

Robert Middleton Interviews Kevin Franz

Robert: Hello, everyone. This is Robert Middleton of Action Plan Marketing and the Action Plan Marketing Club.

Today I'm interviewing Kevin Franz of www.FictionSecrets.com. I met Kevin at the System Internet Seminar. We were just networking and talking to a lot of people. I found out that Kevin is a fiction writer. He's written a number of books.

He was at the seminar because he offers programs and services for business people on how to use storytelling and writing techniques that experienced writers use in business writing. I immediately jumped on that and said, "That would be a great interview. I'd love to talk with you," so here I am!

Welcome to the call, Kevin.

Kevin: Thank you, Robert. I'm looking forward to talking to you.

Robert: Let's talk about fiction writing in business. What can a fiction writer teach someone about business?

Kevin: The short answer is "a lot."

Robert: I hope so.

Kevin: I think the reason is when I first started learning the craft of fiction about 10 years ago, I had already been a writer for about 15 years before that. I've been writing for about 25 years.

When I started writing fiction about 10 years ago, what I discovered is that it's a completely different set of tools to write a compelling story as opposed to writing a technical book or manual.

Essentially, fiction writers know things that other writers don't know. We read different books and go to different seminars. We have different teachers and gurus, if you will.

When you put all of this stuff together, we end up with a different toolkit to choose from when you're writing a compelling story or a compelling piece of fiction that most business people, business owners and entrepreneurs, they just don't have that information. They just haven't been exposed to it.

I spent 10 years going to all the seminars and going to all the writing groups and all that, and I've learned a set of tools that I'd like to share.

Robert: You know, something that I realized, I was looking at your website earlier where you say what can you learn from people like what's his name, the horror writer?

Kevin: Stephen King.

Robert: Stephen King or people like that, they write books that are page turners. We always love a book that's a page-turner because it's not boring. It keeps us interested and keeps us going. How many business books are page-turners?

Kevin: Not very many.

Robert: Some bestsellers are. They really are interesting. The language is good. They do put in stories. They have a quality to them that's not just, "Here are the facts and here's what you do. Here are the 10 steps and blah-di-blah-da."

They can be very valuable, I'm not saying they're not, but I read a statistic (I don't know if it's absolutely true.) It said that 90% of people don't finish the average nonfiction book.

Kevin: I would say that's probably true.

Robert: That's because they just don't keep the reader reading. We want to learn how to get the reader reading and stay reading. This is really for nonfiction book writers, but you're writing for your website. You're writing articles. You're writing sales letters and all of this. If it's not interesting, people will stop reading.

Listen up for this one. I think you're going to learn a lot of really good things. Here's the next question. Why would someone want to add a story to their marketing? You have some ideas around that?

Kevin: Absolutely and I think you just hit on most of them. It's something to keep the reader interested, make them *feel* something. You can make them happy. You can make them sad. You can make them angry, but you better not bore them because once you bore them, you're done.

You have no second chance at getting them back. Your sales letter will end up in the trash and your marketing piece is not going to get read and they're going to click away from your website.

I heard a line a long time ago that there's a straight line between the heart and the wallet and if you tug at the heart enough, the wallet pops right out of the pocket and suddenly you have a customer instead of somebody who's just reading your material.

I think adding stories is one of the great ways to add interest and to make it compelling for the person to continue to read. It's the difference between a bullet list of features and a story that can bring a tear to your eye. One is going to get read and one is going to get glossed over.

Robert: I often find myself reading something online that's very good that does have a story or an example that really hits my situation or my reality and I want to know more. It draws me in. It keeps me going. I absolutely know what you're talking about.

How do you write a great business story, or perhaps even more appropriate, how do you integrate that into marketing writing?

Kevin: There are several different types of stories, and they can all be woven into marketing. We don't have time to go through all of them, but just a couple of them.

One story that you should always have available is your own personal bio. That is, "Why should somebody be listening to you?" You have to legitimize yourself. Why is your product going to work? What stories do you have? What can you bring to the table?

Writing a good biography is not just listing where you were born and where you went to school and all that. That's something called a resume!

There's a huge difference between listing your resume and telling a good personal story and a good personal bio that says, "This is the pain I felt. This is why I changed it around, and this is how I did it." A personal bio is one of the great stories to add to almost any marketing piece.

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Robert: It could be, “This is how I discovered this way of working,” or “I worked with a particular client and then I had a breakthrough and now I’m teaching that.” It can be anything like that, right?

Kevin: Of course, I can tell people that I once was broke, and that’s a statement. But if I tell you that I was \$47,000 in debt, cash advancing credit cards to pay the rent and hoping when I put my gas card in the little machine that it didn’t come back and say, “See attendant,” because I was overdrawn. That’s the difference.

One says, “Okay, I was broke once.” The other one is something that other people can relate to and say, “Wow, I know that pain.”

Robert: Yes, it’s the difference between a concept and reality. I love that thing. A lot of us beginning in business have been there with this broke situation and worrying about if the next check would clear.

Kevin: Sure.

Robert: Oh my god.

Kevin: I just got a chill thinking about those days, to be honest with you.

Robert: It’s interesting, Kevin, because often I’ll be working with clients or a group, and I suppose a story can also be used not just in writing but in your presentation, teaching and coaching and consulting as well to get people involved. In fact, I’m always telling stories when I’m coaching people, always. They can relate to it better than just the facts.

I tell people what a struggle it was for me getting started and what happened and what I did. Then people feel more comfortable working with me because they know I was just as bad, if not worse, than them.

It puts them in my place. They can say, “If Robert had that much of a problem, I can probably do okay on my marketing as well.”

Kevin: I think that’s absolutely true. I do the same thing, and I think most successful people have to put themselves on the line a little bit and say, “Here’s where I was. Here’s where I am now,” and let the reader or potential customer get to know you a little bit. The more personal you can make it, the more you’re going to like, trust and want to do business with you.

Robert: It’s interesting. Even though it’s business, all business is really very personal. You go to a website and there’s nothing worse than a bad bio, except for one other thing, no bio at all. You go to a website and it’s faceless.

Kevin: Right.

Robert: You want to put yourself in that and then tell the story. We’re digressing a little bit. Let’s get into this thing. You have five steps to writing a business story. That’s the kind of stuff that people are looking for. Where do you start with this to make sure it comes out well and communicates?

Kevin: **Step 1: Picture an image in your head.**

Well, let me just start by saying the act of writing is trying to take ideas and feelings that are going on inside your

head and the idea is that you're going to transport those ideas to make your reader feel the same thing you were feeling.

