

Not what comes to mind, but what is thought about.

TECHNIQUES OF WORDING

Takuya Isojima Creative Director/Copywriter Dentsu Inc.



Introduction

I am going to attempt writing about words. What defines communicable language and how can it be written?

This book is not about the style of writing, as I sadly admit I am not a fine writer. More importantly, the subject of words that I would like to discuss here is closer in meaning to *thought*.

I don't mean to put readers off at the outset by making things look complicated, so I will go straight to the conclusion. This is what it basically boils down to:

With an extra bit of thought, you can reach others with your words.

Perhaps it is the connotation of the word, but when we hear the word idea we tend to think that it means inspiration, or in other words, the first thing that comes to mind. The recent trend celebrates ideas in the context that they provide solutions to all problems. Expectations and illusions regarding impulse and intuition seem to be getting greater by the day. We all feel it. So I would like to make another statement:

Words born from impulse do not reach others and they do not leave an impression.

The reason why I feel this way is quite simple.

We are not geniuses who can suddenly come up with marvelous ideas.

We are not so intelligent that our first impressions will always be correct.

As average human beings, putting in a little bit more thought than the average person is the only way we can find words that are worth communicating and can actually reach others.

I came to this conclusion because I am a copywriter.

Being a copywriter at an advertising agency is interesting. New hires take an aptitude test after being accepted to join the company, and then one day you are suddenly told you have been assigned to a certain department. In my case, I was assigned to become a copywriter.

Of course I joined Dentsu aspiring to become a copywriter, so when I was given that appointment I couldn't have been

happier. At the same time, however, I thought to myself, “What do I do now?”

Unlike drawings, anybody can write words, and it is harder to distinguish between the good and the bad. So how can I write something that would sell? I never studied writing (my university major was sociology) and I was not in any advertising study group (I played tennis). So, while I was thrilled with the appointment, I honestly had no clue what to do.

It is quite straightforward for an author. Authors follow their urge to express and write stories, which they sell to make a living.

A copywriter is different. There is no urge to express. There may be exceptions, but at least I had no urge to express at the time when I was appointed as a copywriter. It wasn't as though I had to create a piece of work. I was just required to sell words. Once I was appointed, I had no choice but to put together words that would sell. So I started thinking. I had no urge to express and I was not a fine writer, but I was assigned to be creative. As a copywriter, what was I to do? The answer

was simple.

Put more thought into it than others would.

There was no other way to come up with words that would sell.

As I said earlier, unlike a piece of work that is 500 pages long, anybody can write a few words. Everybody speaks in words and they all send emails. The only way to write words that reach out and communicate using the same language tool is to think more about it than others.

The greatest opportunity for a copywriter is when everyone is occupied – the people who see the advertisements as well as the clients. To call that *an opportunity* might sound like a copout, but the clients and the people who see the advertisements only remember the first impression of the wording they see because they are too busy. In order to write copy that is convincing to everyone, the copywriter must think about it more profoundly, beyond first impressions and inspirations.

Everyone who is a copywriter by profession has surely come

to the obvious conclusion that in order to put together words with monetary value that communicates better, it is necessary to give it more thought than the average person would.

I was blessed with a wonderful mentor who taught me a number of techniques. Now that I have been thinking and writing copy for more than 20 years, I have accumulated my own skills. I would like to share these with you in this book.

These are not techniques to add power to words in order to communicate, but rather techniques to find wordings that are worth communicating.

I hope that you will find this book useful not only as a reference for copywriting, but also when preparing presentations and other forms of communication on the job.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Chapter 1 Wording that does not communicate	8
Chapter 2 Wording that has been carefully thought out	18
Chapter 3 What does it mean to take your thought one step deeper?	29
Chapter 4 The four doors that make your thoughts deeper	42
Chapter 5 Wording to which the four doors give life	57
Chapter 6 Deepening your thoughts even further	87
Chapter 7 Things that interfere with the process of deepening your thoughts	100
Chapter 8 Last thoughts before the conclusion	112
Conclusion	123

Chapter 1

Wording that does not communicate



At the risk of starting off on a negative note, I thought I might clarify what incommunicable wording is before focusing on wording that communicates.

A typical example of incommunicable wording is the response of athletes in an interview. This is not because the athletes are not well versed. It is because this is a typical scene where a person has not given any thought about what to say and as a result, the words that come out of the person's mouth are incommunicable.

Regardless of what the sport is, an interview might go like this:

Interviewer: Congratulations!

Athlete: Thank you!

Interviewer: How do you feel?

Athlete: Uh, well... I'm really glad that I worked hard for this.

Interviewer: Looking back on today's game, what do you think?

Athlete: Uh, well... I wanted to do my best and give it my all.

Interviewer: Do you have a message for everyone?

Athlete: Yes. I'd like to thank all of my fans for their support. I'm going to continue to do my best. Thank you so much!

(Cheering continues....)

I am sure everyone has seen an interview go like this. There is nothing wrong with it. In fact, it is correct. The problem is that the words are meaningless.

Let me change the setting to a presentation at an advertising agency. The clients are sitting across the table. Someone from the agency stands up to make the opening remark. This is a situation where people often use words that have not been thought out and are incommunicable.

“Uh, thank you very much for giving us the opportunity today to present you with our suggestions. We have given the utmost thought to an optimum project to enhance your company's performance. We would appreciate your consideration.”

Such greetings are common and there is nothing wrong with them. They are correct. However, the words are meaningless.

It is unfortunate that these situations take place, but they do because not enough thought has been given to the words. Without this extra effort, words that are worth communicating have not been found. Either that, or more thought is being put into something other than the fundamental purpose of reaching out to others. Let me go into more detail using the aforementioned interview and presentation.

The case of the interview with the athlete showed a combination of lack of thought (being right after the game, of course there would be no time to think about what to say) and thinking about something else. The athlete was probably more concerned about speaking clearly and briskly.

It must be hard being an athlete these days. They are constantly being chased by reporters and having a microphone shoved in their face. They are expected to make a comment in a proper way as though this is a very important aspect of being a modern-day athlete, when in the world of sports silence ought to be valued.

My analysis is that athletes are so cursed with expectations for clear, sportsman-like rhetoric and a vivacious, energetic image

that they have no room to think about how to answer specific questions. This is why I suggested that it is a typical example of a situation where meaningless words are spoken – a situation that doesn't allow for proper thinking.

There are many athletes who begin their response with the words, “Uh, well...” but they are not necessarily trying to buy time. They blurt out these words because they are under pressure to respond as soon as they are asked a question. Then they end up choosing typical phrases like “did my best” or “appreciate your support” in order to give a quick and clear response. They line up words that do not communicate.

If someone asked them to look back on today's game, they would not have been able to answer right away if they actually gave it some thought. That is a natural reaction and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Rather than coming right out and saying, “Yes, well... I did my best and gave it my all,” it would mean so much more if the athlete simply said, “It was a hard game,” even if it meant stopping to think about it for a while. It shows that the athlete thought about the question and the words that came out were a true reflection of the game.

The presentation at the advertising agency was indeed a case

of not giving any thought about what to communicate in the given situation.

The person was aware of having to make a greeting and being polite to the client but had not contemplated how to reach them. That is why the person spoke overused words like *utmost* and *optimum* – words that do not communicate.

Some people make jokes in a situation like this. Those people have actually given thought to what it is they wish to communicate.

- What do I want to relay in my greeting? What do I need to communicate?
- I want the client to be as relaxed as possible.
- What could I say to make them relax?
- Perhaps I should tell a joke.

It is not a big deal if the client doesn't laugh at the joke. What is important is they understand that this person wants them to relax. Of course, jokes are better when they're funny; but even if it falls flat on its face, a joke told is better than a meaningless greeting because you are developing a relationship. And it communicates because more thought has been given to what

message should be relayed.

Let me tell you about a rare incident when communicable words were spoken during a sports interview.

Perhaps you remember that the Japanese swim team took silver in the men's 400-meter medley relay at the 2012 London Olympic Games. In the interview that followed, Takeshi Matsuda, who swam the butterfly leg, said something that truly grabbed the listeners. His words were the most communicable and most touching of anything spoken during those Olympic Games.

This is what he said:

“I wasn't going to let Kosuke go home empty-handed.”

He was referring to swimming star and teammate Kosuke Kitajima. Kitajima put everything on the team medley after failing to win a medal in his specialty, the breaststroke.

It is not that Matsuda's words left an impression because they were special. They communicated so well because he had thought about what to say.

Takeshi Matsuda very likely contemplated why it was so important to him to win this medley relay, giving extra thought to what that would mean. Then he came to the conclusion that the whole team wanted Kosuke Kitajima, their hero, to receive a medal. He realized that the driving force of his determination was in his emotions, and discovered what he wished to communicate. This led to his response, which later became famous.

Of course I have never met Takeshi Matsuda, nor have I heard about his train of thought. However, his comment was very obviously based on *thought*. He had given careful consideration as to what this race was going to mean to him. This is an important point. Simply taking the words, “I wasn’t going to let Kosuke go home empty-handed,” and brushing it off as some fancy rhetoric does not grasp the true nature of communicable words.

I do not mean to sound portentous, but I wanted to show why the typical words in an athlete’s interview and the pretentious greeting were incommunicable. I cannot stress enough

that this is not due to incompetence in vocabulary, but simply because it hasn't been given much thought.

Just to be sure, I do not think athletes are poor communicators. If someone tried to interview me after a tough game, I wouldn't be able to respond with communicable language that could move people's hearts. Nobody could. As I mentioned in the beginning, we are not geniuses. We do not have the power to instantaneously come up with wonderful ideas.

The language Takeshi Matsuda spoke was not prepared for the purpose of the interview. The words came out naturally as a result of contemplating the significance of that race. He just happened to share his thoughts at the post-race interview, and his response was not off-the-cuff. That is precisely why it communicated so well.

As I suggested in the Introduction, we tend to yearn for the ability to have ideas come to mind instantaneously. We think that we need an epiphany. But that is not true. It takes considerable thought. I believe that the more something is thought about, the better it communicates.

In the next chapter, I will discuss words that have been carefully thought out.

