

Ralf Weiser – Top Ten Blog Posts

What a ride it has been since starting to blog two years ago. This Thursday will mark my 390th blog post. It's also my birthday weekend and thus – quirky or not – I am making a mini PDF booklet of my top ten posts available to you. I am hoping that you will enjoy it.

This is also a great opportunity to appeal to the writer in you. Yes, that's right. You are a writer too. There are many resources available to get you online and [blogging in less than 20 minutes \(http://michaelhyatt.com/ez-wordpress-setup.html\)](http://michaelhyatt.com/ez-wordpress-setup.html). All you have to do is a) start, b) deliver valuable content as viewed by the intended audience, and c) do so regularly and consistently. Do not keep the things you would like sharing with the world to yourself. Share them instead. The world needs you.

Ralf

Here is my “why” and what you get out of my blog

Why I turned to blogging and writing and what you get out of it

The reason why I turned to blogging and writing is simply because it is time for me to give back to society – you in particular. For the better part of my life I was lucky enough to enjoy opportunities that opened up for me. Sure, I was the one who grabbed them and turned them into something, but ultimately synchronicity and a lot of friends helped out by providing me with opportunities. Now it is time for me to share my talents with you. Inspiring and motivating you is at the top of my list.

The talents and experience came in hard lessons and those lessons taught me well:

- Growing up in a household with two alcoholic parents taught me about how to evaluate relationships, patterns, what drives trust, and how keep an eternal optimism and enthusiasm.
- Growing up not having a lot of money taught me being resourceful, innovative, creative and motivated.
- Growing up in Germany taught me when and how to stand up for people that cannot fend for themselves.
- Pondering nature provided me with an eternal awe how beautiful our little planet is and how rich we humans are. It taught me to think about how to make life more sustainable and how to build this thinking into every day social and business life. It is called the triple bottom line approach: People, Planet, Profits.
- Immigrating to the United States taught me how to best appreciate freedom, free business, how serious we need to take the rights that our founders provided us with and how we owe it to ourselves to enjoy and perpetuate them.
- Leading people taught me how to be authentic, genuine, and sincere. I am their/ your servant.

- Realizing that the only thing holding you back in life is YOU.

What you get out of reading and following my blog

What you get out of following my blog and the materials I provide is inspiration to stretch yourself to be able to reach your full potential that you were blessed with right from birth. I can help you stir up your own snow globe – all it takes for you to take it to the next level.

Call to action:

If you like what you see and read here, please pass it on. Forward this mail and / or website link www.ralfweiser.com on to a friend. It is my goal to help inspire over 6 million people in the next 5 years – that is about the amount of people that my LinkedIn connections connect me to at this time.

Ralf

#10 Got butterflies in your stomach? How to make them fly in formation



Nothing is more terrifying than the fear of fear. Will I be safe? Will my family be safe? Will I make it? What will other people think of me? Am I making the right choice? How will this turn out? What if more goes wrong? Sound familiar? Fear is an essential part of being human. There is an abundance of it in our lives and this can hamper your growth and prevents many great things from occurring.

It's ironic that so much of what we do aims at limiting our exposure to fear. We risk less and clamor for safe routines. The ultimate irony though is that we do not really like the routine at all. In fact, just look at the many books and movies that we consume which tell us of heroes that seemingly fear nothing.

That is not what fearlessness really means. Having fear is essential in self-awareness. How else would you even know that you are risking anything? What is often so damaging is our primal instinct from our early human existence that kept our ancestors safe: freeze-fight-flee. Problem is simply that because it's instinct, we resort to freezing (fearing) first by default.

That is also actually the first step to letting the butterflies in your stomach fly in formation. Realize that what you are going through is normal and expected should provide initial comfort.