As a fiction writer, I'm sitting at my desk and I'm typing away. In my head, I'm seeing, feeling, thinking and hearing all sorts of things. My job is to put those down on paper the best I can, so that somebody else six days later or six years later, whatever it is, they read those same words and instantly they're seeing, thinking, feeling and hearing all the things that I was.

That's the magic of writing. That's what you're really trying to do is put them into that place. So the way that I like to write stories starts with a picture. It starts with an image, okay?

When I'm teaching creative writing to kids, that's an easy thing. Kids are very, very good at being creative and coming up with all sorts of good opening images. Business people I have to work a little harder with, so the best way to start if you've never done this before, is to just think about somebody that's using your product right now.

It can either be the before person or the after person, either way. Just get a strong image of who that person really is. Let's take an example. Let's say you're a lawyer and you've created some sort of information marketing product for divorced men. Okay? Now when you're thinking of that picture, you're thinking about this divorced man.

Let's say that the image pops into your head of a guy, mid 30s and he's in a business suit. He's sitting behind a desk

and his head is in his hands because he's just so frustrated at what's going on.

There would be your opening picture. It's nice and strong and good imagery is involved in that. You're picturing that in your head and you've got Step 1 done. You've got the picture in your head and you're ready to go on to Step 2.

Robert: That's almost too simple. It's really straightforward. That's interesting. Imagine your client in a situation and start with the problem situation, which is a great way to start because it brings up more of that feeling, "I've been there. I'm there now," right?

Kevin: Sure, absolutely. Now you've got some emotion behind it and again, that's the whole thing. It's images with emotion equals compelling and compelling makes people keep reading, so you've got a nice strong image, huh?

Robert: You can't stop reading, in fact, with a good story.

Kevin: Absolutely.

Robert: It's almost impossible to put it down.

Kevin: That's what we're hoping for.

Robert: Yes, okay. Good!

Kevin: So now you've got this image in your head and that's not the only image, but let's just take that as our example, okay?

Robert: Sure.

Kevin: **Step 2: Give it a twist.**

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Now you go to Step 2. Step 2 is what I call give it a twist. Here's what I mean. There's a reason why on Sunday afternoons you don't watch the same football game over and over and over again.

Robert: Except for really insane fanatics.

Kevin: Exactly! There's a few people out there. I live in Chicago and there's still a few people who break out their tape of the 1985 Super Bowl.

Robert: Right.

Kevin: But most people will only want to watch it once.

Robert: Sure.

Kevin: And the reason is once you know what's going to happen, it takes all the excitement out of it.

Robert: Right.

Kevin: That's a very key concept. If you write a story where everybody can see the ending coming up Fifth Avenue, no one is going to be intrigued enough to read to the end, so I like to take that opening image and then I go through a process called "giving it a twist."

Again, kids are great at this. Adults have to work a little bit harder, but let's picture our guy again. Remember, he's sitting in a business suit, sitting at a desk, head is in his hands.

What if we gave that a little bit of a twist? What if it's not a desk he's sitting at, but it's actually a card table with a kitchen chair by it and we realize that he's been thrown

out of his house and he's living in some little ramshackle apartment and now we really start to feel the pain, okay?

Robert: Right.

Kevin: So just those two steps, Step 1 get a picture in your mind and Step 2 is to give it a twist to make it a little bit more real and a little more visual and you're ready for Step 3.

Robert: Great.

Kevin: **Step 3: Ask questions.**

Step 3 is probably the most important step. That is to ask questions. You've got this picture in your mind. You've given it a twist and now you start asking questions.

Why is this guy sitting at a card table instead of at a big desk? Why is he wearing a suit? When did he get divorced? How many kids does he have? When did he get married? Why did he get divorced? Where did he used to live?

You start thinking about all these different things that would come into play if you were going to tell a story about this guy or make a movie about this guy. Sometimes I like to think in terms of movies also because that helps you think theatrically.

Robert: Sure.

Kevin: You start asking questions. What has this person done previously to try and solve his problem? How much money did he spend trying to get that done? What is he going to do next?

The more questions you ask, the more answers you're going to get. Before long, you start to get to know this person and you start to know their situation and you make some decisions and say, "Okay, maybe I don't know how many kids he has, but let's just say he has three," and you go with that. You can always change it later.

You make some decisions along the way until you have a clear picture of this guy's situation, where he's been, where he is and where he's going to go. Now what you've got is the seeds to a good story and you can move on to Step 4.

Robert: You're saying that you might take notes on this because this is before you even write a word, right?

Kevin: Exactly so.

Robert: You're creating this image and scenario and twist and ask all these questions, but now you're seeing it almost like a movie.

Kevin: That's exactly right, and if I can just take a quick aside here, these steps are exactly what I do when I write a book, when I write a story.

When I first wrote my first book and it started to sell a lot of copies, my phone started ringing and people started asking me to come and speak. It kind of blew me away. I didn't know what to speak about. I said, "Okay, you know what I'm going to do. I'm going to talk about how I write."

I really sat down and analyzed. How did I come up with that book? How did I come up with that story? That's where these five steps are. This isn't theoretical. This is

exactly what I do, so there's a lot of work that happens before you even write that first word and then we get to Step 4.

Step 4: Create an outline or short version of the story you're going to write.

Sometimes I lose people here because they don't like outlines. They think outlines are uncreative and rigid. They remind them of fifth grade and getting whacked with a ruler and all sorts of stuff, but really all I'm saying is create a short version of what you're going to say.

It doesn't have to be formal. It doesn't have to good looking or anything. Just create a little paragraph that says, "Our lawyer or our guy was married for 15 years when his wife suddenly surprised him with a divorce. He had three kids, lost his place, lost his home office and was forced to live in this apartment and my product is what's going to pull him out of it."

It could be something as simple as that. I call that a road map for where you're going to go. The truth is many stories do not follow this road map once you actually start writing them, but just the very act of having someplace to go makes starting the story so much easier. It just gives you so much more confidence that you're going to actually get something done.

That's really key, as we'll talk about a little bit later. That blinking cursor and a blank screen is a very scary place to be, and this kind of helps you pass that.

Step 4 is to create an outline or a short version of the story, number one, so you don't forget and number two,

so you have a road map of where you're think you're going to go.