Chapter 2

Wording that has been carefully thought out



In the previous chapter I talked about how Olympian swimmer Takeshi Matsuda's post-race comment communicated so well because he had thought carefully about what that race meant to him. I used that as an example because it was clear and easy to understand. However, since most people probably don't spend their days thinking about what a particular race means to them, I'd like to discuss communicable wording – words that have been thought through – from a closer realm.

Let's talk about email. Everyone knows what it is and everyone uses it. Although it is said that young people nowadays do not read books or newspapers anymore, if you include writing that has not been published or printed *per se*, opportunities to read have actually increased.

A number of my friends work in trading companies. They say that the amount of email exchanged on a daily basis is beyond imagination. The “cc's” seem to be quite a problem. Sometimes the sender simply has a feeling that the recipient is somehow involved in the subject of discussion and copies the person on an email just in case. Although there may be no real need for this recipient to read the email, the sender can assert the fact that it was sent. A vast amount of emails like this go

back and forth every day.

Email used to be a medium that relayed general information or perhaps a confirmation or a reminder. An urgent message would be communicated directly by telephone. Emails were to be read at one's own convenience, and that was nice... until everyone started carrying smartphones and tablets. With a mobile device in hand now, there is no excuse not to read and respond immediately. Apparently, it could develop into a big problem if you delay your response to an email sent from your girlfriend/boyfriend.

Going back to the “cc” use, this function is often used to send people a thank you note for attending a party held the previous evening, for example. Young people in their 20s regularly use email to say, “Thank you for the party last night.” Perhaps the message would look like this:

“Dear all (please excuse the cc),

Just a quick note to thank you for last night. I had a great time talking with you all. We should do this more often. Let's get together again soon. Thank you very much again.”

Whether the content of this email communicates or not depends on how each person receives it, but when I read this, it is **nothing more than a typical collection of words that are sent out as a formality.**

I think the problem is in the “cc.” The message is not directed to any particular person, so of course it is polite and standard. It also shows how shallow this medium called email is.

Imagine if this were a handwritten letter. Even if the content were exactly the same, the fact that the writer took the trouble to handwrite a letter gives it that much more weight. That extra amount of work communicates to the recipient that the writer is the type of person who is considerate enough to send out a thank-you note. It communicates something special.

People who send thank-you messages by email are also probably trying to appeal that they are the considerate type as well. Excuse me if that sounds insensitive, but as long as everyone understands how easy it is to use email and the convenience of the “cc” function, an email could never have the effect that a handwritten letter does. So if you cannot depend on the weight of the behavior, your only choice is to compete using meaningful words.

Let's rewrite the thank you email above. How does it sound if it is written like this?

“Dear all (please excuse the cc),
Just a quick note to thank you for last night. I had a great time talking with you all. I never knew that all of you also worried so much about what gifts to bring back from business trips. We should do this more often. Let's get together again soon. Thank you very much again.”

All I did was add one line mentioning how everyone worried about buying gifts to bring back from business trips. Doesn't this simple addition turn it into words that communicate just a little bit more?

The point here is not that you need to add a fancy word or two in order to leave an impression. Besides, mentioning the fact that everyone worries about what to bring back from a business trip is hardly anything special. What is important, and I will say this time and again, is the thought that goes into it.

If you really had a good time at the party and want to let

everyone know that you did, you should think about it. If you write that you had fun, you need to think about what it was that you enjoyed so much.

You're probably thinking, "Of course." Please remember, however, that it is surprising how little we do this. We stop after we say, "That was fun," "That was great," or "I'd like to do that again." The only thing we might do is to use language that sounds more mature or formal.

We need to think about what is beyond these words – for our own good and to illustrate communicable wording. What was fun? What was great? Or to be a bit more mature, what was so meaningful? There is nothing wrong if the answer you come up with is finding out for the first time that everyone worried about what gifts to bring back from a business trip. Perhaps you discovered that everyone, surprisingly, liked the same pop artist. By adding one line, the people who were there last night will probably remember the conversation thinking, "Oh yes, we talked about business trips." Then, for the first time, you have communicated your thank-you message. It has gone beyond a formality and created a mutual circuit of communication between you and the recipients. Moreover, for the first time, you have truly given meaning to last night's party.

Mentioning the conversation about business trips is nothing special, but it is something that goes one step beyond. It reaches others because you have thought about and discovered why you had fun – and then communicated that in words.

In any case, everyone has started “writing” because of email. Writing no longer comes with the deep connotations of the past. Words are everywhere. If we want to use these words to communicate by email, this is all the more reason we must think.

Let me give you some advice.

Don't be satisfied with generic wording.

The word *cute* is a good example.

Today, girls in their teens and twenties refer to everything as being “cute.” Maybe not everything, but whenever they see something they like, they say, “Oh, how cute!” and leave it at that. This is really a waste of words.

However, we actually do the same thing. In daily life, we use words like *fun*, *happy*, *funny*, or *annoying* to express a great many situations. We use these generic expressions and expect others to understand us.

In this day and age when words are everywhere, do people really understand? If you are serious about communicating, do not try to get away with using easy wording. It may take some effort, but you need to give it more thought. What was fun? What made you happy? Why was that person annoying?

If you think first before coming up with words, they become uniquely yours; and in this world of overflowing vocabulary, they become communicable.

When I go shopping with my wife, she'll show me a blouse and I'll say, "Yes, that's cute," without giving it much thought. It could be pretty, or even bizarre, but I'll still say it's "cute." In the end, I haven't communicated much to her other than "my husband seems to be responding." In fact, if I think it looks bizarre, I should probably tell her so. She might get angry, but at least she'll remember what I said. It will leave an impression because I gave it some thought before speaking. I suppose I should take this opportunity to reflect on my perfunctory conversation with my wife.

In corporate life, people use words like *significant*, *proactive*, *utmost effort*, and so on. These are the same. They have been changed to sound more mature and (at the risk of sounding

unkind) they are used to brush people off. The words have no meaning other than format and appearance.

You must think about it. Which part of it is significant? What exactly are you proactively planning to do? To what is utmost effort being applied?

The wording that you have discovered as a result of thinking should express your very own thoughts. This will communicate to others, prompting them to say, “That makes sense.”

Of course, since they are your words reflecting your thinking, some people may not agree. Should you care? Probably not, because you have proof that your words got across. If someone disagrees, you can ask why and talk it out. This may sound like whitewashing, but this is how business is conducted. This is how relationships deepen. I might even add that **words resulting from going that extra step can be called an idea or a proposal and is something that will truly benefit the company.**

So what would we do if we were about to send an email to thank people for the fun time at a party? I’m sure a lot of thought will go into it. We would not leave it at *fun*, but we would try to remember how much fun it was. We would try to

remember the conversations we had with the person we hit it off with in the hope that we would meet again.

Yes, “cc’s” are a problem. From the moment the message goes out to *everyone*, the words become impersonal and no more than a formality. But if the recipient is identified as a certain person, the human brain suddenly becomes active and unique and personal words start to flow.

It is important to ascertain the person you are reaching out to when writing words that communicate. In advertising, we call it “fixing your eyes on your target.” I would like to talk in more depth about that later, in chapters four and five.

Chapter 3

What does it mean to take your thought one step deeper?



In chapters one and two, I spoke about taking your thought one step further. It is important because I think this is exactly what you need to do in order to come up with words that communicate. In this chapter, I would like to explain what it means to *take your thought one step further*.

Think about what's fun.

Think about what makes you happy.



As I explained in the previous chapter, I must remind you not to be satisfied with generic words like *fun* or *happy*. Think

carefully about what you consider fun and what makes you happy. We are basically lazy, so most of the time we tend to think that the first words that come to mind are good enough.

For example, imagine that you have just finished watching a movie. You are probably thinking it was good or it was not so interesting without giving it any more thought because you're too busy. But what if someone asked about your impression of the movie? The only words that you would come up with are, "It was good," or "It was so-so." That would be natural because it is the extent of thought you have given to it.

But professional film critics are not like that. They think about what was interesting or what wasn't as good as they expected. They discover something beyond what they thought about and put that into words, which very likely communicate far more than the first impression we expressed.

Taking your thought one step further just means asking yourself why you thought what you thought.

I'm not saying that first impressions are bad, or that inspirations are mistaken. On the contrary, I think that **first impressions should be taken very seriously.**

At work, when I write copy for a product or a company, I start with whatever basic knowledge I have before reading various reference materials. I do this so that I can confirm what the product or company means to me as an average person living an average lifestyle. Since most people judge products and companies depending on the initial impact, it is important to me that I start by taking note of my own first impression.

Moreover, because my first impression is made before any input of reference materials and various opinions, they are most likely my own original thoughts and my true feelings that could get lost and averaged out once I absorb enormous amounts of information and listen to other people's opinions.

A first impression is not bad at all, but it is only the gateway to finding the wording that will communicate your original thoughts.

Let me speak more specifically about advertising.

A long time ago, I was invited to a university seminar to give a lecture on copywriting for advertisements. I gave the students an assignment to come up with copy for a "chocolate bar," which I look back now and think it was a bit crude.

One of the students, after complaining about how he was not

good at this kind of assignment, showed me what he came up with.

“Sweet.”

That’s all it said. It didn’t even resemble copy. The other students snickered. I laughed, too. Then I decided to poke a little further. This was the exchange that took place:

“Sweet? That’s direct.”

“It is.”

“Couldn’t you think of anything else? It’s pretty obvious chocolate is sweet.”

“Yeah, but these days they’ve got those kinds with nuts and raisins in them, and I don’t like those.”

That made me stop and think. This simple exchange created a thought. It might be stretching it, but this could even be a strategy.

“Chocolate bars these days are too fancy. They add nuts, they are filled with raisins, they are low in calories, and they end up

reducing the sweetness. We don't need all that. Chocolate is sweet and we should focus on that value!"

This is pushing it, but at least it provokes thought.

That student wanted to write it off as simply being "sweet," but through our dialogue he was able to take his thought one step further. He thought about why he wrote "sweet" and realized that he didn't like the type that included nuts and raisins. He liked plain sweet chocolate. He realized that this was indeed his concept of chocolate and found what it was he needed to communicate.