- **Take a deep breath and slow down.** Get time to work for you. The moment you allow for thinking time, the greater the chance that you can think of alternatives to your situation.
- **Seek community.** Your brain thinks isolation is best when in fact you should be seeking community. Share your thoughts and collaborate with folks about options.
- **Exercise.** What? Yes, that's correct. Get up and get your body going. The moment your blood starts pumping hard throughout your body it will start changing chemistry and flushing out the bad stuff with it. It does wonders.
- **Stop what you are doing and do something completely different.** Take yourself out of the situation that keeps messing with your brain and do something that you really enjoy doing. Best thing to do is to do them in public, or with other nice folks.
- **Remember that you are only afraid of the first moment.** Whenever we are afraid to do something we are really afraid of taking the first step. Once you are rolling you will get back in your "zone" and gain momentum. It is the first moment of announcing to everyone that you will do something different that we fear the most. What can possibly happen during this brief period of time?
- **Listen, read, or watch something by your favorite person you look up to.** The reason why you look up to that person is most likely because they did master their own fears.
- **What is the worst that can happen?** Your mind will tell you all sorts of things that are really meaningless. Read Bob Williamson's book "[Miracle on luckie street](http://www.amazon.com/Miracle-on-Luckie-Street-ebook/dp/B004FPZ5X8)" <http://www.amazon.com/Miracle-on-Luckie-Street-ebook/dp/B004FPZ5X8> . If a homeless, drug addicted thug who was thoroughly on his way to go to prison (again) or getting killed on the street can get back up on his feet through finding God and now be a multi-millionaire helping other people achieve

greatness, so can you. His life could not have gotten any worse. Please read his book. It is a fascinating story.

- **Call a friend or mentor.** Everyone should have a mentor, but a great friend will do as well. Shared thoughts are always better than getting all wigged out on your own.

Ask any public speaker and they will tell you that they have butterflies in the stomach prior to going on stage. It is natural and in fact, a little fear creates a healthy tension within that helps delivering a great speech. This “healthy” fear is a good sign for you as well. Fear means that you are risking something. Without a little risk in your life you will never break away from the things that hold you back.

Please share this thought and post with people who you think could need a little nudge. Thanks!

Ralf

#9 Nothing changes until the pain of remaining the same isn't greater than the pain of changing

Think about this one for a little bit. How many bad habits and other things that you do not like about yourself can you think of? If you are even remotely a little bit like me, there are plenty of items popping up on your list.

This list of issues is just as bad as clutter at home: it stresses you out as it leads to cluttered thinking. It causes perpetually worsening pain because your brain will soon run around in circles because it lacks focus.

What's a workable solution? I call it “sitting on the rock time”. That is a figure of speech for pondering and deep thought. Make a list of those things that cause you mental grief. Scan for the top 3 to 5 items that really irk you. Now think about how bad the pain is it

causes you. Is it finally greater than changing? Progress will happen only if that pain is greater than the risk and fear of the unknown – which comes with any change.

Your stress will reduce the moment you are making the decision to change. Wherever possible, prototype what you want to change on a small scale. You increase your chances of succeeding significantly while limiting the risk of messing up.

Spring is around the corner and even if it isn't, there is always time for a little mental spring cleaning. Remove your brain clutter by tackling the most painful bad habits and of course any other thing you do not like about yourself. Comments or stories you would like to share? Please do so in the comment field.

Ralf

#8 5 reasons not to use an ellipsis (...) at the end of a sentence

Normally an ellipsis (3 periods) is used in quotes leaving out not so interesting or impertinent portions of quotations and citations. When used properly this makes sense and can also be used letting the reader absorb what has been written and taking the thought from there – literally filling in the blanks.

Perhaps it is the world of texting and Facebooking that created the need for brevity... Wherever that fits it probably has its space right there... In business writing and even business e-mails this practice is still pretty disruptive and sends the wrong message to the reader... It is at least as disrupting as my perturbed look photo in this post.

Annoying? It is at least as annoying as using multiple exclamation points or placing exclamation points behind just about every other sentence. There are 5 good reasons to avoid ellipsis's:

1. **It is a credibility buster.** Using this behind many or all of your sentences makes you look unprofessional and thus it reduces your credibility.

2. **There is no closure.** Open ends are great material for novels and movies, but in business writing you want to be effective in engaging the reader by providing the red thread through your writing.
3. **Thought creep can back fire.** Letting the mind wonder where it was not supposed to go leads to potentially getting more questions back about things you had not even considered, or you did not want to consider.
4. **You are too lazy.** Do you really have nothing to add, or were you too lazy to type it? It leaves the reader to wonder about this too.
5. **They are distracting.** Communication in any form or function must be congruent throughout. The moment you use and abuse periods like this you will lose the reader because she will find it distracting. Telling a story, or getting a point across is pointless – you are leaving the best part out.

