

How I went from Layoff to Payoff

3 Steps (and more) to Becoming the Copywriter You Really Want to Be

By

Penny Thomas

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This is how one administrative assistant with no writing degree or entrepreneur experience became a control beating ... 68%... copywriter.

If I can do it...so can you.

Your circumstances will be different from mine – but I'd like to share my story so you can see how I did it.

I had my ups and downs. I made mistakes and there are some “wish I had done this sooner” thoughts.

I learned by trial and error – and I'd like to spare you the error part. Here's what I did to get to where I am today ...A copywriter with a control under my belt...quality clients in a good niche...and a position on [*AWAI's Wall of Fame*](#).

Maybe by reading this, your journey to success will be a lot shorter than mine was.

The Journey Starts

It was 2002 – the economy was tanking, along with job security in the investment banking industry. I watched and waited, as one layoff after another took more and more of my colleagues. I knew it was only a matter of time before my number was up.

In October I got a letter in the mail – Bill Bonner’s famous “Can You Write a Letter Like This?” Initially, I didn’t give it much thought. But then I read it...and read it a dozen times more.

Reading this letter made me excited... breathless and my heart beat faster. “Yes” I could write a letter like that, I wanted to make other people react the way I did.

I decided to order [*AWAI’s Accelerated Program for Six-figure Copywriting*](#) as an ‘insurance policy.’ I sent my check in – the whole amount. I wanted to have and hold the entire program while I still had a job and money.

Christmas 2002 – pink slips for 25 percent of the staff, and this time I was one of them. Happy Holidays everyone! I was elated...and terrified. I was free from the 9-5 grind and a soul-destroying 3-hour commute. I could be and do what I wanted.

The copywriting program arrived just in time. I tore open the package and started reading. Yes, I could do this. I was going to be a freelance copywriter. This was the beginning of a new life for me.

Unemployed With a Bright Future

Luckily I had some money – thanks to an aggressive savings plan (see page 21 for details), a good severance package and an unemployment check coming in every week. But this wasn't going to last for long. I needed to do something.

Resume Writing

A co-worker called – could I help with her resume? Sure I could, I'd been writing and re-writing my own resume for years! I had books and books on the subject. I bought [*AWA's Pro Resume Writer's Program*](#) for tips on starting a business.

One resume led to another....and another. That horrible winter of 2003 had many hungry job seekers in need of resumes. I interviewed, created and wrote. But, I failed to promote this business – and my client base dried up.

I wasn't too unhappy about this, as resume writing wasn't what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a freelance copywriter. I still dreamed of writing a letter like Bill Bonner's.

But the savings account was running low and the unemployment checks were coming to an end. I needed a steady income while I studied copywriting.

Temporary Jobs

Sounds dull and boring, but surprisingly it wasn't – and many jobs turned out to have a positive effect on my copywriting career goal.

Like when I sold aluminum siding and replacement windows. I wrote my own sales pitch...following all the copywriting rules. My commissions soared. But the big benefit for me was...I lost my fear of cold calling. Delivering a sales message face to face – with the possibility of instant and visible rejection – inures you to any future phone or mail rejection.

A receptionist job gave me loads of time to hand-copy control-beating letters. When you're paid \$11 an hour and have the time to write out ***AWAI's Hall of Fame - Trout Spoken Here*** three times – the chore becomes relatively painless. Nobody is interested in what the receptionist is doing – as long as the phones get answered. This one assignment improved my copywriting skills by a huge margin.

I got to open the department mail. I made sure I read all of the direct marketing packages before handing them over. My bosses let me keep some packages – I copied others. I found some potential clients this way.

I practiced re-writing some of the promotions for my portfolio. The people I worked with were on mailing lists I couldn't afford to get on – big dollar newsletters and such.

I created a swipe file – and filled it with good direct mail packages from temp assignments, my mailbox and [Monthly Copywriting Genius](#). I dragged a folder full of good copy into work and studied it on the train and during the frequent “down” times of temping life.