First impressions are not bad. This is an example of believing in your first impression and thinking about why you thought what you did.

You cannot take back your first impression. The moment you feel it, it becomes the truth for you. Still, it is an impulse and no more than a gateway. What is important is to dig deeper.

When you dig into your imagination and discover your own thoughts (i.e. I should focus on the value of chocolate – that it is "sweet"), the wording you come up with will be more than just "sweet."

You might declare: “The best things are sweet. Chocolate bars are the best.”

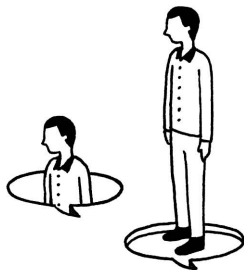
You might be simple: “Just plain sweet. Chocolate bars are the best.”

You might be cheeky: “What’s wrong with being sweet? Chocolate bars are the best.”

You might even be challenging: “Who likes fancy chocolate? Chocolate bars are the best.”

I will discuss ways to complete this type of wording later. My point here is that once the writer discovers his own thoughts, he has a greater possibility of finding his own words – his own communicable wording.

Differences in how deep a thought can be, seen from the perspective of a radio assignment.



Let me give you another example.

Several times a year, I lecture at courses that teach copywriting. I give the students assignments to write and then I make comments.

One subject I often assign is radio. Of the great varieties of copy that students come up with, it is easy to see that the better ones (those that communicate) are those that have been given

deeper thought.

“Straight talk. Radio.”

This is one example of the copy they came up with. I liked the use of “straight talk.” It is very radio-like. However, it is not completely satisfying. It needs to be more convincing. As I was wondering what was missing, I came across this copy:

“Even idols talk straight when they take off their fancy clothes. Radio.”

That makes absolute sense. This person is thinking one step further. He used his first impression, radio = straight talk, as his gateway and then reflected on why that was his first impression. Then he came to the realization that almost everyone, even idols, don’t wear heavy makeup or fancy costumes when they’re on the radio. He simply put that into words.

This is what another person wrote:

“Everyone is straight-talking because they’ve got their guard down. Radio.”

This also shows that extra thought was given. The first impression was straight talk, but then the writer wondered why and came to the realization that radio has less impact compared to television so people don't take it as seriously and let their guard down. This is what makes them say things they didn't mean to. This person just put this thought into words.

- A. Straight talk. Radio.**
- B. Even idols talk straight when they take off their fancy clothes. Radio.**
- C. Everyone is straight-talking because they've got their guard down. Radio.**

The difference between these three pieces of copy is obvious. Copy A has stopped at the gateway. This is not wrong. *Straight talk* is good because it is referring to a very important aspect of radio broadcasting. However, in order to turn that into word-ing that communicates, it is important to think one step further. Believe in your first impression, think beyond that, and ask yourself why you felt that way.

That is how the wordings in Copy B and Copy C were created. They are more convincing than Copy A and communicate

better. This is not because the expression is particularly clever. It is because the creator put more thought into it.

In this chapter, I have discussed giving more depth to your thoughts. I hope it is clear to you now.

I have spoken repeatedly about incommunicable wording, but I would like to emphasize that this means *the wording that needs to be communicated has not yet been found*.

One example is in the chocolate bar story explained above. The word *sweet* that the university student came up with is indeed a wording, but it is something that he thought of before he found the expression he needed to communicate – before he found his own thoughts about how he did not like chocolate with nuts or raisins and that simple chocolate was the best. Without yet having found what it was that he needed to communicate, it is not surprising that the first wording did not completely get through.

This also applies to the comments by the athletes I first spoke of. They were bombarded with questions before they had a chance to think about what it was that they needed to communicate. Obviously, the only words that could be spoken were perfunctory and incommunicable.

The process of deepening your way of thinking, which I have been stressing as extremely important, is perhaps like going on a journey of reflection in order to find what it is that you truly wish to communicate.

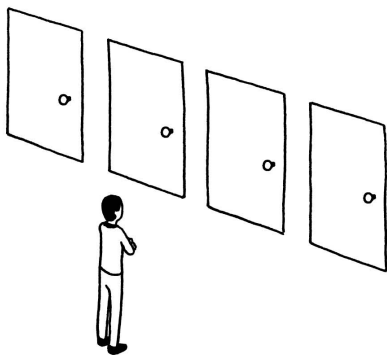
Honestly speaking, the act of thinking is quite tedious. However, it is something we must do if we don't want to waste our first impressions and if we want to find the wording that truly communicates.

People's inspirations always have meaning. First impressions have meaning. Believe in them, let them be the gateway that opens toward deeper thought, and take a step in. There, you will find your very own thoughts. They will be original. They will be the things that you feel must be communicated. It might be a tedious process, but go and search.

In the next chapter, I will talk about how to think one step further and to make this tedious action a little bit easier.

Chapter 4

The four doors that make your thoughts deeper



This chapter will talk about what methods you can use to take the extra step to deepen your thoughts.

Any copywriter is familiar with the methods I will introduce here. I learned them when I was just starting out, but now I use them in lectures and workshops as if I discovered them myself.

The methods I am referring to are the doors that help us observe products and companies from various angles for the purpose of writing copy from different perspectives. I will explain what it means to deepen your thoughts and how it can be useful not only for copywriters, but also for a great number of people who need to create plans.

Product / Company	Target
Competition	Era / Society

These are the four doors where copywriters deepen our thoughts, find our own original ideas (what we really want to communicate), and write copies. Let me briefly explain each one.

The product/company door

Quite obviously, this is the door where you think about the product or company for which the copy must be created. Thinking about it may seem to be an obscure notion, but what it means is to try and *redefine* the product or the company and discover its essence.

Let's use the chocolate theme again as an example. When you define the product as it is, it is a sweet snack made from cacao beans. At times it can be used to say, "I love you." Sometimes it makes people feel relaxed. It could be the enemy if you are trying to lose weight. There are many definitions. What is important here is to verify them as the first step to finding your own thoughts, which is your original wording.

To give you an example of advertising copy, here is one written by Shunichi Iwasaki.

A New Year's card is not just a greeting; it's a gift.

This is a very kind and thoughtful definition that suggests that New Year's cards are not just a formality. This copy was created because the creator thought about what New Year's cards are really for. In fact, I was in charge of a New Year's cards campaign once and used this copy. I remember that the moment I established that a New Year's card was a gift, I felt a warm affection and visualized a drama behind every person who had anything to do with New Year's cards. This made it easier for me to create the commercial and all the other creative material.

Since 2008, I have been in charge of corporate advertisements for a chemical manufacturing company called Asahi Kasei. This is the copy I wrote for them.

"Something that didn't exist in the world before today"

To be blunt, if an electrical appliance manufacturer makes something new, it's just *a new electrical appliance*. It's an

extension of something that already existed. In comparison, a chemical manufacturer studies the material and works with the source. So I figured that it would be entirely possible for them to create something that never existed before. That is how I redefined one of the world's finest chemical manufacturers, Asahi Kasei, in my own way. I wrote the copy hoping to communicate to the public the company's social value and grand scale, and to communicate to its employees how worthwhile their work is.

The *product/company door* is a very important door to approach the subject head on. However, if you start going round in circles here, this door could very possibly get you stuck. Why did I tell you about it in the first place then? I'll explain this in more detail later.

The *target door*

This door is about thinking to whom you intend to communicate your wording. It's a matter of course, but we tend to forget about this when we are too wrapped up in drawing up a plan, designing a campaign, or figuring out how to bring the project

together. In other words, we are so wrapped up in ourselves that we have abandoned the part about who it is we are directing our message at. I'm guilty of this myself.

A little while ago, I was in charge of an advertisement for a Sony Blu-ray recorder that had just been released. During our preliminary meeting we discussed this new type of medium and marveled on how many times clearer the picture was than a DVD, or how much longer it can record than a DVD. Perhaps you remember that in those days there were two standards for what would be the next-generation DVD format: Blu-ray and HD-DVD. For this reason, there was a lot of talk about which features were superior to the rival HD-DVD and which were not.

Somehow, it was not working. Every copy and every plan created ended up lacking something. "XX times clearer than a DVD" told it as it was, but it didn't feel as though the words were reaching anywhere. You felt like saying, "But DVD isn't that bad."

What struck me was the question, "So, who's going to buy it?" Then I started thinking about the target. Who would buy a Blu-ray when everyone owns a DVD player? Who would

switch over? The answer was clear. It would be the people who bought high-definition television sets. This was just before the transition to terrestrial digital broadcasting, so the penetration of high-definition TV was about 20%. These 20% were the people who would buy a Blu-ray recorder, of course, because anybody who is going to buy a machine that records high-definition programming would have to own a high-definition TV. It took me a little while before I realized the obvious, but when I did, this is the copy I wrote.

“What a waste!”

What I meant was, “Why settle for a DVD recorder when your television is high-definition?” It would be a waste not to have something that can record high-definition. It was very blunt, but I think it communicated directly to the people who I needed to communicate to (my target), much more so than some talk about how much nicer the picture would be than on a DVD.

When I spoke earlier about how the *product/company door* is very significant when approaching the subject head on but

could get you stuck if you start going round in circles, this is what I was talking about. It happened with the Blu-ray project. When I approached the subject head on, it was so many times clearer than a DVD. There's no mistake about that and it is an important feature. However, it is also very possible that the wording ends up simply being convenient for the communicator. The person on the receiving end could very well respond with, "My DVD is not so bad." That is when you need to think about whom you want your message to reach. Think about the person on the receiving end. It is obvious but very important when thinking about the words you want to communicate.

A certain copywriter once wrote the following:

"What others want to hear, rather than what you want to say."

At first glance it looks like a Zen riddle, but I think this is precisely what it means to think about the words you want to communicate.

The competition door

Think about your rivals. Make comparisons. This is probably the easiest door to explore your thoughts.

Makoto Tsunoda, a copywriter whom I highly respect, once told me about an episode he was involved in. Apparently there was a time when he frequented hostess clubs, and there was a girl whom he especially took a liking to. Let's call her Hitomi.

