

Power Words

How to Instantly Become a Better Writer

Use power words.

Seth Godin reminds us that our core emotions are: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. Seth says, "In the case of someone with an idea to spread or a product to sell, knowing that you've only got six buttons might help focus your energy."

Not all words are emotional anchors. An example is President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address. Check out these power words:

"This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt
First Inaugural Address

Each underlined word makes the audience feel something. In this case, FDR uses words that cause fear, such as "paralyzes," "unjustified terror," and "dark hour," and balances with words that cause hope, such as "boldly," "vigor," and "victory." For added impact, he repeats that he's speaking "the truth, the whole truth" at the outset of his speech.

Smart speakers, as well as their speechwriters, sprinkle their speeches with carefully-chosen power words, drawing the audience from one emotion to another as skillfully as any novelist or screenwriter.

Unlike many storytelling strategies which can take years of practice to master, you can start sprinkling power words into your writing and you'll notice an immediate lift in the quality of your prose, headlines, and subject lines.

317 Power Words to Start Using Immediately

Sincere gratitude to Jon Morrow of Boost Blog Traffic for brainstorming and generously sharing a list of 317 power words to get you started. **Start cataloguing your own power words today.**

Fear

Fear is without a doubt the most powerful emotion for grabbing and keeping an audience's attention. To make sure you don't change the channel, news networks load up with fear words, making you worry you might miss something important. Here are fear words:

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Agony | Corpse | Frightening | Mired |
| Apocalypse | Crazy | Gambling | Mistake |
| Armageddon | Cripple | Gullible | Murder |
| Assault | Crisis | Hack | Nightmare |
| Backlash | Danger | Hazardous | Painful |
| Beating | Deadly | Hoax | Pale |
| Beware | Death | Holocaust | Panic |
| Blinded | Destroy | Horrific | Peril |
| Blood | Devastating | Hurricane | Piranha |
| Bloodbath | Disastrous | Insidious | Pitfall |
| Bloodcurdling | Drowning | Invasion | Plague |
| Bloody | Dumb | IRS | Played |
| Bomb | Embarrass | Jail | Plummet |
| Buffoon | Fail | Jeopardy | Plunge |
| Bumbling | Feeble | Lawsuit | Poison |
| Cadaver | Fired | Looming | Pummel |
| Catastrophe | Fool | Lunatic | Poor |
| Caution | Foiled | Lurking | Prison |
| Collapse | Frantic | Meltdown | Pus |

Reckoning
Refugee
Revenge
Risky
Scary
Scream
Searing
Shatter

Shellacking
Silly
Slaughter
Slave
Smash
Strangle
Stupid
Suck

Tailspin
Tank
Targeted
Teetering
Terror
Terrorist
Toxic
Trap

Vaporize
Victim
Volatile
Vulnerable
Warning
Worry
Wounded

Good News

Amazing
Audacity
Backbone
Belief
Blissful
Bravery
Breathtaking
Cheer
Conquer
Courage
Daring
Defiance

Delight
Devoted
Excited
Eye-opening
Faith
Fearless
Fulfill
Grateful
Grit
Guts
Happy
Heart

Hero
Hope
Jaw-dropping
Jubilant
Magic
Mind-blowing
Miracle
Pluck
Sensational
Spectacular
Spine
Spirit

Staggering
Stunning
Surprising
Triumph
Uplifting
Valor
Victory
Wonderful
Wondrous

Safety

Anonymous
Authentic
Backed
Best-selling
Cancel Anytime
Certified
Endorsed
Guaranteed

Ironclad
Lifetime
Money back
No Obligation
No Questions
Asked
No Risk
No Strings

Attached
Official
Privacy
Protected
Proven
Recession-proof
Refund
Research

Results
Secure
Tested
Try before You
Buy
Verify
Unconditional

Curiosity

Backdoor
Banned
Behind the
Scenes
Black Market
Blacklisted
Bootleg

Censored
Concealed
Confessions
Confidential
Controversial
Covert
Cover-up

Forbidden
Forgotten
Hidden
Illegal
Insider
Lost
Off-limits

Outlawed
Private
Secrets
Smuggled
Strange
Unauthorized
Withheld

Lust

Brazen
Crave
Depraved
Dirty
Exposed
Forbidden
Hypnotic
Lascivious

Lick
Lonely
Lust
Naked
Naughty
Provocative
Scandalous
Sensual

Sex
Shameless
Sinful
Sleazy
Sleeping
Spank
Steamy
Sweaty

Tantalizing
Tawdry
Thrilling
Uncensored
Wanton
Whip

Anger

Abuse
Arrogant
Ass kicking
Backstabbing
Beat down
Bullshit
Bully
Coward
Crooked
Crush

Disgusting
Evil
Force-fed
Foul
Hate
Know it all
Lies
Loathsome
Loser
Lying

Maul
Money-grubbing
Nazi
No Good
Obnoxious
Payback
Pound
Preposterous
Punish
Revolting

Ruthless
Sick and Tired
Smug
Sniveling
Snob
Snooty
Snotty
Stuck up
Underhanded

Greed

Bargain
Best
Billion
Bonanza

Cash
Cheap
Discount
Dollar

Double
Explode
Extra
Feast

Fortune
Free
Freebie
Frenzy

Frugal
Gift
Greatest
Inexpensive
Jackpot
Luxurious

Marked down
Massive
Money
Nest egg
Pay zero
Prize

Profit
Quadruple
Reduced
Rich
Savings
Six-figure

Skyrocket
Soaring
Surge
Treasure
Triple
Whopping

Source

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