Robert: Right, if this was a sales letter, you have more than the story. You have story, but you also have facts. You have benefits. You have all of this, so you're talking right now just about the outline of the story or maybe the outline of the whole sales letter, if you're working on a sales letter.

Kevin: I'll be honest. I've used it for both. Obviously a story and a sales letter is not going to be 200 pages. It's probably several paragraphs, but the same idea works. The outlines would just get shorter if you were just writing a quick little sales story, but the idea is to have something written down so that you know where you go.

It comes out to be about the same. If you want to do one for the entire sales letter of course, that's a great thing too. I do that all the time also. "Here's where I'm going to say this. Here's where I'm going to say that," and block everything off.

Robert: Okay, very good.

Kevin: **Step 5: Write the story.**

Then we get to Step 5. We finally get to it here. As you noted, it takes you a long time to actually get to this step of writing the story, and I guess the idea is that there is no real magic pill you can take and suddenly your story is written.

You have two choices. You can either hire someone to write it, I'd be happy to write your story for you, or you

have to sit down at some point and actually put the words onto paper.

The best that I can do to help you is I've got some tips and techniques and things you should do, and I've got some warnings of things that I've seen a lot of rookie writers do that you should avoid. So we can take it in either direction. Which way would you like to go?

Robert: Gee, I'm not sure. Maybe we'll start with the tips to better writing and then talk about mistakes, but before that I have a question. How important is style?

Somebody recently sent me a PDF of this book he had written. I read a few pages of it, but it was ridiculously overly stylized. It was not like an ordinary person would talk. It wasn't conversational.

It was like every word had to be unique, special and weird in some way. People kind of go nutty about this and about what style, voice and tone. Can you talk about that a little? Maybe that's in some of your other points.

Kevin: I tell you, it sounds like you've already looked at my outline because I talk about exactly some of that in my things to avoid.

To me there's two rules. First is you want to communicate. That's why you're writing in the first place, and to do that, you have to keep it simple. The second thing is you have to avoid making your writing obvious. Do you know what I mean?

Robert: Yes, like I was telling, the writing was so obvious that it called attention to itself, not the story itself.

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Kevin: That's exactly it. I tell people. When people come up to me sometimes and they say, "Mr. Franz, you are a great writer," to me that's not even a compliment because there's a much, much better compliment than that. That's when they come up to me and say, "Mr. Franz, I loved your story."

Robert: Yeah!

Kevin: If they say I'm a great writer, that means somewhere along the line my writing, my style, took over from the idea I was trying to get across and that's not what I want. I don't want anybody to tell me I'm a great writer. The best writers are the ones that communicate and get their message across and nobody even thinks about the writing.

Robert: Yeah, it's almost like someone else could take the same story and write it in different words and as long as they had all the same incidents, people wouldn't know. One might be a little clearer or whatever, but at least it's the same story.

Kevin: Right.

Robert: As you say, it's not the style. You know really good writers work on rewriting and rewriting to make it simple and clear and to make it less bumpy and confusing and all those things.

Kevin: Exactly and I would say that my own personal style is to write as simply as I can to get the point across. Certainly you can use imagery and certainly you want to use compelling emotional words, but in the end it has to be simple enough that somebody is going to read it and not get lost in it saying, "What was that sentence again?"

I try never to be clever. I try to be clear if I have to make that distinction.

Robert: That sort of takes a load off people. I think people are really worried about style. People apologize, “I’m not really a writer.”

I read people’s stuff about their business sometimes and I say, “This is very clear. I understand this. This makes sense. There’s nothing convoluted here. This is good.” People are often better than they think, as long as they’re clear thinkers.

We might be covering some of the things anyway, but why don’t we do the five common mistakes that people make, which we might have covered already.

Kevin: Okay, we’ll get to the common mistakes and then I’ve got some tips if we have time for them. The number-one common mistake I see is that people begin writing without a plan.

As you can tell from my 5 Steps to a Story, the writing part is not the first thing you do. So times I see people and they want to write a story. They want to add something memorable to their sales letter.

They jump on their computer and they open Microsoft Word. That white screen is sitting there with a cursor blinking in their upper left-hand corner and they’re like, “I have no idea what to write from this point on.”

They become paralyzed because they think that the act of writing is some sacred event, and it’s not like that at all. It’s very workmanlike, and if you plan before you sit down

to do the writing you'll never end up with that horrible image of the flashing cursor with no idea of what to write.

Robert: I write an ezine every single week and I've been doing it for 12 years. Someone recently said, "Robert, you need more stories in your writing," so that's one reason I got you.

Kevin: Okay.

Robert: I said, "Stories are really important," so most of my ezines start with a story. It's true. Often I'll think about the topic of the ezine for a few hours when I'm getting up or the day before. By the time I sit down, the picture, the image, the point I'm trying to get across is already there.

Then it's just writing, but you have to do some of that thinking, or the mistake you say is no planning, no thinking ahead.

Kevin: Yes, I do exactly the same thing. Ideas percolate. It can be anywhere from an hour to a couple of weeks or a couple of months and then all of a sudden, when the idea is ready, the writing is easy.

Robert: Right.

Kevin: Another common mistake that I see is people that try to write in order from beginning to end. They think that they need to start with once upon a time and end with "They lived happily ever after," and then write the story in exactly the same way the reader is going to read it. That's just not the way that professional fiction writers write stories.

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Robert: Is that so? I can imagine that in nonfiction, but also in fiction the people don't necessarily start at the beginning and go right to the end?

Kevin: Most definitely.

Robert: I'm sure some do.

Kevin: Yeah and think back to those five steps. The first step is writing is to raise an image. That strong image may occur at the beginning of the story, but it may also occur at the end of the story.

It's wherever that image fits in. That's typically where I'll start writing. It's wherever that first image took me. I'll start writing about that. If I have to fill in a beginning later and an ending later, it's almost like making a movie, the reader is never going to know what you wrote first, so you write what you know.

Robert: Exactly.

Kevin: And piece everything together. Please don't think that *War and Peace* started on Page 1 and just was written through to the end. It doesn't work that way. I don't know if that takes pressure off or not, but I like to think that it takes pressure off.

Robert: I think it really should. I'm working with this with a bunch of clients right now who are writing sales letters or descriptions about their services.

I said, "Here's the basic format. Here's a workable template. This really works. You want to plug your ideas into the template." I said exactly that. You can start anywhere. Write the ones you're clear about first and then

you cobble it all together like a jigsaw puzzle and there it is.