One day when Mr. Tsunoda arrived at the establishment, Hitomi was attending to some men at another table. After a while, he started getting irritated because she wouldn't come over to his table. When she finally did one hour later, he was about to explode in anger. But the first thing she said to him then made his anger disappear. Guess what she said?

She said: "Those customers were so boring."

Perfect!

In this case, the message she needed to communicate was, "Thank you for coming. I really missed you." This is exactly what she did, but here she used the concept of comparison. By making this comparison, her message became far more convincing.

It is not often that you will find absolute value in this world. Perfect products are very rare. In this day and age when the volume of commodities and information is overwhelming, we unintentionally seem to be viewing things relatively when we make judgments. We look at two different things and wonder which is more important. Instead of saying, “I want this!” we say, “I prefer this to that.”

Because everyone does this nowadays, it’s best not to believe that the product, company, or subject you are in charge of is absolute. First establish a rival and think what aspects are superior or inferior to what you have, and what would be the best way to break through. This is an excellent process for deepening your thoughts and finding the words you truly want to communicate.

Having said that, I would like to stress the importance of searching broadly for a rival. Unfortunately, our rivals are not as easy to spot as customers sitting at another table in a hostess club. Juice brand A’s competition is not necessarily juice brand B. Consumers could be comparing it to tea or even mints. It is important to establish all sorts of competition and think about how you can win that battle. When you find an unexpected rival, you might come up with a surprisingly new idea.

The era/society door

This door makes you think about the relationship between the product, company, and plan that you are in charge of and the present era and society. You must be very aware of the times and societal behavior. This does not mean that you have to follow the trends, although of course you may if you choose to or you can also intentionally go against them. Whichever the case, the important thing is to understand the drift of the day and age, and the mood of the people.

Let me tell you about the time I was in charge of corporate advertising for Hitachi Ltd.

The TV commercial featured movie director Akira Kurosawa, and the catch phrase was “Let’s create.” The commercial put together images taken from footage of Kurosawa on the set making a movie. The object was to express the joy and dynamism of creating.

This is the narrative script I wrote for the commercial:

“Let’s create. Let’s make something that hasn’t been made

before.

The world is made up of all types of people.

Still, Hitachi wants to continue creating.

Because our nation has always moved forward and surprised the world by creating.

Right, Mr. Kurosawa?

Money games leave you feeling empty. Arrogant criticism is not productive.

Let's create. Let's make something new, something that will lead to the future.

See what is created by the 300,000 people of the Hitachi Group."

Just as this campaign was progressing, one of the major television networks, Fuji Television, was facing a possible takeover by a company called Livedoor, headed by Takafumi Horie. Everyone was glued to the daily developments and news surrounding this event. I was troubled by both those who put him on a pedestal and those who despised him. The thought of money games starting up again made me feel queasy. I was a typical "bubble generation rookie," the generation that graduated and entered the workforce during Japan's bubble economy

of the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Black Monday happened right after I joined the company. Stocks plummeted and we were thrown into a long recession. Soon after that, however, the stock market became active again, claiming neoliberalism.

With one eye on the Fuji Television versus Livedoor issue, my team and I commuted to the Hitachi research center outside of central Tokyo to do some research for the commercial. Amidst the lush greenery, there were many researchers working – but not just working, they were making things. And a lot of things.

As we were gathering information, I developed a strong urge to give recognition to these people and what they were doing.

Whatever the outcome of the takeover of Fuji Television, the Hitachi researchers would continue to devote themselves to creating. These people were far cooler than the people who were fretting over the takeover's effect on the stock market.

I knew that my urge to give these people recognition could be shared widely.

There were people who supported Fuji Television and there were those in favor of Livedoor, but there were many others who just didn't care about which side to take and were thinking, "Is this what our nation has come to?" To me, that was the mood of the times. Then I started thinking about the wording I

would use for the commercial.

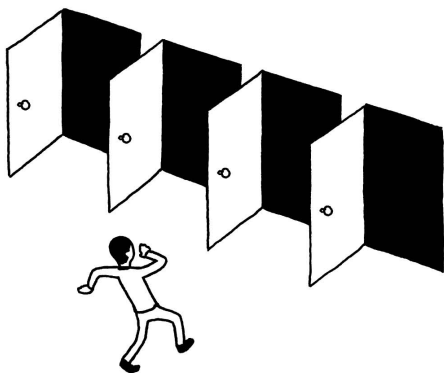
It was with these thoughts that I came up with “Let’s create” and wrote the narration. This, for instance, is what it means to think through the *era/society door*.

That concludes my discussion on the four doors. These methods are nothing surprising, but they will make it easier to find the way into different types of thinking processes.

In the following chapter I will discuss these processes and the different types of wording they produce, using examples written during copywriting workshops.

Chapter 5

Wording to which the four doors give life



The four doors to make your thoughts deeper and to find your own words:

Product / Company	Target
Competition	Era / Society

In this chapter, I will go into more detail about how to apply these doors that I briefly explained in the previous chapter. Even if the topic is the same, the words will be completely different depending on which door you use. You will see the process of thinking deeply before applying the words.

Whenever I am put in charge of training new Dentsu employees, the first thing I do is talk about these four doors, provide a subject, and then have them write copy. Then I judge the outcome. I will use some of the copy written by them as specific examples while I discuss the process of strong words coming to life.

A topic I often use is the radio, as I mentioned in chapter three. What copy will entice people to listen to the radio? To be honest, people (especially young people) do not listen to the radio much these days. This is precisely the reason I choose this topic. It is important to have a fresh mind while thoughts are developed in various directions to search for the right words.

Let's look at some of the wordings developed through this exercise.

From the *product/company door*

"Just lend us your ears"

"We've got some news you might like to hear"

These are examples of the kind of copy I see very often. They are easy to understand and have a bit of humor. They are nice. To be strict, however, the ideas are still a bit shallow. The writers have not yet found what it is that they really want to convey.

For example, I could say that "Just lend us your ears" is

simply rewording the sentence, “Please listen to the radio.” Of course it sounds good because the idiom “lend me your ears” is well represented. Still, it is just rewording.

Rewording is important in rhetoric, but before that, it is more important to find what it is that you want to communicate. The person who wrote this hasn’t found that yet. Perhaps these words came to mind before thinking thoroughly and discovering what attracts people to the radio.

The same goes for “We’ve got some news you might like to hear.” It looks like this person remembered the idiom “good to hear” and put together the copy before fully exploring his thoughts.

However, this phrase includes the type of first impression that you need to treasure, as I mentioned in chapter three. “Good to hear” also means that there is a scoop or some sort of beneficial information. This is the biggest difference with the copy, “Just lend us your ears.” In other words, the writer of this copy must have had the first impression that radio delivers beneficial information. The person should then put more value on that first impression and think one step further. What could that beneficial information be? Dig deeper. The moment the

answer is discovered will be the moment one's own thoughts about the radio have been found. Then the writer is ready to write words that communicate.

Later in the book I will explain more about how to use the door when that happens.

“Memory box from adolescence”

This was another piece of copy.

These words came from the *product/company door*. The writer thought about what the radio meant and redefined it for us. Sure enough, the middle-aged generation has special memories of late night radio from school days, when they were cramming for exams or simply staying up past midnight listening to their favorite DJ. In that sense, this copy is not mistaken. It's the absolute truth. But somehow, it doesn't communicate. It doesn't feel like it will move people. Why is that? Meanwhile, here is another one.

“All Night Nippon is still on the air”

It doesn't sound like copy, does it? It looks more like a notice.

Still, compared with “Memory box from adolescence,” it communicates better. It feels like it will move people. It might trigger the middle-aged generation to look up who the DJ of the “All Night Nippon” program is today.

“Memory box from adolescence” does include that important first impression, which was the idea that the middle-aged generation will probably listen to the radio. Of the four doors, this is the *target door* we’re seeing. I advise going one step further, however, and not simply be satisfied with likening radio to a memory box and leaving it at that. Once you have written the words *memory box*, think about what those people might have listened to when they were young. What kind of programs and what songs were popular? When you hit that, doesn’t it all come together?

This is the kind of observation evident in the copy, “All Night Nippon is still on the air.”

The person who wrote this copy probably had a train of thought that went something like this:

- Only the middle-aged generation listens to the radio.
- The target is this group of people who haven’t been listening

to the radio anymore these days.

- What did they listen to on the radio back then?
- “All Night Nippon” was one of their favorite programs, and it’s still on the air!
- I should let them know because they may be happy to know that.

Understand who your target is and think about or research the best way to attract their interest. Then, write. Unlike your first impression, here you have something that includes an idea that will move your target – in this case an element called “All Night Nippon.” This is an example of what it means to open the *target door* and deepen that thought.

From the target door

Since we are on the topic of the *target door*, let me continue.

Earlier, I showed you the copy, “We’ve got some news you might like to hear.” I introduced it as copy that goes no further than the first impression. What can be done to make this deeper? How do we go one step further?

Let’s open the *target door* and establish whom the target is and what that person would like to hear. What would be

beneficial news to them?

Here is a piece of copy that came from among the first-year employees:

“Where can I encounter a song before it becomes popular?”

This person established the target as someone who likes music. Likening radio to music is not a progressive idea. In fact, it's quite typical. But that's fine. The *target door* is not there to forcefully establish a target. It is there to find the target that can be moved most easily and then to imagine what the benefits are for that target that you have established. This is what it means to deepen your thoughts through the *target door*. After writing, “We’ve got some news you might like to hear,” think further:

- I suggested interesting news, but whom will it benefit?
- Radio might be good for someone who likes music.
- What sort of benefits could the radio have for someone who likes music?
- It plays music you did not know or expect. Maybe it is the pleasure of hearing songs being played that you would not

have chosen yourself.

This would be a good way to deepen your imagination. It is not hard to do. You do not need to make a dramatic leap. Take one step at a time and open the door using your first impression as a cue and then deepen your thoughts.

One piece of copy went like this:

“Today I switched off my navigator and turned on the radio. I arrived 30 minutes early.”

This writer thought of the driver as the target. How he would arrive early is beyond me, but we see that he thought the best place to listen to the radio is in the car.

