

16 simple ways to get a larger audience.

(Or how to build your blog, sell your books or get published.)

In short - everyone needs an audience. Without an audience, what you write will not be read no matter how inspiring you write or how important it is what you write about. It's like when the visibility of the books determines whether people think it's a good book or not. A book that is displayed in the store exists, while a book that is not in the store, or is not displayed there - does not exist. Banal, perhaps, but unfortunately part of everyday life for many writers.

#Tip 1: Focus on the joy, not the results

#Tip 2: Write when nobody is aware that you write or no one cares about what you write

#Tip 3: The less you care about writing "correctly", the more people will be affected by what you write.

#Tip 4: Have respect for the process. The results will come.

#Tip 5: Change the way you think.

#Tip 6: Make a plan for your writing.

#Tip 7 :How do you get others to listen to you?

#Tip 8: Find a niche, a discussion, a dialogue. Spend some time getting acquainted with the topic. Write some posts, factual posts, important posts, thoughtful posts on some selected blogs. Read other people's input. Get informed.

#Tip 9: Engage with others. It does not have to be a serious matter. But you have to mean something. Think about what you say and when you say it. Take some time to come up with well-considered feedback. Do not leave names and urls on blogs, just to do so. Let people find you because what you say is interesting.

#Tip 10: Subscribe to blogs and newsletters run by people with authority. Preferably people with easy access to mass media.

#Tip 11:Write articles if you think it works. (Chronicles are often difficult to get into the newspapers, but feel free to try.)

#Tip 12: If you have nothing to add, move on. Do not think you have to have an opinion on every topic.. It must always be sincere. Do it over and over until you are heard. Why? When people listen to you, it's because they know you have something to contribute.

#Tip13: Do not spend time on blogs that are not really about communicating or listening. Find the places that has Value and that gives Value.

#Tip 14: Find connections that are valuable.

#Tip 15: What do people care about?

#Tip 16: Find something people like to talk about.

How to become visible?

Most of us who have written a lot and for a long time know what it is like to get our first contract with a publisher for our first book. Then you think: That's it! Now it's done. Now it's up to the "professionals". Those who know everything about marketing. And if you're not yet in a contract with a publisher, you believe that as long as you continue to write well and importantly, someone will, sooner or later, pick you up and see what a wonderful writer you are.

Here is a reality check: The people who are supposed to be professionals, or those who are going to find you in the crowd of writers, do not exist. They will not come to you. You never see them. The only one who can get the audience to read just you is...

Guess?

Exactly, it's you. You are responsible for gaining an audience.

My (short) story

I always loved reading as a boy and reckon that the hundreds of books I plowed through in the 60's, 70's and 80's enabled me to become good at reading what was well written or not. But it took many years before I realized I was an author. (I still think that word gets a little big in my mouth and I rather call myself a writer or something like that)

I started an advertising agency in 1996, together with a good friend. We quickly ended up in the internet circus and were probably among the first (in Norway) to create so-called websites in the mid-90s. During the time we were working, I wrote a lot. And I liked it. But I still limited myself to short texts. Advertising texts, short stories, some short stories.

In the year 2000, we were sold to a larger company. I experienced that some old history that I had lived through had to be sorted out. I was and am traumatized after experiences as a nineteen year old soldier in Lebanon.

Every end has a new beginning in it, it is said. And for me that was correct. In May 2001, I began processing the traumas of what happened in the summer of 1982. A very wise man who helped me on my way to what I am doing now said to me in the spring of 2001:

"Knut, you are such a writing guy, shouldn't you write down your experiences from Lebanon?"

My first thought was that I could not bear it. But then I started thinking that maybe it would be good. If nothing else then to preserve it so that my daughter could read it when she got older. I sat down. Words became sentences and sentences into pages. In the end, there were just over 30,000 words on white sheets. The story of my experiences, reflections, fears and emotions. I had not thought of publishing it until my sister, Ellen, read it and said I should try to get it published. She believed that others could benefit from reading it.