The Boost I Needed ... and My Dream Became Reality

Every Monday [AWAI's The Golden Thread Online](#) arrived in my in-box. It was something to look forward to during that grim period of boring temping jobs and no copywriting work.

When the announcement for [Fast Track to Success - Bootcamp 2003](#) arrived. I couldn't resist. I had to go – and I'm glad I did.

What an eye-opener. I talked to real, live, honest-to-goodness copywriters - they existed. It wasn't a myth, you could make six-figures writing "A Letter Like This."

I met Michael Masterson, Katie Yeakle, Don Mahoney, Paul Hollingshead and Bob Bly. They were real people!

I learned more in those three days than I'd learned all year studying on my own.

I watched as a new copywriter – AWAI graduate Krista Jones – walked to the podium to collect her \$10,000 check for writing the control beating spec for [AWAI's Six-figure Copywriting](#). I wanted to be the next Krista.

Home again with renewed energy. I was going to finish the course and submit the live practice assignment.

I finished the male vitamin supplement letter and sent it in. AWAI liked it ...and after I had made a few corrections, I had my first sample. I was on my way. I had graduated!

Winning a spec assignment was my next goal. Every time AWAI posted one – I wrote it up and submitted it – no matter what the niche. I figured I could use the practice. Each one I wrote improved my writing – looking back at my first one's I can see how far I've come. I eventually won an AWAI spec assignment, [Secrets of Writing for the Christian Market](#) – I was over the moon and ready for anything.

What I needed to do next was figure out the business end of copywriting.

COPYWRITING BUSINESS 101

Baby Steps

2004 was spent writing specs, temping, writing resumes and sending out self-promo letters. My days were full but I wasn't progressing as fast as I wanted to become a full-time freelance copywriter. Things got easier after I started using the tips on managing my time and networking successfully in [Making the Leap](#).

Then my self-promotion started to pay off - I got copywriting work. Some I could do in the evenings and weekends. Sometimes I could stop temping for a while.

When money got a little tight – it was back to the temp agency. I'd proved I was a skilled and hard worker – I got assignments whenever I asked for one.

I was slowly building my business and keeping my head above water – but I wasn't living the writer's life the way I'd dreamed of.

Business Plan

I needed a plan. Not a complicated one, something simple along the lines of 3 years out, 1 year out, 1 month out.

As the proverb says - "He who fails to plan, plans to fail."

[Freelance Writing Success in a Box](#) has an excellent business plan section, along with great marketing tips and I worked my way through that.

Another serendipitous piece of mail arrived - The Small Business Development Center at a local college was offering a Business Start-up Workshop – for less than \$100. I signed up - I wanted a good excuse to interact with people and learn something. Starting up a business alone is very lonely work

If you want to go the solo route then download free business plan advice and templates from:

U.S. Small Business Administration - www.sba.gov

SCORE – Counselors to America's Small Business - www.score.org

The Business Start-up Workshop covered licensing, taxes, financing – and creating a business plan. The business plan was the most important. Licensing, taxes and financing weren't relevant for a newly minted freelance copywriter.

The business plan helped me focus my life around building up my business. I eliminated certain things (and people) from my life that weren't helpful to my plan. I was quite ruthless – and found out who my true friends were.

The quick and easy plan I had was based on 3 questions:

1. Where do I want to be – or what do I want to be doing in 3 years?
My mission statement.
2. What steps do I have to take to get there? This was a really long 'to do' list.
3. What can I do this year to further my goal? A slightly more manageable 'to do' list.

I pinned my mission statement – with the goal date highlighted – above my desk. Next to it was this year's 'to do' list. I hid the 3-Year list in my notebook. Looking at it was very daunting. I'd revisit it next year.

On the first of each month I went over my Year list and wrote out a Month 'to do' list. This I looked at on Monday mornings and made my Week list.