It is clearly evident that the driver is the established target, but if that’s all it is, you may as well say:

“Your partner on a drive.”

This is how wish-washy it sounds. In fact, I do come across copy like this sometimes. This does not mean that the words

are wishy-washy. It means that your thinking is wishy-washy.

You've got the radio with you on a drive. We see the target. But nowadays, what is the first thing that you switch on when you get in the car? It's not the radio, is it? It's the car navigator. When you realize that, you might create the words (i.e. your thought), "not the car navigator, but the radio switch." The power of your words will reflect the fact that you have not stopped at the satisfaction of finding that the driver is your target, and show that you are able to properly observe and give thought to the habits of today's drivers. (Of course, it doesn't really matter here that you can use the car navigation system with the radio on.)

"Even idols talk straight when they take off their fancy clothes. Radio."

This is the copy I mentioned in chapter three. It also was the result of deepening a thought from the *target door*.

- Who listens to the radio?
- Wouldn't they be geeky types?
- A bit of research tells me that many shows feature idols.

- What would be a benefit for geeks who are into idols?
- Probably to feel the idols as their genuine, natural self.

The copy was likely conceived with this train of thought. Then, as I discussed in chapter three, it is taken even further to contemplate why people speak the truth on the radio. Finally, it takes us to the words (fact) that the idols are not wearing their fancy clothes on radio.

Again, this is not particularly a huge dramatic insight. It's just a matter of giving it considerable thought. Giving it this much thought helped the writer to find what it was that he truly wanted to communicate.

At a handshaking event, "I listen to your radio show" will get you a bigger smile than "I see you on TV all the time."

Perhaps a bit far-fetched, but this copy is written with the target clearly in mind. It was one of the better ones, with a lot of thought put into finding what would make the target happy. You may have noticed that this copy also includes the focus of comparison with television, which you would find behind the *competition door*. It is fine to go beyond one door and open up

all four doors if you like. Each time you open a door, you are bound to deepen your thoughts even more.

Now that we are here, let's move right along and talk about the *competition door*

From the *competition door*

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the *competition door* is where your focus is comparison, the easiest way to capture your deeper thoughts. This is because in this day and age when it is difficult for absolute values to exist, we tend to find ourselves unconsciously making comparisons whenever we make decisions. This door tells us to focus on that comparative instinct.

If you are going to think about radio, first consider what the competition is. The television will likely be the first thing that comes to mind. As I mentioned earlier, it is important to deliberate broadly what the competition is, but it is not necessary to forcibly establish a peculiar competitor who is not there. From whom will you be taking customers away? From where would you move people away? If you think it is television, consider

what advantages radio has over television. Consider the reasons for people to give up their time watching TV in order to listen to the radio. This is an easy way to understand how to deepen your thoughts.

Let's look again at the copy, "At a handshaking event, 'I listen to your radio show' will get you a bigger smile than 'I see you on TV all the time.'"

- Open the *target door*. Determine that the geeky type is your target.
- Open the *competition door*. See yourself taking away customers from television.
- Consider why the geeky types would think radio has more benefits over TV.

This is likely the train of thought that preceded that copy. In fact, the writer may have written it more out of inspiration, but what is important is to unravel that inspiration to see where it came from. Once you see the pattern, it becomes easy to imitate. Take a variety of these patterns of thought and make them your own, because this is what you will need in order to

constantly come up with powerful words.

Consider the copy, “We’ve got some news you might like to hear.” If you think that the news someone would want to hear is beneficial, keep that first impression in mind as you proceed to:

- Open the *competition door*. Establish television as the competition.
- Think about the benefits of radio in comparison to television. What can you get from radio that you can’t from television?

This pattern of thought led to the following copy I introduced in chapter three:

“Everyone is straight-talking because they’ve got their guard down. Radio.”

- What is it about radio that is better than television?
- Maybe everyone talks more on the radio.
- In fact, there have been quite a number of explosive remarks.
- Why is that? Is it because radio is lower key?

This is probably the flow of thought.

Similar to the other copy, “Even idols talk straight...” the writer found a superior aspect of radio – *straight-talk* – and took this one step further to contemplate:

- Why does radio mean more *straight-talk*?

As you can see, the person who pursues his thought persistently prevails in the end.

Here is another piece of copy that was submitted.

“Television plays popular songs. Radio plays songs before they become popular.”

Similar to the copy I mentioned earlier that said, “Where can I encounter a song before it becomes popular?” the writer entered the *target door* and proceeded to open the *competition door*. Great thought was given to why the radio is attractive to music lovers (the target) than television (the competition), and the thoughts were expressed more specifically. This is a

good example of deepening the thought by opening one door at a time.

I would like to invite you to take a moment and compare radio to television, thinking of various good points about radio. This is how you *deepen your thoughts* by using the *comparison door* and the first step in the process of finding your *very own thoughts* regarding an assignment you have been given.

Here is a piece of copy written by another writer.

“You can’t do your ironing and watch TV at the same time.”

It’s not spectacular copy, but it is suggestive in appealing the fact that you can listen to the radio while you’re doing something else at the same time. So where did this suggestiveness come from? It was the result of persistent comparison with television.

- “Doing something else at the same time” is a specific quality of radio.

- But there are many people who always leave the television on.
- Then what can you “do at the same time” as you listen to the radio that you cannot do while watching TV?
- How about ironing?

This persistent thinking gave power to the words that would otherwise be mundane.

“You can’t hear the television from the kitchen.”

This is also good copy. While open kitchens and island kitchen counters are becoming popular, most kitchens are still set beyond the living room. This copy was created by opening the *competition door* and carefully observing the living room where the television is located, and then contemplating where the radio could fit in a lifestyle that revolves around television.

“If television comedy is not enough for you.”

This copy was written from the *target door*. The target is the comedy fan, but the *competition door* is also open. In fact,

there are many comedians who are on both television and radio, so the comparison is a very good idea. This is good copy, but again I would advise taking the thought another step. If comedy on the radio is funnier, think about why. Then you might come up with this copy:

“The funniest guy is the one who sounds funny.”

To contemplate deeper is to ask yourself *why*.

Why did you think comedy on the radio is funnier than on television? Why did you think comedy was more suited to radio? It really isn't an easy process. But each time you ask yourself why, your thoughts will become deeper and you will get that much closer to an idea that is uniquely yours.

I have used television as the competitor because it is easiest to understand, but of course, television is not the only competition. I stress again that what you establish as your competition within the *competition door* is most important.

“It's not an obstacle on a crowded train.”

This copy is establishing the newspaper as the competitor. It also uses the *target door* to focus on the person listening to the morning news on the radio. The target is set, the comparison between the newspaper and radio is made, and the advantages of the radio are well thought out.

“The morning paper has last night’s news. The morning radio has the latest news.”

This copy not only illustrates the physical aspect of *not being an obstruction*, but also grasps a complete comparison of the news content.

The thought process should be clear by now.

- What is the radio’s competition?
- If news is a specific quality, the competition could be the newspaper.
- What content should the radio deliver to make people switch from the morning paper?
- Maybe the promptness that only the radio can offer?

There is no dramatic leap here, and that’s fine. Deepening

your thoughts one step at a time will lead you to copy like this:

“All the tunes on my iPod sound too familiar.”

This copy is easy to understand. It is very realistically picking a fight with a medium that has been established as the competition. The writer has given a lot of thought as to how the radio can beat the new medium called the iPod. At the same time, it expresses a wish for even a certain percentage of iPod users to listen to the radio. Fixing a specific target here has worked well.

“I don’t know its title, but I like the song that’s playing.”

“A sudden nostalgic melody set my heart on fire.”

The pattern of thought behind these pieces of copy is the same.

- What would make people choose to listen to the radio today?
- What is the competition?
- In this day and age, it has to be the iPod.
- What makes the radio more superior and more interesting?
- The radio plays music that wasn’t downloaded by the listener.

It is this sort of process that deepens the thought, and when you summarize the entire process, you come up with the words, “All the tunes on my iPod sound too familiar.” If you imagine someone listening to the radio, the pieces of copy developed are: “I don’t know its title, but I like the song that’s playing,” and “A sudden nostalgic melody set my heart on fire.”

It doesn’t matter which is better. It is just a difference in how the words are put together, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

I have just given you three examples – the television, the newspaper, and the iPod – of different competitors you can establish through the same *competition door*

Needless to say, depending on what you choose as the competition, the copy will naturally be different and the scope of the copy (i.e. thoughts) will expand.

More specifically, whether to establish the competition in a narrow space or to look for one in a broader range will be an important decision to make.

I am going to change the subject and talk about tea now.

When we think about tea sold in a PET bottle, the competition is, of course, tea sold by other companies. This is competition in a narrow space. Think about it. Is the competition really another company? Couldn't it be water? That might make the entire pie bigger. Or you could consider other beverages like sports drinks to be the competition. More to the extreme, it could even be mobile phones. Young people who don't have money to spend will cut back on all sorts of things in order to pay their mobile phone bill. At a glance there may be no connection, but there is a definite link between PET bottled tea and the phone bill. It may take some effort, but thinking about this link is very worthwhile because it will help you to remove yourself from the narrow-minded marketing point of view of focusing on tea sold by another company and look at the world from a broader perspective. Searching far and wide for your competition rather than thinking about the immediate competitor in a narrow space will definitely lead to a more dynamic copy or way of thinking.

Let's go back to the subject of the radio.

"If it's too good to tweet, send it in."

This copy anticipates competition that is even more up to date than television or the iPod. The writer probably thought very hard about who the competitor today really is. I like the observation that *sending in a message* to be read on air is a quality unique to radio. The following copy might be easier to understand:

“If you’re going to tweet, have an idol read it for you.”

Maybe I got a bit carried away here, but anyway...

It’s interesting that establishing the new medium Twitter as the competitor actually gave light to the possibilities that radio may have. Indeed, the relationship between radio and the Internet is becoming more intense. Widening the gateway to your thoughts also broadens the potential of the product and company that you want to promote.

Be aware of the most recent media. Observe what captures people’s hearts nowadays. Having that vision will take you to the next door.