Kevin: A warning about this, but it's actually a happy warning, what may happen, and it's happened to me several times, is you will start somewhere else and in the act of writing that second part or that second piece, you come up with a much better idea for that first piece or a much better idea for the ending piece than what you originally had in mind.

Stories are creations that all come together, but they only come together at the end, so don't worry about it if it's seems kind of jumbled while you're in the act of actually writing.

Robert: Remember, we're not writing novels here. We're writing ezines. We're writing articles. We're writing sales letters, so they've got to be a heck of a lot simpler because they're a heck of a lot shorter.

Kevin: Exactly, instead of a chapter you may be thinking in terms of paragraphs.

Robert: Yes.

Kevin: That will help you out. A third thing, and you touched on it earlier and I'm glad you did because it's a very, very important point, and that is too many people think that what they write is the final version and when they hit that last period and say, "The end," they think, "There! I am done!"

Really, your work is kind of just beginning at that point. There's an old saying, "Stories aren't written, they're rewritten," and you really do have to go back and edit your

work and improve it. I actually have a little formula that I use for mine. That is two drafts, plus a cleanup, plus one more set of eyes, okay?

Robert: Right.

Kevin: So I write something, and as soon as I'm finished with that section or that piece of writing, I immediately go right back to the beginning and I look at it again and say, "Did I make my point clear enough here? Is my imagery good here?" and I really tear it apart and look at it and create a second draft, which is usually much, much better than the first draft.

Robert: So you might do that chapter by chapter.

Kevin: Chapter by chapter, the entire book, a little section, you know you break it down however it makes sense to you. But the idea is you have to look at every section at least a couple of major times.

Once you get done with that second draft, then I do something called a cleanup where I go through it again and I'm making not quite as major changes this time. What I'm really looking for is consistency, spelling, grammar, did I word anything awkwardly.

This is a step. Here's a nice hint for you. It's not on my list of hints. It's kind of a bonus for you. Read it out loud and you'll see all sorts of awkward phrasing.

Robert: Absolutely.

Kevin: A super advanced tip for those of you with teenagers in the house. Let them read it to you out loud. When somebody else looks at it, they can't put in the inflection

that you were hoping for. You know, it has to come naturally.

Robert: Yes.

Kevin: If you see somebody else reading your work out loud and they're stumbling, that's because your sentences aren't clear enough. Your meaning isn't clear enough.

Robert: Or the language is a little convoluted for whatever reason.

Kevin: Exactly. So that third step is called a cleanup, and that's where I take care of those kinds of things. And then finally, the last step is one more set of eyes. That's the person who's going to catch the double words that you never see when you're reading your own words and just a millions things

Robert: Yes, little grammatical mistakes, commas, all that kind of stuff.

Kevin: Exactly, just things that you become blind to after working with it for so long. I remember getting my first manuscript back and the editor said, "You did really, really well. I only found a few dozen mistakes." This was on my book.

Robert: As opposed to a few hundred.

Kevin: I thought it was perfect. I would have sworn that it was a perfect manuscript. I worked so hard on it and sure enough she was absolutely correct. There was glaringly obviously things that I must have looked over a hundred times.

Robert: I know after awhile you lose the perspective. What you've told me so far about this is very much how I do my ezine every week. I know a lot of people reading this want to do an ezine and they see it as a daunting task, so you can really take these as great guidelines for an ezine. I sort of write my whole ezine pretty fast.

I start at the top and then I go all the way to the bottom and correct things, and then I start at the top and I go through it two or three times until there's nothing to change. It's really not that hard. I change a lot in the process and then the changes get fewer and fewer. Then I give it to my wife and I say, "See if you can find some typos."

Kevin: That sounds fantastic. You should pat yourself on the back because there are a lot of people out there who aren't taking this step right now. I hate to blame him because he's such a great a marketing guy, but I kind of blame Dan Kennedy for this because he has a concept that's called "good is good enough."

Unfortunately, many people have taken that to mean, "My first draft is good enough," or "What I can do quickly is good enough." It just doesn't work out.

Robert: A better way to say it might be, "It can never be perfect. There's no such thing as perfection."

Kevin: I'm sure that's what he meant, but I've seen so many times where people will just crank something out and I know that they've never even read it all the way through, let alone edited it.

Robert: It sounds sloppy and the ideas are kind of weak. There's too much repetition. That's one thing I see a lot and other problems, like a sales letter will have too much hype.

Kevin: Of course, and I see this a lot with young people that I think just don't have the background that some other people have. They haven't lived through the pain of embarrassing mistakes enough to keep looking, so that's Number 3.

The fourth one is rookie writers tend to write too much and usually the too much is either unnecessary background or unnecessary descriptions.

Here's what I mean. There's an old saying in writing that says, "You should always try and leave out the parts that readers tend to skip." If you think about it, that's very profound.

Robert: That's very Zen.

Kevin: It is very Zen and when you think about your own reading, what do you tend to skip? I tend to skip big, long, dense paragraphs of description.

I don't care. When somebody starts giving me a laundry list of what somebody is wearing or what the weather is, I don't care and I find myself scanning and skipping to where the action is.

Robert: It's also an interesting thing. When you're reading good writing, it creates a clear picture, but it lets your imagination fill the scene. You don't have to tell in this house every item in every corner, but if you say, "It was an elegantly cluttered office with things all over the place,"

that's enough for you to picture the office because you've seen one like that, as opposed to the pen was this way and the phone was that way. That's boring.

Kevin: You are 100% correct on that. When I'm giving a creative writing seminar, I do a whole piece on it and it's called "Finding the Big 3." If you ever find yourself describing more than three things in a scene, you should probably take another look at it and make sure that you're not over describing things because you're right, people will fill in things. They're smarter than you think they are.

Also, big, long, technical paragraphs of how something works when they just want to know that it works are all things that the readers tend to skip.

The idea behind this is if you're going to skip it anyway, you don't need it and too many times marketers or business owners will say, "But it's important. They're going to want to know this," And no, maybe, maybe not. Let's try it without and see how many people complain.

Robert: That's very interesting. Is there one more?

Kevin: There is one more and this one is a little bit technical, but once I explain it, it's very, very simple. That is that beginning writers or rookie writers or whatever you want to call them, tend to use too many adverbs and adjectives.

I see this all the time. The writing is just filled with it, and just to be clear, an adverb is an -ly word. It's something like "softly," "loudly," "forcefully," "timidly" and that kind of stuff. And they modify verbs. They try to describe the action.

