ECONOMY IN WRITING

Directness characterizes good writing.

The old advice, "Say much in little," should be followed by every writer.

What it means is to just say what you want to say -- nothing more, nothing less.

The result is concise writing.

Conciseness doesn't mean mere brevity. Economy in writing is not achieved by simply excluding an idea or deleting words or phrases or sentences.

Economy in writing instead refers to the relation between the number of words used and the amount of meaning conveyed.

Would you need to include more details and illustrations for clarity? If you do, then include them.

Would an extra word or phrase make you sound considerate instead of curt? Then don't leave the word out.

Economy in writing dictates that every word must serve a purpose. If a word does not, then it must be stricken out.

How do you achieve economy in writing? Here are six ways:

1. **Avoid falsely literary style.** Be direct. Don't be too artsy with your words.

   Not good: He dredges us from his fertile imagination an image of a macho whose very presence causes the female of the species to swoon.

   Good: He imagines himself a macho who is irresistible to women.

2. **Cut out long-winded introductions that serve no purpose.**

3. **Remove empty adjectives and adverbs, redundancies and all other useless words in your sentence.**

   Not good: He believes in and is convinced of the superiority of anything foreign and particularly of the Western culture.

   Good: He believes in the superiority of anything foreign, particularly of the Western culture.

4. **Get rid of anticipatory constructions like it is, there are, there is, etc.**

   Not good: It will be the desire of his parents that he will go to medical school, become a doctor and treat sick people.

   Good: His parents desire him to go to medical school, become a doctor and treat sick people.

5. **Simplify sentence structure by substituting a word for a phrase or clause, a phrase for a clause, or a simple sentence for a compound or complex sentence.**

6. **Avoid unnecessary verb-noun combinations.**

   Not good: His Spanish-American mother voices a constant reminder to him never to commit offenses against God, the Church and the Crown.

   Good: His Spanish-American mother constantly reminds him never to offend God, the Church and the Crown.

Apply these six tips to your writing and you will be able to achieve economy.

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