From the *era/society door*

The newer the copywriter is and the more recently he started thinking about a plan, the more likely he is to only think about the relationship between himself and that product or company. Is the product necessary and is it something he wants? That is all he thinks about. Of course that is fine as a way in, but he will be up against a wall before he knows it. Then he will have to open another door. What does the product mean to his girlfriend, his parents, or his boss? With broader thinking, the copy and plans start to change. The *era/society door* is where you broaden your imagination to think in the largest scale possible.

I will go back to the radio so I don't sound quite as abstract.

“Did you know that you can listen to the radio on your smartphone?”

This was another copy that was submitted. It doesn't look like copy or anything more than a notice, yet I think it's good copy. Compared to the very copy-like wording “lend me your ears” that I mentioned earlier, at least a lot more thought has gone into it and it reflects that the writer observed today's societal

trends.

Perhaps this was the thinking process.

- How do I get people to listen to the radio?
- Getting people to buy a radio is quite a task.
- Today you can actually listen to the radio on smartphones.
- Wouldn't it be faster just to tell them this instead of having them buy a radio?
- I will tell them that they don't have to buy one.

Upon hearing the word radio, most people will imagine an old fashioned box-like radio, and the setting in which the radio is used. But that is something of the past. Nowadays, radio has jumped out of that box and into the Internet. There are all sorts of tools available to access the radio now. We must capture the sense of the current era.

“Lend me your ears” sounds more like copy than “Did you know that you can listen to the radio on your smartphone?” but copy is all it sounds like. A clear, present-day observation will show you that the latter piece of copy communicates more

effectively.

The *era/society door* in other words is all about how well you observe the present day and society.

“At the time of the earthquake amidst all the somber news, what shed a light on the darkness was my radio.”

This copy is very symbolic of what it means to think of the era and society. Having just told you that the boxed in radio is outdated, this may come as a surprise, but we learned many things from the major 2011 earthquake that shattered our nation. One thing we realized is that a small radio can be a reliable friend. It was that small radio that connected us to information most effectively. This may sound imprudent, but it is important to make a careful observation of this and to take advantage of shifts in society and changes in people’s awareness, for you will discover the reason for the radio to exist in today’s era and society.

Taking advantage of the insecurities of this age and society may be a questionable act. However, every household should have a radio in case of an emergency. It could even be accepted as a public service announcement.

From the *era/society door* we found the earthquake theme. From there, if we open the *competition door*, we could write this copy:

“Is your television portable in an emergency?”

Or if you really want to be mean and realistic, you could say:

“When it happened, we couldn’t communicate with our smartphones.”

Since the pattern of thought is already there, all sorts of copy come to mind. For example, if you want people to get in the habit of turning the radio on, you could say:

“Turn on the radio once in a while as part of your emergency drill.”

The wording is convincing because the era and society have been grasped, and the value of existence of the medium known as the radio was established as the starting point for contemplation.

For those involved in copywriting and planning, this *era/*

society door is the most dynamic and worthy of reflection.

To put it bluntly, it is not about demeaning the competition or differentiating or anything trifling like that. It is about taking on the entire world. If you are going to write words or create a plan, you may as well take on the challenge with the guts to move the world and change society.

Thinking about the relationship between the product/company and the present day will obviously create wording that will communicate to the world much more so than just thinking about the relationship you personally have with the product and the company.

In this chapter I introduced wordings that are created through the four doors, using copy written by first-year Dentsu employees. I hope it helped you develop an understanding of the specific thought patterns and processes that you will go through using these doors.

I would like to emphasize that your thoughts do not have to be wild or eccentric. Ideas are not erratic. You just need to give it deep thought as you open each of the *product/company*, *target*, *competition*, and *era/society* doors.

Do not rush to turn your first impression into words. Use that

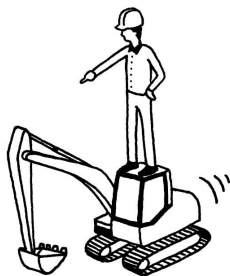
first impression as an important cue to slowly and carefully contemplate. Think about why you thought so. Think about why you felt the way you did. There is bound to be a reason. Be persistent and ask yourself “Why?” over and over again as you open each door to deepen your thoughts to discover that reason. It takes a lot of time and effort, indeed.

But for those of us who are average human beings, this is the only way to create wording that communicates. Or maybe it’s just that I haven’t found an effective method yet.

In the next chapter, I will discuss probing yet further into your thoughts from the viewpoint of polishing the words.

Chapter 6

Deepening your thoughts even further



In this chapter, I will focus on adding the final touches to your words. The various things I introduced in the previous chapter were to show you how to deepen your thoughts using the four doors as your gateway. This chapter will show you how to take another step further *to deepen the thought that becomes evident when it is finally put into words*.

Basically there are two methods that I use when I write copy.

Going back and forth between a story and universality

One is going back and forth between a story and universality. This may sound confusing but what it means is this. When you think of a story, extract whatever it is that you find to be universal. When you think of a wording that is universal, expand it to a familiar story.

As in the previous chapters, I will use copy written for the radio to explain what I mean.

“Hikaru Ijuin is more interesting on the radio than he is on TV.”

This copy is based on a story involving the radio and a comedian, Hikaru Ijuin, who is an extraordinary talker. The wording comes from observing and thinking what it is about the radio that is more interesting than television, making use of the fact that the *competition door* had been opened and television established as the competitor.

“Whoever says that Hikaru Ijuin on television is funny needs to grow up.”

This is another idea.

This copy is more challenging. I will explain it in more detail later when I discuss the second method.

This story using Hikaru Ijuin suggests that radio is attractive. I think it is specific and quite good, but it is worth going one step further and not being satisfied at this point.

- Why is Hikaru Ijuin more interesting on radio than he is on television?
- From this fact, what is it that I want to say?
- How would I communicate this to someone who doesn't know Hikaru Ijuin?

By deepening your thoughts this way, you could come up with this type of copy that I mentioned in the previous chapter.

“If television comedy is not enough for you.”

This work involves what is called extracting universality from a story. Take a story or a fact and look at it from a distance. Then take one step closer to the essence.

Let's look at this copy, “If television comedy is not enough for you,” and develop that into something that might be more universal. The way to do that is what I have been telling you all along – push yourself into a corner and ask yourself why you felt that way.

Why did you think that comedy on the radio was better than comedy on TV?

What is the difference between radio and television?

Radio communicates through sound, and the sound it delivers determines its worth.

From this thought process, you can develop the following

copy that I introduced in the previous chapter:

“The funniest guy is the one who sounds funny.”

It is a good example of extracting the universal truth from the topic of radio and comedy.

Which is the better piece of copy then, this one or the one introduced at the beginning of this chapter, “Hikaru Ijuin is more interesting on the radio than he is on TV”? Which one do you think communicates?

Honestly, that is a difficult decision. What I am trying to emphasize is that it is better not to be satisfied with a particular story, but to continue the process of extracting something that is universal. Through this process you can get closer to what it is that you really want to communicate.

Stories are specific and easier to understand. It is fun to imagine the people involved with the product or the company. It encourages creative writing. Then afterwards, you review your words and ask yourself, “Why did I write this? What is my point?” This is a wonderful process of deepening your thoughts.

Having said that, the opposite is also true. This is the process of turning universality into a story.

Here is the copy I introduced in the previous chapter:

“All the tunes in my iPod are too familiar.”

This is clear and sharp copy that challenges the competitor. It can be used as it is, but you can consider this as a universal fact and break it down into a story.

- The iPod basically stores tunes that I downloaded.
- The radio is different.
- Then what can I hear on the radio? What would people like to listen to?

You can shift the focus on things around you. Think about it in relation to yourself, your family, or your partner. Such thought process can lead to copy like the one I brought up in the previous chapter:

“I don’t know its title, but I like the song that’s playing”

“A sudden nostalgic melody set my heart on fire.”

These stories stir something inside.

The reality that was found through the *competition door* was: the radio = other people choose the songs; the iPod = you select the songs. So the copy, “My iPod only has songs I know,” seems straightforward and closer to the truth. However, it might be better to use copy that tells a story to make it more realistic. Big words tend to become big-headed. Will the big words you came up with really communicate, or are they written only to suit your own convenience?

The thought process of breaking down the story involves leaning closer to the feelings of the people you are communicating to.

It is not about whether it is better to find universal words in a story or extracting a story from universal words. What is important is to go back and forth between the two. More specifically, it is necessary to deepen your thoughts about what you really want to communicate by taking a step closer to the essence or leaning closer to the feelings of others.

When people write down words, that action is always accompanied by a habitual way of thinking.

If you like to observe other people and write down what you see and the feelings that come with it, dig deeper and make an effort to find the universal facts within.

If you like using big words such as “things *should* be,” imagine the way people feel or act when they come in contact with your words.

It is not easy by any means, but it is the accumulation of such tedious efforts that deepens your thoughts.

Ask yourself what you want to do with this wording

I would like to talk about the way you can deepen your thoughts when establishing and setting words in place.

You may find more repetition here, but please bear with me as I believe this is extremely useful.

You must clearly ascertain what it is that you want to do with the wording.

Let me be more specific.

As I mentioned briefly in chapter two when I discussed the chocolate bar, after you have discovered your own thoughts and you are ready to settle on the words that express them, you come up with a number of variations. These variations reflect the purpose – *what you want to do with the words*. When you discern that purpose, your thoughts become one step deeper.

Broadly speaking, the variations of *what you want to do with the words* can be categorized as follows:

- Declare
- Suggest
- Depict
- Provoke

When you are establishing your own words, ascertain your own will. Do you want to declare something in front of a great number of people, or do you want to suggest something to a target? Is your intention to depict a story or to provoke at the risk of a backlash?

Here too, I will use the radio theme to explain.

Consider this. After concentrating and giving the radio a lot of thought, you open the *era/society door* and finally arrive

at the thought, “In an emergency, turn on the radio.” That is commendable because it is your original thought. Now you must think about how to establish the wording. What do you want to do with the words?

If you wish to declare the thought, “In an emergency, turn on the radio,” try using words that are loud and strong. Announce your thoughts to the world as if it is the new common sense.

“Disaster media. Radio.”