I changed my morning routine. Instead of reading the newspaper while sipping a cup of tea, I used this early quiet time to go over my plan and work up a daily schedule.

Just by looking at these lists made me feel I was finally in control of my present time and my future.

Finding your USP or Positioning Statement = Your Niche market

The business plan included creating a Positioning Statement or USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and finding my niche market – an area of interest and passion.

I asked myself the following:

- What skills do I have?
- What industry experience have I got?
- What degrees, diplomas and certificates have I earned?
- What am I interested in?

Copy Protégé - [www.copyprotege](http://www.copyprotege.com) - has a very good article by Chris Allsop in their archives on developing a USP (April 2008 - #167).

It took me a weekend – time and effort well spent. I delved deep into my psyche and came up with some surprising answers.

Now I knew my niche and had a nice positioning statement /USP.

I had a business plan and my unique selling proposition – next thing I needed was a workable schedule to reach my goals.

My Success System

Much of my success comes from what I call “**WSM**”. It’s a system I use to make sure I’m always using my time to do the things that guarantees I’ll achieve the copywriting goals I’ve set for myself.

Here’s what it stands for, and how it can help you achieve the writer’s life:

W = Write

You're not a copywriter unless you write copy every day. Writing is how you actually gain the skills and find your "voice." Don't get caught up in the easy mistake of wanting to learn it all and never finding the time to write. If you don't have any clients to write for, write spec assignments, re-write any one of AWAI's promos, or write an article you could submit to a potential publisher or use as a self-marketing piece.

S = Study

In addition to writing; you constantly need to be learning and sharpening your skills. And that doesn't mean only studying copywriting. Read books on marketing to give you a deep understanding of how this business works as a whole. The more marketing you know, the better copywriter you'll be ... and the more valuable you'll be to every potential client that comes your way.

M = Market

As soon as you feel competent at writing copy - market yourself! It's the only way you'll land paying assignments. And if you're feeling a little timid about "being a copywriter," simply fake it till you make it. Although cliché, there's a profound truth in it.

When practicing the **WSM** system, make sure you set up your day to devote enough time for each component. You don't have to divide your time equally across all three. Just make sure you do enough of each, to get closer to your goals.

Structure The Day

At first I set myself a really tight schedule – and always failed to meet my daily goals. This was demoralizing. So I started writing in one hour of ‘wiggle room time.’ This gave me time to cope with the inevitable daily emergencies.

As time went by these emergencies got fewer – don’t know if I was scheduling or coping better. I still factor in ‘wiggle room time’ and when I don’t need it, I use that hour as a gift to myself.

I’ll give you a sneak peak at my day. It took me a while to figure out a good schedule. I wanted to preserve the feeling of “living the writer’s life” with all the freedom that comes with it. And – to be honest - goofing off doesn’t put money in the bank. A business like schedule is needed – even for a freedom-loving writer. My clients work 9 am – 5 pm ...and so do I.

A sneak peak at my day

Early morning - over tea and toast - I check out my monthly and weekly goals. I look over my calendar. Think of the day ahead and make my plan. This is when I figure out how to allocate my WSM (Writing Studying Marketing).

8:00 – 10:00 am - I’m at my desk writing – while my brain is fresh. I put down a steady stream of words, 500 – 1000 an hour, for two hours.

10:00 – A quick check of emails. Break for coffee and some studying – away from my desk.

11:00 – 1:00 pm - Back at my desk – writing or marketing myself – depending on the workload.

1:00 pm – A quick lunch and half an hour walk to the post office to mail my marketing letters or to the bank to cash my copywriting fees (I like this part best).

2:00 – 4:00. More writing, editing, studying or marketing – clients (or lack of) make this decision. I answer emails.

4:00 is Tea Time - what can I say? I was born in Great Britain – I can't survive without tea. This is my “wobble room” time for emergencies or if I've fallen behind on a deadline. If all is good - I'll do some studying.