It kills Powerpoint presentations too. If you work in the professional writing and speaking world and you spray periods like it comes out of a machine gun, here is your sign. It is against all conventions to abuse it. Do it and you are getting your speedpass right into oblivion.

Ralf

#7 Can you ever redeem yourself after having done something stupid?

We live in a pencil and eraser society and yet when children and adults alike do something they should not have done, all we seem to be interested in is assigning culpability and punishment. The use of pencils in school and work is remarkable. You make a mistake and it is quickly gone by taking the eraser to it. How much of quick erasing is going on in your life? This is not so when it comes to crime and punishment. That is more a ballpoint pen situation – it stays for good. Being able to assign blame and culpability is supremely important as is coming down hard with

punishment. Very little to no thought is given to rehabilitation and so a devilish cycle perpetuates. The probability is high that new not so smart activity is going to happen soon again. It is really so sad to watch. Here we miss such a great chance to offer folks with an opportunity to realize what went wrong, make sure that a lesson is learned and then offer joining the rest of our community in a “normal” (insert your meaning of this word here) fashion again.

Some adults have a proven track record that they will not learn much anymore and those are the ones that we should think twice about letting them join our ranks again soon without safeguards. One key issue that you should ponder sometime soon is what happens to younger and younger folks: Children and adolescents are more and more treated like adults. You do two things when you mentally throw away the keys to their future. For one you rob them of their youth. Let children be children. They make mistakes that should not prevent them making a positive contribution before they even had as much as a chance. It is more important that they learn what better choices are. The other thing that you teach them when you follow the adult methodology is that they may be not “worth” the effort and worse yet because they may now have permanent black marks on their records can no longer gain access to better education or careers.

Do not get me wrong here. I am not advocating a free for all for everyone. I am just saying that we all deserve at least a second chance at life and perhaps more if we can prove to society that we can make a positive contribution. You/ we can start by making common sense a common practice. Scan for an opportunity to jump in and help when someone needs it.

Ralf

#6 Illuminators – How can you become a person other people look up to?

How many people do you hold dear because you look up to them? I call them illuminators. They do selfless things and see to have it together. People are drawn to them; they are very inspiring.

Now look at how many people you know that just seem to vegetate – they just exist and try making it through another day. Often, they are demotivated, anxious and outright unfocused. Some are blunt and nasty. They can drain your energy right out of you.

Have you ever noticed how many more of the negative people there are compared to the inspiring ones? I hold the belief that there is a sacred ratio of illuminators versus negative people. The illuminators help keep the others stay mentally afloat. Fortunately, it takes a lot fewer really positive people to inspire the rest of the folks.

Guess what, you may be a lot closer to being a illuminator than you thought. Just look at the list below that gives you a few criteria of really positive people:

- You have a positive attitude towards life.
- You say what you do, and you do what you say.
- You protect other people that cannot fend for themselves.
- You know how to serve other people.
- You do things for others without expecting anything in return.
- You have focus because you know your purpose and limitations.
- You smile – even if the situation you are in may not be anything to smile about.
- You are honest.
- You are sincere.
- You are in the moment with the people that you are surrounded with.

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- You _____ (Please share items that would extend this list in the comment field below.

There are so many illuminators around us that help us keep our mental balance. They inspire us to do the right thing. They let us never lose hope. We cannot ever give up on ourselves and others.

Please do your best and give your own snow globe a little stir and ponder how little it takes to become an illuminator yourself. Join the tribe! I would love nothing more than for you to share my post with your friends and letting them sign up. Just follow the link at the right side of the blog site.

Ralf

#5 When people say “interesting” what does that mean?



You guessed it, “interesting” rarely means exactly that someone or something is truly interesting. Especially in business conversations this term can lead to some significant misunderstandings.

Depending on the context of the conversation someone may use to convey that:

- The job they are trying to get hired for is interesting because they have heard of the job and / or its needed skills and competencies for the first time.
- The person does not know what you are talking about and is not asking for more clarity because he does not want to feel embarrassed.
- The person does not want to admit that the concepts they are being subjected to are too complex to follow right away. Yet, the person does not request that more time be spent on training.
- The person they may refer to in a conversation is interesting because she/ he does not share the same values, beliefs, or is otherwise significantly different.
- The conversation they are in is not going as expected or is contradictory to that person's beliefs, values, or opinion.