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And in my own writing and what I teach is if you have more than one or two adverbs out of 10 pages, you've got too many. There should not be adverbs. Adverbs are like crutches that hold up bad writing. There's usually a better way to say it. If you find yourself relying on adverbs, you should try and find a better way to say it.

Let me give you an example. Let's say that you were writing a story and you wrote a line that said, "Tony shut the door loudly," and that's probably very accurate. He closed the door and he did it in a way that created a lot of sound. You know that "shut the door" wasn't accurate, so you added the adverb "loudly" to show how he did it.

For most people, that's not a bad sentence. He shut the door loudly," and they would move on. But if you start looking for adverbs to get rid of, what you'll find is that the reason you had to say "loudly" was because "shut" is not the right word and there's a better word out there.

Robert: Yes! I know it!

Kevin: Go ahead and tell me then.

Robert: Slammed!

Kevin: Absolutely, that's a beautiful one. He slammed the door or he banged the door. There is any number of better verbs to describe what happened that would let you get rid of that silly adverb.

Robert: Pounded his head on the door until his head bled.

Kevin: That would be awesome! See, you're getting the hang of this. How many novels have you written? That's good stuff.

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Robert: I'm interviewing all these writing people to inspire me into my next book. This is ongoing. It's like an albatross around my neck.

Kevin: Adjectives are the same thing except they describe nouns. They describe things, "big," "little," "tall," "short" and a few of them are okay, but when you start getting the laundry list of adjectives and the laundry list of adverbs, it just slows down the writing.

It sounds like that's what your friend did in the piece that he sent you. I would guess there was a ton of adjectives and adverbs in every sentence, trying to make that happen.

An image to keep in your mind is that adverbs and adjectives are a lot like hot peppers. A couple of them add a lot of flavor. Too many of them and you've ruined everything.

Robert: I like that, a hot pepper analogy. Okay, so let's see. We've got five things that are big mistakes.

Mistake 1: Not having a plan.

Mistake 2: Starting from the beginning at all times instead of being flexible.

Kevin: Trying to write in a straight line.

Robert: Mistake 3: Not realizing that it's going to take a few drafts and some edits to get it right. The first shot is not going to do it.

Mistake 4: Too much description.

Mistake 5: Too many adjectives and adverbs.

All this is about simplifying it, and even in the editing, it's all about simplifying.

Kevin: Right, one thing that I'll offer people on your list is I actually have a checklist from my full course. It's just a single-sheet checklist that has a lot of these things on it and a bunch more also. If anybody would like that, I'd be happy to send it to them. It's very handy.

Robert: Can we create a link to that?

Kevin: Sure, absolutely.

Robert: There will be links to Kevin's website and information about the things he does at the bottom of the interview.

Kevin: Absolutely.

Robert: Those are some of the things to avoid. Let's talk about things that will make your writing more effective.

Kevin: I've got something that I call the **7 Tips for Writing**. These again, just like my 5 Steps to a Story, are absolutely true. These seven tips I'm going to give you are exactly what turned my writing from average, or even below average, to actually being a published author and having people come up to me and tell me that they like what I do.

This is what I had to learn, which is different from the technical world that I had to learn for the fiction world. We're going to go through these. There's actually seven of them, but they come in pairs, except for the last one. It's going to be fairly quick.

Tip 1: Know the rules.

Tip 2: Don't be afraid to break the rules.

This is one that's a little bit difficult, but if you're going to write well, if you're going to write using the English language well, you are going to have to know some of the rules of English. How to put paragraphs together, how to use the correct punctuation, just all of the rules of grammar that you may or may not remember from grade school.

You're going to have to have a solid handle on those. There's just no two ways around it because you can't rely on spell check and edit check and all that. You're going to have to know what you're doing.

I recommend the people do whatever it takes to learn the basics of grammar. Get your son's sixth grade English book if you have to.

Robert: Get a copy of Strunk and White.

Kevin: That's one of the resources that I always recommend. *Elements of Style* is on every fiction writer's shelf. I don't think it's on every business person's shelf and it should be.

Robert: When I wrote my manual, I bought that book and really studied it so I felt a little more confident about some of the basic things about punctuation and you know, where you put a semicolon, what's a sentence fragment and is that acceptable and blah-di-blah-da.

Kevin: Exactly, when to use "affect" and when to use "effect" and just making sure that you don't make any egregious mistakes. Tip 2 is don't be afraid to break the rules, and here's something that some people get squeamish about,

especially grammar teachers. But I vote for clarity over correct grammar 100% of the time.

If you have a way of saying something that is perfectly clear, if it's not grammatically 100% correct, I try not to change it so that it is grammatically correct, if that makes sense.

Robert: Well, there's the famous "he" or "she" versus "they."

Kevin: The correct grammar can get in the way.

Robert: Yes, it can and often it's not like people speak, so if you want to write like people speak.

Kevin: Hey, wait a minute, that's one of my next ones! Don't give it away! But you're absolutely right. "Who should I give this to?" is a perfectly acceptable sentence, as opposed to "To whom shall I give it."

Robert: We don't speak like that, even though it's not grammatically perfect.

Kevin: Exactly.

Robert: "But you've used a preposition" and no one even knows what a preposition is.

Kevin: That's right, so I always vote for clarity over grammar and that's what Number 2 is. Don't be afraid to break the rules.

My books are filled with broken grammatical rules. I start with articles sometimes. I'll start a sentence with "and" or with "also." The reason is for clarity, to make sure that the image I have in my head is getting to my reader, and

I'll do anything to make that happen, even break the rules of grammar.

Robert: But you can't break them until you know them first.

Kevin: Exactly, you should know how to do it right. It's not an excuse to use poor spelling, "Mr. Franz said I don't have to use..." no, no, no. You have to know what you're doing. Then you can break the rules.

Robert: You hear all kinds of awkward sentence structure or the object and the verb and the noun are convoluted somehow... and anyway, you get the picture.

Kevin: Numbers 3 and 4 also go together and I think you used this exact phrase.

Tip 3: Write like you speak.

Tip 4: Don't fall into the thesaurus trap.

We've been talking about this. The writing style that I like is just slightly above conversational. It should be a little bit more formal than when you're talking to your buddy in the corner bar.

You're not writing a Shakespearean play. You're not Hemingway, so don't try to be. Try and write like your audience speaks, but maybe just a little bit higher. If on a scale of 1 to 10, conversation is a 5, try and write at about a 5 1/2 or a 6. Use the words that you hear people use all the time.