5:00 pm – Another email check and clean up. Then my workday is over. I take brisk walk. Or do bit of gardening, or have a session at the gym.

It's Been a Good Day...

I've kept my integrity as a professional and my dreams of independence by “living the writer's life.” I've answered to no one but my work ethic and me. This is what being a freelance copywriter is all about.

I always tidy up my desk at the end of my day – a tip I learned from ***Writing Rituals*** by Nick Usborne. At 8:00 am the next morning I start work with a clear mind and a clear desk. It makes a huge difference to my productivity.

I've put in six hours of quality work – far more than most office workers do believe me. I have no water cooler to chat over or coffee room to lurk in. I've told my family and friends I won't answer their phone calls or emails during my office hours.

I tell clients – very nicely – that 8:00 – 10:00 is when I'm at my most productive and could they hold their phone calls until later. They understand – after all, I'm probably working on one of their projects.

I only check emails at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm and 5 pm. Any more is time wasting.

Some might ask – when do you do housework and laundry? Same time I did when I was doing the 9-5 thing in the city and commuting 3 hours a day – in the early morning and on the weekend.

Market Yourself

Build a Web Site

Every freelance copywriter needs a web site. It shows your client you are serious and you exist. It's your permanent advertising billboard. It makes you think and act like a copywriter. You're in hiding if you don't have a web site.

I didn't build a site immediately...but I did secure my domain name www.pennythomas.com. I'm glad I did, because there are a couple of Penny Thomas out there – a Jiu-Jitsu fighter in South Africa. And a film set painter. However, I own every single pennythomas domain name - .com through .gov. and rank #1 on a Google search.

Do it for yourself – **now**. Secure your domain name. Use something simple ...your name...or your name plus copywriting. It costs less than \$10 to register a domain name. You can always change your mind later on if you come up with a really cool tag.

A well-known copywriter told me that my first web site and domain name – penwriter - was “too scholarly.” That it showcased my creative writing talents – not my marketing writing talents. He suggested a creative director might be intimidated by me when visiting my site. He said the layout was wrong and it wasn't search engine optimized.

His critique was harsh, but I had to laugh... the thought that someone might be intimidated by me, a newbie copywriter, did wonders for my ego. The site had to be changed. Back to the drawing board.

I pulled out the USP I'd created with my business plan. This gave me the focus of the area I wanted to specialize in and what to say. Then I listed all the benefits I could bring to a copywriting project.

My 'home' page is all about what I can do for a client. There is nothing much about me on it. I saved all that for “About Penny” at the end of my site. I figured my life history wasn't as important as what I had to offer a client.

Finding Clients

Driving people to my site was my next challenge. The pundits say – to get clients, create something of value and give it away in return for an email address. Then market yourself to that email list by way of an informative, content rich newsletter.

Now here is where the whole chicken and egg conundrum comes in. How do I get someone to go to my site, give me an email address and download this thing of value?

I had to market myself – and I had four ways of doing it:

1. Letter writing with a follow-up personal phone call.
2. Write articles about what I do and distribute them via web sites, ezines and print business publications
3. Network – the old fashioned way ...face-to-face and/or Internet forums, blogs, discussions boards
4. Speaking engagements – be a guest on a teleclass or speak at a local event. Horribly frightening, but effective I'm told.

I chose #1 as being the least threatening to me. After all, I am a direct response writer, so I can create my own fabulous, killer letter can't I?

Well...guess what. It's extremely hard writing about yourself. Feedback from fellow copywriters is essential. They can see where you're not selling yourself strongly enough. I couldn't have done it without the help – thanks guys, you know who you are.

I marketed myself to small, local companies at first. Each one-page letter was personalized and included a copy of my AWAI male vitamin letter. I stuck a stamp on it and mailed it off. I did one a day, 5 days a week. Then exactly one week later I made a follow-up phone call.

It worked! I got clients – not big ones, not long direct response packages. But I was earning money as a copywriter!

