later with tears of regret in my eyes) can of worms from almost a quarter century ago to rest simply by composing a cathartic text that finally sums up everything I feel and think about it. Pro tip: don't hit the SEND button. Believe me, just don't.

(One caveat: I am in no way qualified to give mental health or any related advice. I only say it works for me. Critics of the self-help industry claim that self helps is either useless or makes things worse for people in a seriously bad place. It works for people who are middling OK-ish and want to heal completely, but not for those struggling for sheer survival. A fork doesn't really feed a castaway. But it's great for someone who already has food and a plate.)

I don't want to deprive myself of this great opportunity to feel and be better and here I am writing less than book length long-form blog post style e-booklets that are actually manageable.

B. Writing is a perishable skill

Like an athlete you can't expect your edge to really cut if you are not constantly training. I almost physically feel the sharpness slip from me when I don't write for some time. Second only to writing about something I am not qualified to write about, writer's block and empty page anxiety hits me most when I haven't been flexing my writing muscle. I tried to mediate this by writing short copy like amazon reviews and facebook posts. But there simply is too little meat in that to nourish.

The motivation out of the way and speaking of long-form, here is what I intend:

The intended topics are Stoicism & other practical schools of philosophy, relationships, careers and miscellaneous topics I am competent to write about.

But I have to make a confession: I don't really like long-form. I may sound like a tl;dr ("too long; didn't read") simpleton, but it often simply, actually is too long. I hate to read about how the weather on

the way to an interview was or if there were horsies on the meadow and flowers in the window. Screw this. Dear colleagues, I want the facts concisely and your educated conclusions. Feel free to be artsy-fartsy inside the confines of that, but spare me the 19th century ladies' romance novel level of description of detail and the meandering unnecessary background. That's just content.

A writer's mark is being able to express concepts and ideas concisely and to the point. This is the standard I want to hold myself to. I want morsels of quality that are easily digestible on the commute.

I e.g. plan a philosophical piece on beauty. And everything I have to say about it fits into a few paragraphs. And that's a good thing. No need to wax about a former lover's wonderful petite and lithe body. Or the aspect of the wooden clogs wearing bikers who waited in the barn across the road to... umm... get to know her better too. The 80-ies really were something in the Austrian panhandle. But that's a story for another day and tl;dr right now...

Please, also ignore my e-book on direct mail fundraising in German titled "Klasse statt Masse".

[edited by Klemens Dombrowski]

Free introduction to my upcoming series of short, easily digestible e-booklets on Stoicism & other practical schools of philosophy, relationships, careers and miscellaneous topics I mistakenly think I am qualified to write about.