The second part of that is don't fall into the thesaurus trap and here's what I mean. Let's say that you're writing a

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story and you write a sentence like, “A tall man walked in the room.”

What’s going to happen is you’re going to look at that sentence later and you’re going to be embarrassed about the word “tall.” You’re going to say, “That’s only four letters. I can come up with something better than that.”

You’re going to hit “Shift F7” in Microsoft Word and it’s going to bring up a whole list of words that you can use instead of tall. It’s going to be “gigantic,” “huge,” “big” and lots of words.

Robert: Stupendous, “ginormous.”

Kevin: Here’s the thing. A thesaurus gives you similar words, not identical words, and if you just pick a word from that list that you think sounds good, without knowing exactly what you’re saying, you’ve changed that picture. You’ve changed that image.

What if I changed it to “enormous”? Well, the guy I pictured in my head was 6’3”, 200 pounds, just a little big taller than average. That’s why I said, “A tall man walked in the door.” Well, if I change that to “enormous”, what picture do you get?

Robert: I think of a giant.

Kevin: Absolutely. He could be 8 feet tall or he could be 5 feet tall and 500 pounds. There’s just a whole range of things. You’ve changed the meaning by changing the word to something that you think is a \$5 word instead of a 10-cent word.

Robert: Let me do a little pushback here. I use the thesaurus when I think, “That doesn’t mean exactly what I want it to mean. I know there’s another word.” Sometimes we just forget another word. You look through the thesaurus and say, “That gets the shade of meaning.

I think that’s a great reference, but I think what you say is really important. Don’t just change words for the sake of changing words.

Kevin: Clearly, I use the thesaurus or I wouldn’t know it’s “Shift F7.” You know obviously there’s times, of course, there’ll be times when I’ll say, “I’ve used that word three times in the last paragraph. There must be something else.”

Robert: Exactly.

Kevin: Sure, it has its uses, but I think the key here is to know the danger of using it. You know what we end up is not the best writing we can do, but the best writing that Microsoft can help us do and it’s just not the way that it should be.

Robert: It’s not very authentic.

Kevin: No, it’s not.

Robert: Once in a while I read stuff and the words they use and the style really ropes me in. You say, “I could never write like this. These people are ten times more intelligent than me,” but we can’t make ourselves ten times more intelligent than we are. We have to write what we can write.

Kevin: Sure.

Robert: You can’t fake writing Stephen King.

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Kevin: And if you look at Stephen King's writing, let's take him for an example. The reason I was drawn to his writing in the first place is I was fairly young. I was only in my teens and it was an adult book that read like a TV show. The writing was so crisp and clear it was like there was a TV show or a movie going on in my head.

Robert: Wow.

Kevin: And I lost track of the fact that I was reading, and to me, I was just watching a television show because if you look at it, sentences are simple. The people speak conversationally. You know who they are.

The descriptions are very conversational. He can write flowery when he wants to, but for the most part it's just simple, clean prose and that's what sucks you in, so, for what it's worth.

Robert: And a little addendum, Stephen King wrote a book called *On Writing*, which is a great book to read about writing.

Kevin: It's also on my resource list. It's a classic.

Robert: It's really good. At the end he gives the story about his accident. He got into this car accident where a van hit him and it's so matter of fact and straightforward, but chilling at the same time. It's a fascinating piece of writing that he puts into that book.

Kevin: It really is and I'll tell you a story about that. I have that book on CD and I actually played that portion for my wife because I thought it was just so well written.

It's interesting that you picked that out, too. You could see everything that was going on, feeling what was going on, but it wasn't in an overly dramatic way.

Robert: It was very matter of fact.

Kevin: Exactly.

Robert: But he let the incident speak for itself.

Kevin: Yes. Next is Tips 5 and 6 on my 7 Tips for Writers and these are two of the very best I have, so thank you for those who stayed tuned in for this long because here's a couple that I really, really feel strongly about.

Tip 5: Write quickly.

Tip 6: Get to the end or finish what you start.

Let's do the first one first, write quickly. I have a concept that I use called "writing at the speed of thought." What I mean by that is when you're thinking creatively and the juices are flowing and everything is going well, the ideas are coming fairly fast.

Robert: Sometimes too fast.

Kevin: Sometimes too fast, so what you want to do is make sure you set up your environment so that you can capture them the first way. If you need to become a faster typist, then do what it takes to become a faster typist. If you need to eliminate distractions, then do that, but when the ideas are coming, that's the time to write.

I recommend writing as quickly as you can. That means do not go back and start editing. Do not go back and start correctly spelling. Do not go back because you shifted two

letters around as you were typing. All of that can come later.

You want to write as quickly as you can and get the ideas out of your head and onto paper or into the computer. I use the phraseology, “get it onto paper.”

And so the second part of this is when do you stop writing as fast as you can? The answer is very simply when you get to the end. Don’t stop before you get to the end, if you can help it at all.

Robert: Like a chapter or a section or an ezine. I write my whole ezine in 30 minutes. Pow.

Kevin: I couldn’t agree more. You’ve got a huge advantage over a lot of people because you’ve finished so many things.

Many people, if you’re just a business person or an entrepreneur starting out and you’re writing your first ezine or you’re writing your first website or your first sales letter, there’s a lot of times where you’ll never get past the first paragraph because you’re saying, “Boy that’s just not perfect yet.” In your mind you crumple it up or you hit delete on your computer and you start again.

If you never can get past the first paragraph, you’re never going to get to the end. I always tell people it’s easier to edit than it is to finish, so finish first and then go back and edit your work because then you’ve got something.

There’s a special word that we use for people who finish what they write and that’s called “author!”

Robert: But be satisfied with crummy first drafts because you can always go back and edit them, but you can’t edit nothing.

Kevin: That's exactly right. You don't have a story yet. If you haven't gotten to the end, you're just another person with an idea, and trust me, ideas are the cheapest commodities on Earth. It's actually having something tangible that gets things done.

I use the example, "How many people do you think started a novel last year?" and then compare that to "How many people finished a novel last year?"

Robert: It's probably like 100 or 1,000 to one.

Kevin: I would say that exactly what it is. Everybody can start. Everybody's got an idea, but you want to be the one that actually finishes what you start. I recommend starting small. Even if somebody has a dream of writing a science fiction trilogy, start with a two-paragraph story with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Finish something that you can say, "There's my first work. It's complete. Now I can move on to my second." It works the same way if you're doing article marketing, if you're writing an ezine, if you're writing a sales letter, Get something done and then you can move on to the more complex things.