As my skills grew I wanted bigger clients. I went to my local library, and got a copy of *Direct Marketing Market Place* – a reference book listing companies who use direct mail. Then I picked out a few companies and repeated the one a day, 5 days a week mail campaign with a follow-up call. I should have done more, but one-a-day phone call was all I could cope with.

I made sure I got an email address from everyone – even if they didn't want my services at that time.

Another good source for potential clients is your own **swipe file** – you do have one don't you? The direct mail you're getting must be something you're interested in – your niche. Otherwise you wouldn't be on their mailing list.

Subscribe to [Inside Direct Mail](#) – an excellent resource, filled with great articles and potential clients.

Every piece of mail you get is a potential client. Research the sender. Find the name of the person in charge of writing direct response – Titles could be: marketing manager, creative director, circulation director (for magazines), and fundraising director.

Send your self-promo letter along with one of your samples or a re-write of one of their mailings. Call one week later to follow up.

A Lucky Encounter Leads to A Client

One interesting – and totally unplanned – contact came via Amazon. I posted a review about a book. The author – a copywriter – and I got into an email dialogue. He mentioned that a friend of his was looking for copywriters with expertise in my niche – and suggested I get in touch...I did.

I sweated over my self-promo letter. I felt the fairly generic one I'd been sending out wasn't good enough. I was lucky I had a personal introduction to lead with – it helped – and my letter was a masterpiece of self-promotion, filled with benefits and proof. I used Cathy Cairn's spec/self promo piece from [Getting Your First Client](#) as a model. Mine ran to two pages – much too long, but it got me the job - a full direct response package – on spec. They liked it, paid me and my package went on to beat their previous control by 68%.

Now I had something great to promote myself with. I re-wrote my self-promo letter. Lead with a headline and the testimonial about my control beater. This became my standard mailing piece.

Keeping Contacts Warm

Most of my mailing and follow-up calls didn't produce immediate work. I was a little disappointed until I realized that for direct response a 1-2% return is usual. Who was I to buck a trend?

I had to keep these contacts warm. If my name appeared before them on a regular basis then my name would be the first to pop up when they needed a copywriter.

The earlier versions of my web site didn't have the "Free Report for your email address" set up. This was my next step. 2,000 words later I had my report – *Direct Response Copy That Opens Wallets*.

I signed up with Constant Contact© for an e-mail campaign. My web designer friend put all this on my site – and I was ready to go. I entered the email addresses from all my client contacts and composed an introductory newsletter. Out it went and bingo, I got some positive responses.

My newsletter goes out once a month. I might increase it to every two weeks – when I get a good backlog of interesting, marketing related newsletters written – between 200 and 400 words.

Network

I do some networking – in friendly territory. [AWAI's Bootcamp](#), [Writer's Retreat](#) and [Web Writing Workshop](#). And I've picked up some assignments this way.

I joined my Chamber of Commerce and picked up some local work at their business card exchanges. This is a great way to find B2B clients, especially small ones who are in need of good promotional material.

I should do more – and will join some on-line forums and discussion boards in the very near future. Marketing managers do visit these sites for advice on how to write their own campaigns. Then they find out how hard it is and hire a freelance copywriter.

The bottom line isits all about getting and keeping your name in front of prospective clients.

Continuing Education

It's important to read everything you can about marketing and writing – It gives you a feel for the market and the prospect. You become a better writer when you are an avid reader.

Here's a list of some books I've found interesting, useful and fun. There's a lot more, but I've forgotten the titles. Memo to self...keep a log of books read.