“Radio is the most reliable.”

If you want to make a suggestion, imagine a specific target and make a thoughtful and scrupulous recommendation.

“Do you have a radio in your emergency kit?”

“Turn on the radio once in a while as part of your emergency drill.”

The latter piece of copy came up in the previous chapter.

When you want to make a depiction, observe your target very carefully and imagine that person actually holding the product or using the service. In other words, picture yourself as the

person you want to communicate to.

Earlier, I told you about this piece of copy:

“At the time of the earthquake amidst all the somber news, what shed a light on the darkness was my radio.”

By clearly depicting a state of emergency, the wording gained impact.

If you want to provoke your target, become a little bit mean. Close in on the competition or the person you wish to communicate to with a message that stings a bit, like this:

“If there is an earthquake, is your television portable?”

“If you tune in all the time, you won’t panic in an emergency.”

Declare, suggest, depict, and provoke.

When I create copy, I bear in mind these four variations of *what I want to do with the words*. I am certain that there are many other variations, and I encourage you to discover your

own.

By increasing the variations, you increase the number of processes in which to deepen your thoughts, adding to your intellectual wealth.

There is no right answer among these four variations. In fact, what is correct will change depending on the topic. Ask yourself this:

Do you have the appropriate caliber to make a *declaration*?

Do you have enough specifics to make a *suggestion*?

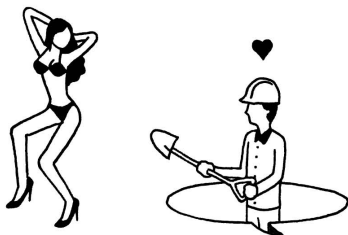
Do you have the insight into the surroundings to make a *depiction*?

Do you have the persuasive power to make a *provocation*?

Verify these qualities until you start to see what would work best. Is *declaration* appropriate or is *provocation* better? At that point, you will find that the thoughts you want to communicate have become one level deeper. The deeper they are, the more your words will reach others.

Chapter 7

**Things that interfere with the process of deepening
your thoughts**



In chapters five and six I went into detail about how to deepen your thoughts in order to write wording that communicates.

You may be thinking that the way I discussed the thought process was simply a matter of taking words and calculating backwards. In fact, this reverse calculation is actually quite important.

Your final output must not be an imitation of copy that already exists. However, what you can do is to imitate the thought process. At the risk of sounding grandiose, you can actually *steal* it. People who make the *effort to steal* are the ones who are able to make full use of that stolen technology and constantly come out with words that communicate.

To tell you the truth, I have now exhausted my bank of thought processes and methods of expression. Using combinations of the procedures I discussed in chapters five and six, I always struggle to create copy for my job.

So I would like to move away from the discussion of specific ways to create ideas and talk about our enemies within us.

Of course it is important to deepen our thoughts in order to create words that communicate, but there is always an enemy

that gets in our way – the enemy that exists within us.

It is not as frightening as it sounds; it is just a kind of *mindset*.

The temptation to say something good

Our first enemy is the *temptation to say something good*. You could replace the word temptation with common sense.

Ever since we were young children, we were given pencils and paper and studied. We would practice writing in Chinese characters, write essays, and draw up theses. Through our many years of schooling, we develop a habit that we cannot get rid of.

My intention is not to criticize our education system here. I just want to point out the fact that we are instilled with a particular habit through our long years of schooling. I did not notice this until I became a copywriter myself.

The habit I am talking about is this.

When we sit down to write something, we tend to write something “good.”

Does that sound familiar?

This habit has become so second nature to us that we probably don’t think twice about it. To be more precise, we *want to*

write something “good.”

There is obviously nothing wrong with writing something good, and I am not suggesting that you write something eccentric either. This is what I think:

If you want to write language that communicates, aim to write the *truth*, not just something *good*.

Equip yourself with “the truth” to confront that “something good,” which is the enemy.

Again, I’d like to use copy written for the radio to explain why “good” is the enemy.

Copywriters who are just starting out often write things like this:

“Someone, somewhere requested my favorite song.”

This writer has elaborately pictured someone listening to the radio. Careful consideration has been given to the quality delivered by listening to the radio as compared to the iPod.

At the same time, however, it is obvious that the copywriter

was trying to come up with something “good.” As least you can see the effort made to put it together nicely.

However, to put it bluntly, if you were listening to the radio and your favorite song came on, would you really feel thankful to someone, somewhere for requesting it? Probably not. This very obvious truth is what you should be focusing on.

The copy “Someone, somewhere requested my favorite song” was a product of trying to write something “good” – to highlight the unexpected connection that may exist between strangers. As a result, the copy ended up sounding like a pipe dream.

Compare it to this copy:

“Music that is good, not that I want to buy any.”

This rhetoric is the sort of “truth” I am talking about. There is no hidden motive of wanting to write something “good.” The focus here is to discover the benefits of listening to the radio and the advantages for the person receiving this message. There is no sense of obligation here to praise the radio. It’s written from the true feeling that says, “Okay, this is as far as the benefits of the radio go, and that’s not bad.” It goes

beyond just leaving an impression that you have heard a nice story, and convinces people to accept the fact.

The habit of wanting to write something “good” causes you to write something pretentious. You use words to try and settle with something that sounds nice and like a stereotype. It is important to understand the danger in that and ask yourself, “So, what is the truth? Where is that truth within yourself or society?” and deepen your thoughts further.

Here is another example of the type of copy I often see:

“I like to listen while I watch the side of his face.”

It’s a suggestion about listening to the car radio on a date. The *target door* is used to establish to whom the copy is delivered. In that sense, the copy is well thought out, but the desire to write something “good” (habit) makes the impact of communication weaker and it becomes closer to a stereotype.

Compare it with this copy:

“When you go for a drive and the conversation stalls, would the iPod give you something to talk about?”

Going on a driving date with your boyfriend is fun, but is it always fun? Beautiful scenery and your favorite music are not the only things you encounter on a drive. People who are trying to write something “good” only get this far with their ideas.

There are traffic jams. You might get lost. You might run out of things to say and feel awkward. This copy is more powerful because the writer has thought about the true experience of what happens on a drive. It communicates because it is written from the truth and not pretense.

Adhering to consistency

The second enemy is *adhering to consistency*.

I don't particularly like the word *consistency*. Why do people make such a big deal out of being consistent anyway?

For some time now, sticking to your principles and opinions has become something to be revered as “being consistent” and the term is frequently used. People who are consistent are praised and those who are inconsistent are criticized.

Of course, people who constantly change their minds cannot

be trusted. They cause trouble and confusion among the people around them. However, I would like to have the honesty and courage of a person who, after contemplating a particular topic for a long time and then suddenly coming up with a better idea than the original one, can say, “Sorry, I made a mistake.” It is important to have that honesty in you.

It would be different if it were a way of living, but if it is just a job, you should be able to admit that you made a mistake or that you found something better, apologize, and make the change without hesitation.

Prioritizing consistency means that you also prioritize conforming to the person that you were. Is this a way to deepen your thoughts? Could you come up with new ideas?

Fortunately for me, I have the opportunity to work with outstanding creative directors within the company as well as from outside and to meet with top leaders of client companies. And I often find myself thinking, “People at the top can really do what they want.”

If they think of something new, or if the situation changes, they change things right away. Alterations are immediately

ordered. They don't worry about what their bosses are going to say because they are the boss.

If what they say today is different from what they said yesterday, they don't worry about it because today's idea is fresher. They are wiser today than yesterday.

I have no idea about these people's lives, but as far as work is concerned they are as inconsistent as they come, and that impresses me.

When I say that they can do what they want, I mean that they are free from their previous selves. They do not make decisions that conform to their previous statements. True leaders **are always free to make the best decisions regarding issues at hand based on the newest information.**

How many of you have experienced feeling trapped?

The more meetings you attend and the more you speak your mind, the more confined you feel. It is the feeling of being slowly trapped within an accumulation of discussions and your previous remarks. You slowly become cornered. Certainly, this is all part of the process of how things are determined, but there are times when this feels like a nuisance.

It makes you want to shout, "Sure, that's what I said then, but

I feel differently now!”

Being consistent means that you are conforming to the previous you. However, business situations change all the time, and shifting your thoughts along those changes is nothing to be embarrassed about. If you find something more appropriate as a result of broadening and deepening your thoughts, take pride in that change – especially if it is about work, not your lifestyle.

For example, if you look at politics as someone’s job, you can’t blame politicians for going back on their word. Once they have thought hard, acquired new information, and found that they were mistaken, it is fine for them to apologize and reveal their new position. Dwelling on something they said previously and adhering to consistency is a bigger sin.

In fact, it is my opinion that politicians are typical examples of being so persistent about consistency that they are unable come up with better things to say.

The discussion in this chapter about two enemies that get in our way of deeper reflection may have been a little abstract

compared to the previous chapters.

But as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, they are important and useful when you are establishing a mindset for contemplation.

“A true story over a story in good taste.”

“What is the truth? Where is the true intention?”

Words that come from this mindset greatly differ from those that do not.

“Are my thoughts of yesterday correct?”

“I have new information now. What is the impact?”

Words that are written with these thoughts in mind at all times will communicate far more effectively than yesterday’s words.

Chapter 8

Last thoughts before the conclusion



I was planning to write my conclusion here and finish the book, but my editor suggested that I take this opportunity to write about modern day wordings and their meaning. Since I declared in chapter five that the *era/society door* was the most dynamic, I thought, “Why not?” Although this may have nothing to do with the techniques suggested in the title of this book, bear with me for a bit more.

By “modern day,” I assume we are talking about the era after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Immediately after that disaster struck, those who watched the magnitude of destruction were left speechless. They lamented at how helpless words can be. However, it was only a matter of time before slogans began to pop up here and there – *gambaro* (we can do it), *hitotsu ni naru* (let us become one), and *kizuna* (bond), among others. This reaffirmed my conviction that human beings crave words.

I am sure many people think about *post-disaster language*. What words are appropriate? What do people want to hear? As a person at the frontline of professionals working with words, I had a lot to think about.