Robert: That's great advice. I'm very in alignment with you, Kevin.

Kevin: It's fun talking to somebody who's clearly written a lot because if I would have asked you or we would have been doing this interview and you had no writing experience, all of this would be new and you'd be saying a lot of "wow." But it's the experience factor that builds all this stuff in.

Robert: So many of these things on your points really relate to any writing, not just the story writing. We talked about stories, which are really important, but this relates to a sales letter, the ezine, the article, all of those things. Sit down and finish the damn article.

Here's a great one. You'll love this. Alan Weiss said, "I talked to people and they said I ought to be writing articles and they say, 'Well, I've been working on an article for the last six months or so.'" And he says, "An article doesn't take six months. It's takes 90 minutes!"

Write the damn thing! You edit a few times and do it. People obsess about this, this perfectionism. That last 1% of perfectionism makes zero difference.

Kevin: Agreed, a lot of people make their writing different, but they never make it better.

Robert: Yes.

Kevin: Then we get to the last one, and to be honest with you, I didn't really ever think that I would need to have this last tip, but what turned out for me is I had a huge self-confidence issue. It seemed that everybody's ideas were better than mine. It didn't matter who it was. Mine were never good.

Robert: Tell me about that one. I read a good book and I say, "That'd be a good model for my book," and I read another one and I go, "This would be better." What's your tip here?

Kevin: Tip 7: Don't worry about being good enough.

The tip is don't worry about good enough because you are and it is. Your idea is good enough. Your writing is good enough. Don't worry about it.

Don't get hung up on all that kind of stuff and comparing yourself because you know what? There's somebody on the other side of the fence who's comparing themselves to you saying, "I'll never be as good as that guy."

You just have to get over that side of things and say, "You know what? Some people might laugh at my idea or somebody might think this is silly, but who cares?" Just do what you do and be confident that your idea is going to work for what you want it to do.

If it doesn't, that's fine too. Try again. Those are my 7 Tips. It's interesting you say that they apply to all writing. That's 100% true, but I didn't get any of these. I wrote for 15 years before I started putting these together, and it took writing fiction to really kind of formalize these ideas.

When writing works, this is what I do and when writing doesn't work, this is what I didn't do, so these really helped me a lot.

Robert:

Great. I have a few follow-up questions that relate to things we've already talked about. That is in business writing, how or what is the best way to weave stories into the business writing? You see that in a lot of nonfiction books and sometimes it works pretty well.

You're trying to explain a concept and then you say, "Take Janet for instance. She came to me because of blah-di-blah-di." It's a case study. Therapists that write books are

always talking about their patients and the issues they went through, so there are a couple things.

Do you have some tips about just how to integrate those stories? How many stories is too many stories? Because sometimes you have to give conceptual tips, just as we're giving conceptual tips.

Kevin: Right and it's difficult to put a number on it and say, "Every 10 pages needs three stories," or anything like that. Some of the best tips that I can give people regarding adding stories to your nonfiction is they work very well as an opener, whether you're opening a new chapter or whether you're opening a new article or to just go ahead and jump into the story.

I also recommend don't start with description, just jump right into the action and grab them from the first second. That's one of the most effective ways of integrating a story. It's just to jump in and do it.

The second good way to do it is to use a testimonial. Use a real example of somebody that you know that's used your product or service and instead of just listing "Debbie from Omaha says my work is great," that's fine. But it really doesn't help anything, so I like to weave testimonials stories into sales letters, usually right after describing what it is that you're offering.

Instead of saying, "This will help you do X, Y and Z," and putting in your bullet points, it's to just put a story in right before the bullet points that illustrates how somebody is actually using your product and benefiting from it. Those are two real quick ways to get a story into your sales letter, articles and marketing material.

Robert: Good. As you say, there's no absolute, hard and fast rule, but the trick is... well, here's another question. It's sort of a more subtle question.

Is there something other than stories? I don't even know how to ask this question, Kevin. What is interesting and what keeps interest and how do you keep interest going in nonfiction? I'm sure when you're writing fiction you have the same issue. How do I keep it going? How do I keep the action going?

Kevin: I think I understand what you're saying. What keeps people compelled to keep reading, essentially is what you're saying.

Robert: Yes.

Kevin: I have a couple of tricks that I use to make that happen. One is the old news term, "you give 'em a teaser." You tease them in the first sentence and then you give them a couple of other sentences and then you give them the benefit.

It can't be too big of a gap between the teaser and the payoff or you'll lose them, but I use teasers a lot in an opening sentence, "Do you know the four ways or the biggest mistakes people make when they X, Y, and Z?" And then you go ahead and tell them a little while later, some nice opening like that is a great way to keep it interesting.

The other thing that I do a lot is I make sure that the last sentence of a paragraph leads into the first sentence of the next paragraph.

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Robert: Now there's a good tip.

Kevin: Yeah and it's kind of like the old slippery slope theory. Every sentence should do nothing more than intrigue the person enough to read the next sentence, if that makes sense.

If your writing is tight enough, even removing one sentence is going to make it harder to understand and harder to read. I'm trying to think of an example off the top of my head, but essentially whatever word or phraseology you use in the last sentence of one paragraph should be picked up on in the next paragraph.

Robert: Right and building on it and building on it.

Kevin: And building on it and building on it, absolutely. Those are two tricks that I use. Chapter endings should lead nicely into the next section, if you are writing a nonfiction book. So you leave them with a question and then the answer to that question is the next chapter.

That's another technique I use all the time that I use in my fiction and I've also just recently helped a woman release a book called *Tough Enough* and I was helping her with the copy editing and with the layout work and all of that. I added a few of those in for her also, just so, "Are you wondering about how to do that? Well, read the next chapter because that's where we explain..." and kind of give them a lead into that.

Robert: Something I'll do with my ezine is I'll do paragraphs that are a short sentence that sort of pops out instead of just leaving it at the bottom of the paragraph. You make it a whole sentence paragraph just for emphasis.

Kevin: That's another great thing. That's something that I do also. A single word can be a paragraph if you do it well. That's one of those "break the rules."

Robert: Like "Huh?" or "You've got to be kidding!" blah, blah, blah.

Kevin: Right and I ask kids all the time, "Is it okay to have a one-sentence paragraph and they all raise their hands and say, "Oh no, you can't do that!" and I say, "How about a one-word paragraph," "No, no!" and then I open up I think it's my second book that starts off with "BOOM!" That's how it starts and that's my whole paragraph.