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion – Robert B. Cialdini
Ready, Fire, Aim – Michael Masterson
Why People Don't Buy Things – Harry Washburn and Kim Wallace
The Long Tail – Chris Anderson
The Tipping Point – Malcolm Gladwell
Freakonomics – Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner
Up the Agency – Peter Mayle
God Doesn't Shoot Craps: A Divine Comedy – Richard Armstrong
Scientific Advertising – Claude C. Hopkins
Breakthrough Advertising - Gene Schwartz
Predictably Irrational – Dan Ariely
Buying Trances – Joe Vitale
Million Dollar Mailing – Denison Hatch
The Boomer Consumer – Matt Thornhill & John Martin
Turning Silver into Gold – Mary S. Furlong
The 50-Plus Market – Dick Stroud
The Irresistible Offer – Mark Joyner
Direct Marketing – Bob Bly
Writing White Papers – Michael A. Stelzner
The Well-Fed Writer – Peter Bowerman
Start & Run A Copywriting Business – Steve Slaunwhite
How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters – Mal Warwick
Open Immediately! – Stephen Hitchcock
The Ultimate Sales Letter – Dan S. Kennedy
Sales Letters That Sizzle – Herschell Gordon Lewis

Subscribe to a few good newsletters and magazines in addition to *The Golden Thread*, *Early to Rise* and *Copy Protégé*. [Inside Direct Mail](#) is a must have.

Nick Osborne, John Forde, Steve Slaunwhite, Chris Marlow and Robert Middleton have useful, informative and content rich on-line newsletters. Check them out.

Be judicious in your choice. Too many newsletters can rob you of precious writing and marketing time.

Things I wish I had Done Faster and Sooner

I'd like to share with you some things I wish I'd done sooner and faster.

I wish I'd joined a peer support group immediately after Bootcamp 2004. I lost touch with many of the wonderful people I met there. Some I'm sure went on to be great successes.

I wish I'd taken on a coach or mentor as soon as I made the decision to become a copywriter.

The investment I finally made in coaching and mentoring has paid me back in spades. It was hard to figure out many things on my own and to keep myself motivated every day. I estimate the time between Layoff and Payoff would have been cut by at least half if I'd hired a coach the first year.

I wish I had taken myself seriously from Day One. I made a substantial investment in [AWAI's Accelerated Program for Six-figure Copywriting](#), but left it sitting on my shelf too long. Wasted time. My life is so much better after I called myself a copywriter and started writing.

I wish I'd figured out my niche earlier. I bounced from one area to another. Fundraising writing and Business-to-Business writing don't have much in common. Focus would have brought me more quality clients faster.

I wish I had started seriously marketing myself immediately after getting final approval on my practice assignment. I thought 'if I build it, they will come.' Well clients won't come to you without prodding. The first direct marketing letter you write should be your own.

I wish I'd gotten my web site up and running in the first year – imperfect, incomplete, but running.

My web site is my portal...my business sign. It shouts out to the world...I exist...I am real...I am a writer. A web site can always be changed – in seconds if necessary. Don't sweat the details, just get it up. Then announce it along with a regular newsletter with useful content targeted to your prospect client audience.

Things You Don't Have To Worry About At First

Don't use the excuse that you have to buy a lot of expensive equipment and have everything perfect before you can start your copywriting business.

Don't agonize over your web site. It can be changed frequently and easily – just get it up and running.

You don't need an office. A piece of plywood or old door over two saw horses works great as a desk – and costs less than \$50.

Files can be kept in cardboard boxes – free from the local liquor store. The wine and gin are the bonuses.

Don't get bogged down in corporate entities and tax accountants in the beginning. You don't need them the first year.

A tax accountant told me to “come back and talk to me when you have at least \$10,000 of work invoiced. You don't need me yet.” And he was right.

You probably don't need a registered trade name – or a license to write from your home in most states in the USA. Check on-line with your state tax bureau.

You don't need the IRS EIN#. You can file under your own SS#. When six-figure earnings are on your horizon, then look into corporate entities and EIN numbers.

You don't need an expensive bookkeeping program in the beginning. Save your money. Keep all your receipts in a shoe box – make sure its clear what each is for (write on the receipt). Come tax time, do what you've always done with receipts. Next year – when you have oodles of money, then you get the fancy bookkeeping program and a tax accountant.