Accurate words over emotional words

In Tokyo, right after the earthquake, we were told to go home, but there was so much chaos throughout all the transportation networks. There were people everywhere who did not know what to do. It was then that Twitter demonstrated its power. Information flew back and forth, letting people know which trains were running again and where there were rest areas along the main roads, even before the mass media could deliver the news. It was the most brilliant moment for this medium called Twitter.

With this timely information, the situation in Tohoku started to unravel and many emotional words were exchanged. There were words of sadness and words of encouragement. The slogans that said “We can do it” or “We are one” were probably already created by then.

This is when I realized it was accurate information that everyone needed. Frankly speaking, words were expected to effectively communicate accurate information. Emotional, inaccurate expressions would only invite confusion.

There was so much devastation that our hearts were already stirred up. We did not need any sentimental comments to be

reminded any further of our sorrow. What we needed were accurate expressions that would settle our feelings and help us organize our thoughts.

Then it became apparent that the nuclear power plant had incurred extensive damage. As more facts were revealed, the verbal reaction of the anti-nuclear activists became emotional and in response, the pro-nuclear advocates became emotional. Listening to the rhetoric of both parties, I wished for accuracy. I wanted to know what exactly was happening now, what the problems were, and what solutions we could expect.

Needless to say, everyone was emotional and their rhetoric was confusing because no one knew what was going on.

Still, I could not sympathize with either of the sides that on one end shouted, “Nukes are frightening!” and on the other end proudly saying, “There’s no problem.”

Emotional words – expressions that try to appeal to people’s emotions – inevitably end up being extreme. They take on sharp edges. The wording techniques are used toward that direction. What was truly necessary at the time, though, were accurate words that helped us grasp the real situation, not the bipolar arguments about whether we should have nuclear power plants or not. The words had to be as close as possible

to factual information.

Time has passed since the major earthquake, but my feelings about *accurate words over emotional words* have not changed. As we proceed to resolve the nuclear power generation issue and head toward recovery from the devastation, we are no longer being tested for our perseverance or resilience. It is our intelligence that is being challenged – the wisdom and technology of the Japanese people. This is no time to be basking in emotional words that make us feel good. It is time to stop making enemies and attacking them with emotional words just to feel good. We need to take one thing at a time and think hard about what has to be done. Then we need to put them into words.

Before and after the earthquake, I was in charge of an advertisement for Hebel Haus™ by Asahi Kasei Homes Corporation. While I was collecting information, I learned that homebuilders were gravely serious about the reality of earthquakes and their consequences. The industry was studying them the most, spending day after day compiling tests and research and working steadily as they strived to find the right answer. It was a

hard and steady process, but I found the people involved very dedicated and reliable.

“Let’s think. There is an answer.”

This is the copy I created. It was to be a brand slogan, but I felt uncomfortable about aimlessly delivering a bright and hopeful message. It was after the earthquake, and I wanted to communicate hope that was as close to the truth as possible. To me, those people at the Hebel Haus™ research center conducting one experiment after another represented genuine hope. I wanted to stress the importance of deep reflection instead of acting rashly on some emotion. Believe in your own intelligence and you are bound to find an answer. This was the one and only genuine hope in the aftermath of the earthquake that I could express.

Words to govern yourself over words that appeal to others

A number of years ago, writer Natsuki Ikezawa contributed an article to the Asahi Newspaper entitled, “Chase away the

copywriting style.”

This is what it said.

“For example, I saw some writing on the outside of a cup noodle container that said, ‘a tremendous bowl of noodles with the double goodness of animal and fish flavor’.

This is the type of writing that we are most exposed to these days. [edit] For the average Japanese person, words have become copy rather than a tool to communicate feelings to family and friends, something that governs your heart, words in a contract that are strictly defined, or the authority for philosophy or religion.

We take this type of writing lightly. No one will seriously pursue whether that product is truly a tremendous bowl of noodles. [edit] This is the state of language in our lives today. It includes a certain amount of lies and exaggeration, and it looks flashy and appealing, but it is not trustworthy. [edit]”

He follows by pointing out the shallowness of a cabinet minister’s words when he said that his campaign pledges during the elections were nothing more than slogans to illustrate his

enthusiasm.

Immediately after the earthquake, all sorts of wordings were expressed to appeal to people or to get them involved such as, “Thank you for your cooperation,” “You are not alone,” “Let’s connect,” and so on. These expressions were necessary to spread awareness so that the public would see the situation in Tohoku as their own. However, I believe that it is time now to change the direction of the language. Rather than saying this and that to others, we need to take a look at ourselves.

Words that try to appeal to others become emotional, as I mentioned earlier. This is natural because you are appealing directly to someone’s heartstrings. The techniques of wording are used in that direction and before you know it, as Ikezawa says, your words “include a certain amount of lies and exaggeration, and it looks flashy and appealing.” (Although as a copywriter, I probably should be angry that he called this a copywriting style.)

If we mean to address post-disaster issues as our own today, we should be directing our words toward ourselves, not at others. To use Ikezawa’s words, we need to treasure words as “a tool to communicate feelings to family and friends,

something that governs your heart, words in a contract that are strictly defined, or the authority for philosophy or religion,” not some sort of slogan to appeal to others.

What is important then is not to forget that “I” must be the subject. Here is a famous quote from the author, Tatsuya Mori.

“When the subject becomes plural, the predicate runs out of control.”

This is absolutely correct. When the subject changes from “I think...” to a plural, it ends up becoming “We must do...” It is easy to run off like that because “we” makes you feel bolder.

If you stick with “I,” you only consider what you can do as an individual. It is important to ask yourself if you are really certain about what you are going to say. Then the words declaring your strong will can move people.

It is important to think in terms of the singular form “I” as the subject and express how you feel toward various issues and what you want to do or can do about them. You can truly rely on the person or the company that declares that “I.”

As I predicted at the beginning, this chapter has taken a detour from the rest of the book, but I wanted to share my observation of words associated with this unique and challenging era.

Conclusion

As I mentioned in the introduction, in university I majored in Social Sciences and read many books mainly on the subject of mass communications theory under professor Takenori Yamamoto. One of the books I was greatly influenced by was written by American social psychologist George Herbert Mead. I should probably quote directly from him, but the book's title has slipped my mind, so bear with me as I write from memory.

On the theory of communication, Mead wrote this:

“Communication is led by the receiver, not the sender.”

This alone may not be easy to understand.

Generally, when you speak of communication, you imagine someone who has information sending a message to the receiver. In other words, the sender leads the communication.

However, the communication theory discussed in Mead's book was different.

- It does not matter whether the information (intent) of the sender is communicated or not.
- What is important is the reaction of the receiver.
- Equally important is the relationship that develops as a result.
- The receiver's reaction creates that relationship, so it is the receiver who leads the communication.

This was basically what Mead said.

I was moved by his point, "What is important is creating a relationship." This purpose is indeed much bigger and made much more sense than whether the intent of the sender has been communicated or not.

I have valued this view all these years after I became a copywriter and started working in the field of communication.

How can we write words that communicate better?

This is the mission of this book and the reason I introduced a number of skills that I have acquired through copywriting. Still, after writing all of this, I was once again reminded of the book that I read in university.

- What does it mean to communicate?
- Surely, to communicate something is not simply about whether the other person understood my intent.
- Building a good relationship as a result is most important.

Shigesato Itoi, one of Japan's leading copywriters who is very talented at interviewing people, once said that an interview is "a situation created by two people."

He said, "If you can't think of a question to ask, toss something in the air for the two of you to think about."

If your objective is to build a good relationship with each other, rather than worrying about whether your intent is communicated, then tossing something in the air is a feasible technique in your use of words.

Instead of wondering if your words are communicated or not, you can use words to promote mutual discussion and create a good relationship.

In this book I discussed words that communicate well. I also pointed out ways to deepen your thoughts in order to

accomplish that.

However, the final objective I hope for is to establish good relationships with others, and that is what I will aim for as I continue to write.

It may seem like I am getting sidetracked at the end, but I do believe that the reason people use words is to build good relationships.

Words exist not for convincing others, forcing them to obey, or winning an argument. Its basic purpose is to establish relationships.

In the future, as I continue to write, if I acquire new techniques of words, I would like to write another book.

As I mentioned earlier in this book, the content is based on lectures I have given during training courses for Dentsu's first-year employees and during workshops at Sendenkaigi Co., Ltd. Most of the copy I have introduced as examples were written there. I find that my ideas come together more easily when I talk to others.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who took my workshops and lectures.

I also thank Aki Nakajima for not giving up on me when I

couldn't meet my deadlines.

I am grateful to all of my copywriting mentors I have had the pleasure to work with since joining Dentsu. You have truly been thorough and patient with me.

I could not have written this book if it weren't for my wonderful seniors.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you who read this book. It would make me happy to know that I was able to create a good relationship with you. Thank you very much.

Takuya Isojima

Creative Director / Copywriter

Dentsu Communication Design Center

Joined Dentsu in 1991 after graduating from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Hitotsubashi University.

Accomplishments include:

* **Hokkaido International Airlines**

“AIR DO wo tsubuse!” [trans. Crush AIR DO]

* **Hitachi Ltd.**

“Tsukuro.” [trans. Let’s create]

* **Asahi Kasei**

“Kinou made sekai ni nakatta monowo.” [trans. Something that didn’t exist in the world before yesterday]

* **SONY**

Eikichi Yazawa series “Mottainai!” [trans. What a waste!]

* **JR Kyushu / Kyushu Shinkansen**

* **Launch Campaign**

“Shuku! Kyushu” [trans. Celebrate! Kyushu]

* **Asahi Kasei Homes / Hebel Haus™**

“Kangaeyo. Kotae wa aru.” [trans. Let’s think. There is an answer.]

* **KIRIN**

Nodogoshi (Nama) “Goku goku, shiawase.” [trans. Gulp, gulp (also means extremely), so happy]

Think about it.
We are not geniuses who can suddenly come up
with marvelous ideas.



Published by: Dentsu Inc.
Planning by Takeshi Ichikawa
Tatsuya Ogawa
Toyokazu Onuma
Translated by: Pauline Baldwin
Edited by: Ryoko Sugio
Illustration by: Hirosuke Yoshimori