There you have it. The above situations can get you in significant trouble regardless which side you belong to. Next time you hear the term “interesting” in a conversation, please attempt to really listen what is being said. Ask for more clarity and do not let the opportunity pass you by avoiding major complications.

Is it still possible that people use the term for the right reasons and within the correct context? Absolutely, and you still need to listen really carefully as this means that you had better pay attention to whom or what this refers to. Those would be really interesting paying attention to.

I would love to hear your cases of folks beginning to misunderstand each other. As always, please drop your comments in the Comment field below this post.

Ralf

#4 What does being weak as water really mean?



I used to think that this referred to water having no taste and no effect at all on anything. The more I think about it, the more I believe that we have been wrong about it. In fact water is more human than you may have ever thought.

- Water is very persistent and yet accommodating. Just look how it forms a stream and follows its path faithfully. It remains powerful and persistent all the way to when it meets the sea. It is always ready to give itself up. Flexibility and persistence are among the greatest human attributes as well.
- Water can transcend from liquid to gas, or solid. External forces can change its characteristics significantly and remain useful in each form. We are also blessed with this attribute. Depending on external forces we also adapt and make good use of the respective attributes that come with it.
- Water that is balanced provides life. With the perfect balance of the pH level it sustains life. When we are well balanced we are too blessed with a sustainable life.
- Water gives and sustains life as we know it. No other substance is like it. We are mostly comprised of water.
- Water can cut stone. With pressure it possesses the power to transform and cut stone and even steel. We humans may be weak and yet under the right circumstances mind and body are capable of incredible feats of strength.

- Water goes stale if stays still. Worse, bacteria and other organisms start growing in it. Always be on the move and you do not go stale.

As you can see there is more to water than meets the eye. It is not weak or without effect – and neither are we.

Ralf

#3 Finding your purpose – write your epitaph

The search for meaning and your life's purpose can be exhilarating when you have gotten to know it, or it can be just as painful when you are still chasing it down. Perhaps folks who are in their version of a midlife crisis can vouch for that one.

Let's face it, purpose is the omnipotent force that people and organizations tap into when they want to pursue significance and I venture saying that nothing is long-term sustainable without it.

Why you often seem to be chasing a ghost is likely related to how busy you are and how little time you dedicate to solitude (the answers lie within you – always). In essence life keeps us so busy and you have distributed your priorities such that you cannot see the forest for the trees and thus totally overlook your “why”.

One of the most straight forward exercises you can go through is writing your own epitaph. What is straight forward is the process, but that is about it. It is an intense exercise that you do want to prepare yourself for. You need at least 4 to 8 hours of uninterrupted time to yourself. No electronics other than your computer with the Wifi turned off and the same goes for cell phone and any other gadgets. Best work retreats in remote areas where you lock yourself into a room or simply take a walk into the woods where no one would normally go. Complete solitude benefits this process greatly.

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Now start thinking about what you think your immediate family would say or write about you during your funeral. Make sure to compare and contrast what they would say versus what you would like to people remember you by. Now repeat this with your friends, co-workers, boss. This kind of thinking is tough and can be sobering and unsettling. Guess what, this is the point. You now have two pieces of information that will help you guide you towards what you are here for. On one hand you pretty much know what people would say at this time. You also know where the spots are that really lift you up. The things that energize and motivate you.

Be careful not to mistaken them with skills that you can do and the things that you do right now but should not do. They are not the true talents that lie within you. Keep your thoughts and outcomes in a journal. Journal like a fool. The faintest ink is better than your most attentive memory.

Schedule another day of solitude and ponder the items that you put into your purpose journal. Now sort them by talents, natural gifts and everything that gives you energy. Prioritize them by how much you really like each one. Then associate the people that come to mind whom you see you would do this for and how much it would mean to them. Seek out these people and share your ideas with them and tell them how much they mean to you. Voicing your intentions to your key folks puts the odds in your favor. It leads to an improved social life and will boost your career, but most of all you will feel more fulfilled and overall happier.

This exercise will peel the onion that is life for you all the way to the inner peel, the center, the “why” – your “why”. Good luck with this journey and please share your path to your core. That is what I call shaking up your snow globe. Get ready being mesmerized when you gaze in yours.

Ralf

PS: It is a little macabre, but keep your personal epitaph around. In case something horrible should happen to you, your loved ones will find what they could say during your funeral. Nothing to be afraid of – it is genuinely you.