Begin now...write your promo letter. Make up some samples. Create your list of ideal clients. Make up a package...and mail it out – then follow up. Just start doing it.

Things You Need from Day One

First on your list should be a very good office chair. You'll be spending a lot of time in it. Buy the best you can afford.

You need a computer with a decent keyboard. Typing 2000 words a day on a laptop is slow and tiring – think carpal tunnel syndrome. You can add a standard or ergonomic keyboard to your laptop.

Fast Internet access will save you time – and money when you have clients.

You need Microsoft Word. There's no way around this. It is the industry standard.

And you need a printer. Don't get an expensive laser one. Check out printer prices and replacement cartridge prices.

If you need high quality printing done, copy your document onto a memory card and take it to Kinko's, Staples or Office Depot. They'll print it out on nice bond paper. You can even email the document to them. Much cheaper than buying a laser printer. Most of the stuff you'll be sending clients will be electronically.

You need a plan – 3 year – 1 year – 1 month.

And...most important of all you need to believe in yourself. You can do it - you can be a freelance copywriter earning six figures.

I believe in you.

Remember WSM – Write Study Market.

Figuring out Finances

My Aunt Morfydd told me ...”Every girl needs her running away money.” I followed her advice – and it has come in handy more than a couple of times in my life. I’ve been able to ‘run away’ from a country, a marriage and quite a few jobs.

Start putting together your “running away money” now.

When I got laid off in 2002 from the investment bank, I wasn’t too upset. There had been 4 layoffs in 2 years – it was only a matter of time before I had to go. And I had a savings plan in place – I had been saving aggressively since reading about a powerful system in Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin’s book ***Your Money Or Your Life***.

The system converts money into life energy. For greater details go to www.yourmoneyoryourlife.org. Here is my simplified version:

Say your weekly (5-day) 40-hour salary is \$800 = \$20/hour

Now it takes you 2 hours a day to get to and from work. That increases your 40-hour week to 50 hours.

It costs you \$50 a week to commute to work. That reduces your weekly pay to \$750

To figure out what one hour of your life is worth – your life energy – divide your adjusted weekly salary \$750 by your adjusted work hours 50 and you get \$15/hour.

“So what?” you say. Well, this is where the beauty of it comes in. Every time you reach for your wallet to buy something you think – “Wow, I had to work 20 minutes to buy this \$5 cup of coffee. Is it worth it?”

If a \$5 cup of coffee isn’t worth 20 minutes of your life energy and you’re saving for a better life - put that \$5 back in your wallet and buy a \$1 cup of coffee at the deli.

Honor your life energy and your savings will stack up.

Pay yourself first. As Joseph said, through Pharaoh (Genesis 41. 34-35) “In the years of plenty, set aside one-fifth against the lean years.” Save at least 5% of your gross income – and bank it first before you pay the bills.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There are three parts to being a successful copywriter

- Learning the trade
- Practicing the trade
- Marketing yourself

They all have equal importance and are equally challenging. But, if you've made the decision to take this great, wonderful, brave leap...you can do it. I did. And so did many others.

Copywriters – especially direct response – have one big advantage over people breaking into other careers. The trade we are learning is all about marketing. We only have to learn one skill - marketing. Unlike a jeweler, or a painter, or a mechanic wanting to set up a business. They have to learn their unique trade and how to market themselves. All we copywriters have to do is write a killer marketing copy for the worlds best, most talented, most wonderful client – ourselves!

Don't forget – **WSM**

Write daily – 2000 words at least.

Study something. Go to the library borrow a book. Bookstores with coffee shops make a wonderful reference library. Their marketing shelves are packed with up to date information.

Market yourself. This is the hardest one of my WSM. And one day I truly believe I won't have to do the warm or cold calling and letter writing. I believe clients will be knocking on my door begging me to work for them. I plan on the only marketing I'll be doing is sending out a regular newsletter to my extremely large mailing list.

I believe in me.

And, I believe in you.