I say, "You mean I can't do that? I just did it and this book got published." It's just showing them that you don't always have to follow the rules.

But you're right. It can be a short sentence, a two-word line set off. I always err on the side of short paragraphs as opposed to long, just to increase that readership.

Robert: And also shorter sentences, the run-on sentence is part of your rules, "Know the rules," but I've seen people do a sentence that's a whole five-line paragraph. I say, "Okay, I got the idea. Now chop this up into three sentences please." It's a little too hard.

Kevin: You touched on it earlier. Not many people know what prepositions are anymore, but if you look at some sentences, they'll have nine prepositional phrases in there. You just start chopping those babies out and you know what? It still makes sense. It still works.

Robert: Right, so simplify, simplify is a theme we keep coming back to, but you have to keep it moving. So... this has been a lot of fun, Kevin. I think these are a lot of ideas that people will find very useful because one of the biggest blockages to marketing that I've seen over and over is the fear of writing. I have a little saying, "Writing is like pumping iron for marketing."

That means the more you write, the stronger your marketing. The interesting thing is because what we're writing are marketing-oriented things like articles and sales letters etc, when we really take the time to write that really well, an interesting thing happens.

We start to be able to speak it better than we used to before because we've written it so many times or really refined it. People tell me this all the time, "I was having a hard time talking about my business and then I wrote all this stuff. I wrote the executive summary and the sales page and this, and all of sudden when I'm talking about my business, people are getting it in a way that they never got it before."

That's an extra bonus of writing. You will become a better communicator.

Kevin: I would agree 1,000% with that and also your writing will improve. I tell kids and adults that I'm working with, I tell them go ahead and get that first one out of the way because your second is going to be better.

Go ahead and get that third one done. I said, "I guarantee you by the time you've written the words "the end" for the 10th time, you're going to be 10 times as good as you were when you started. You can't not be.

Robert: Exactly. Well, so let's leave people with a few great resources to check out. What are some things that you recommend that could help people a bit more?

Kevin: I wrote down a list of four here, and I'm looking for one more book on my library shelf right now if you can bear with me for one second because I want to get the author. There it is.

The first one is of course one we've already mentioned, *On Writing* by Stephen King. It's half autobiographical and half grammatical and some of the clearest lessons that I've ever learned on how to write well.

The second one I'm holding in my hands now. It's by James V. Smith and it's called *The Writer's Little Helper*. If you are a technically oriented person who likes charts, graphs, colors and numbers even when you're writing, this is an amazing book.

He actually goes through and talks about the Flesch-Kincaid Index and how to tell if your writing is boring or how to tell if your writing is exciting and how to build the excitement by changing sentence length and a lot about character development. It's a very, very, very good book. Reasonably hard to find, but again, it's called *The Writer's Little Helper* by James V. Smith. (Actually this can be found on Amazon for as little as 10¢ brand new! I just ordered a copy.)

A third one I have is also one we mentioned called *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. It should be on everybody's bookshelves. You can get it used for a couple of bucks. You absolutely have to own this book.

Robert: Great.

Kevin: Another one I'll give you is an online source. It's called www.VisualThesaurus.com. It's the best online thesaurus that I've found and much better than Microsoft's. They have a free version and they have a pay version and depending on how much you use it, it might be worthwhile to actually go ahead and pay for it.

They use something they call spider charts or spider graphs, where you click on one word and it looks like the spokes of a wheel coming out of that word with more words. You click on another word, one of the spokes and then that one expands out.

It really does a nice job of showing you how you can get from one word to another. It's the one thesaurus that I do use a lot.

Robert: There's actually software that someone gave me that does the same thing.

Kevin: Is that right? It might be based on that.

Robert: It might be based on it.

Kevin: I personally find that incredibly valuable. One more resource if you like the kind of stuff that I've been talking about it to go to www.FictionSecrets.com.

That's my website. If you sign up, there's lots of free information for you. My email address is Kevin@FictionSecrets.com, and if you send me an email and tell me that you're part of Robert's list, I'd be more than happy to send you more tips and hints. I promised the checklist. If they send me an email, I'd be happy to

send you that editing checklist with all the different hints and ideas on it.

Robert: Great. Kevin, tell us a little bit how you work with people. I sense that you edit books or ghost books or this and that. What's the range? If I'm an InfoGuru, an information marketer-consultant, coach, trainer kind of person that wants to do writing and gets stuck, what's the beginning minimal thing you do and what's the biggest thing you do?

Kevin: It starts off with anybody who really wants to know a little bit more about something, I do one-on-one consultations. It's a one-shot kind of deal and we sit down for a half an hour, either over the phone or if you're local, we can sit down over lunch and we just talk about your idea.

The experience I've had is I can help you clarify that idea and get it down to the one big idea. They actually leave that conversation with a great idea for a story or concept for a sales letter. I just answer questions.

The first level is just a one-on-one consultation. The second level, to kick that up a little bit, would be a series of consultations where we actually walk you through the process of writing it. You do all the writing yourself, but we meet weekly and I take a look at it and help you out.

The last one I did wasn't even weekly. It was more than that. I was working with Deborah and we would meet more than once a week and just kind of go through what she had written.

I'd say, "It should be tightened up a little bit here. This is really good. Did you think about that?" It's just nice to have somebody kind of guide you through.

The last thing is I will go ahead and write for you if you want to hire me and you have a concept and say, "I've got these 10 testimonials, but I have no idea how to make them sound interesting, could you do them for me?" I'd be happy to do that also.

Robert: Have you gone all the way to ghosting books and that kind of thing?

Kevin: I have not fully a ghosted a book, no. I'd be willing to try. I'm sure I would do well at it, but the closest I've come is a heavy edit on somebody else's ideas and work.

Robert: People obviously understand that you're an expert at this. You have great insight into this and you made it sound very simple and straightforward, and I agree with everything so...

Kevin: So it must be right!

Robert: It must be good. Everyone listening, this is really good stuff. This is worth listening to a second time, taking notes and then applying it to something. Take that ezine and think through those rules, those images, giving it a twist and all of those things, the mistakes, blah, blah, blah. Really own these ideas we've talked about.

This is something that can really help you long-term to be a better writer and communicator, and be more successful in your business.

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Kevin, I really want to thank you for taking the time and being so generous with your ideas. This was a great interview.

Kevin: Thank you very much, Robert. I hope the people got something out of it and have a great day!

Robert: Thank you.