#2 Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part



Photo: Ralf Weiser

Sorry boys, with Testosterone on board planning ahead and communication it is not one of our strengths. Fasten your chin strap and buckle up tightly, if you are in a business that is mainly handled by men: There is a lot of last minute activity in on your schedule. Business meetings – even large and important ones – are rarely scheduled more than hours or a few days ahead of time. How many times have you showed up for meetings and your meeting party forgot about the meeting or runs terribly late?

In our type of business we have mostly long term projects that typically run between 12 weeks and 12 months and when it is time to start up the equipment we get a call only a few days before the plant must be up and running. Instead of planning ahead at least 2-4 weeks this task is left to the last minute. Our folks are pretty resilient and we make this crazy and largely unpredictable schedule work anyway, but this comes at a tremendous cost – mostly your cost and ours.

All of this means that you can waste a lot of your time and money if you do not make the effort scheduling events quite a few weeks out. Scrambling around in the last minute is directly related to the time versus cost algorithm: The less time you have, the more it will cost. It is that simple.

There are of course ways to forego this sizable issue:

1. Make good use of an electronic calendar. Preferably use something like Outlook, Google/Droid, or the iPhone platforms that synchronize your home AND business calendars no matter where you are. Here is the [Apple http://www.apple.com/icloud/features/calendar-mail-contacts.html](http://www.apple.com/icloud/features/calendar-mail-contacts.html) platform and this is [Google's http://www.google.com/sync/index.html](http://www.google.com/sync/index.html).
 - A. A sub set of 1. is getting a smart phone or at least an electronic organizer. Yes, setting it up can be tough, but look at it this way: It may take a few hours to get it working right, but you will be saving and using this for days and weeks to come. It is worth the effort.
 - B. If going with electronics is not your cup of tea, well get yourself a calendar for home (hand it up where everybody can see it), one for work and one for your pocket that you carry with you at all times.
2. Actually look at your calendar DAILY. Pick a time and make it a routine check. Do it at the end of the day and look at tomorrow's appointments. Then check the rest of the week and of course 4 weeks out.
3. Become a fan of good housekeeping. Keep your schedule clean of any out of date information. Nothing is worse than people not being able to trust your calendar. Trust is another time and money waster you do not want as your enemy.

Good luck with planning ahead and saving yourself time, frustration, nerves, and ultimately some money.

Ralf

#1 Have you thought of one person that has changed your life forever recently?



Think of a person that has changed or impacted your life significantly. This person saw something in you that he or she believed in you more than you did. The encouragement led to a much enriched life journey.

Does this person know what kind of impact their belief had in you? My call to action is to get in touch with this person immediately. Let her/ him know how you feel and appreciate what he/she did.

Next, follow this train of thought and create a ripple effect. Give of yourself. Help out a person who struggles through life. If you want to read up on what that could look like, [Jeff Goins'](http://goinswriter.com/about-me/) <http://goinswriter.com/about-me/> book ["Wrecked"](#) <http://tinyurl.com/ckcv6ez> could help set the stage for you.

My person is my best friend Holger who helped me through some great difficulty when I was 17 and enduring the hardship of apprenticeship in Germany. My mom and dad did not have problems with alcohol – they had problems without alcohol. They were alcoholics. The home life was a royal mess, and we did not even have money to buy heating oil in the winter.

Girl friend? Hah, did not have the guts and the heart to get entangled with more issues, nor was I mentally in a good position to be a good mate. I was bullied extensively during my job apprenticeship. Whenever I could I would drink heavily. Shame galore – living in a small village in Germany was not a walk in the park when you are being put into the same category as your dad. Dad is an idiot = son is an idiot. Simple equation that came with some “interesting” ramifications. I literally clung to life.

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One particularly bad night I had come back from a party with co-workers, drunk and depressed. I bumped into Holger at a block party and he saw the little heap of a mess that was me. He listened and helped me get my bearing again. Day by day and thought by thought. We became lifelong friends, but as of late we can no longer stay in contact all that much as we live in totally different places. Thanks for all you did my friend during the darkest time of my life! Cannot wait to connect with him and telling him how much his help meant to me.

Do you know someone who picked you up from the floor and put you back on your feet? How about a teacher or coach? This special person may not even remember you. It does not matter. Make sure you tell him that you love him and that you appreciate everything that he did for you. Do it fast, because life can change with a blink of an eye.

Ralf