The idea matured over a couple of months and I sent it to various publishers. Everyone refused it. Someone took the time to answer why they rejected me.

The key words were: strong history, important history, but not particularly salable.

I could not help but agree.

That's why I published it myself. Admittedly at my own publishing house and very little editorially treated. But the book was very well received. Thousands of veterans and their relatives apparently recognized themselves. And with *The Long Way Home*, the urge to write more awoke.

In 2003, I retrieved a dusty manuscript that had begun in the early nineties. Like everyone else who is going to write books for the first time, I had underestimated how much work it really meant. The script was therefore only a few chapters long. I had sent it to a consultant who took the time to give me very constructive feedback.

It was the beginning of the book *Delete* and the beginning of my life as a writer. If you want to take a look at *The Long Way Home* (English version) it's free for downloading [here](#).

The importance of having an audience

Being read or not being read has very little to do with luck or destiny. Being "discovered" is unfortunately not something that will just happen. (Now many will possibly be able to tell me about people who have written a book, or a blog post or come forward with a controversial case that has attracted attention and thus they have gained an audience - to these I would say that no matter what or how they did so, also these somehow followed the recipe I am going to give here.)

If there is one thing I have realized after more than two decades as a writer, it is that we can have many ways of doing these things, and we can have different approaches to gaining an audience or readers -

(The Americans call it a tribe - a rough translation would be to have devoted fans.) - Most of us have nevertheless built a large audience with the same tools. And it doesn't matter if you are going to have an audience online, on paper or in the form of a podcast or on TV. The same principles apply.

And then it is good to note that it is not the personalities, but the principles and the method that make this work.

I will try to give you these tips and once you really implement them, understand the point behind them, and start using them, you are guaranteed to experience completely new ways to get readers or audiences to your message.

Do what you do because you love to do it.

There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

—Nelson Mandela

We all have royal thoughts about getting rich and famous. But relatively quickly you realize that writing books is the long road to that goal. (If you ever get there.) Most of us experience

rejections, sour critics - (if we are so lucky, because a bad review requires some form of publication and not many people experience it.) - and an endless stream of disappointments. Frustrations build up, bitterness over all those who "makes it", those who "succeed" and a navel-gazing that often revolves around the irritation that no one else can understand that our text is as good as... (fill in the name you want)
Some are caught up in this. They stop writing or they continue, but the lyrics get worse because they are filled with hopelessness, sadness and bitterness. Nobody likes bitter people.
So what can be changed?

Yes, the way of thinking. "Attityden" - The attitude, that a Swedish football coach wisely called it, when he was a coach for a famous football team.

The way you think, the way you behave, is the only thing you can control.

#Tip 1: Focus on the joy, not the results

As soon as I did it myself, nothing happened. Not to begin with. But then something changed. The incipient bitterness disappeared. The joy of the progress of others grew. I started writing because I could and wanted to, not because I felt I had to. (A sea of difference - you who write on a daily basis, know exactly what I mean.)

I was free from the requirement to perform, and it gave me a creative freedom and of course made what I wrote more readable.
If no one read it, it did not matter. That I did not earn a penny, no problem. I wrote and I could keep on writing - whatever I wanted.

#Tip 2: Write when nobody is aware that you write, or no one cares about what you write

I do not mean it literally. But you have probably heard the expression: "Those who try hardest, rarely succeed."

People start noticing you the moment you really not care. Isn't that ironic?

The world is looking for people who live seemingly fearlessly. Those who doesn't give the fuck, who never think of anyone else noticing what they are doing. You can find them everywhere. They are mass media favorites. Why?

Because the world likes people without fear.

Think about how many documentaries you fascinated have watched about people who have done what they wanted, defied fear and their own limitations and completed.

When you write because you feel like it, and you write about things that you are passionate about and about things that you can actually stand for, whether you get paid for it or not, it will, over a period of time, start to attract attention.

There is something appealing about real commitment.

#Tip 3: The less you care about writing "correctly", the more people will be affected by what you write.

Do not think that you are going to make money on this.

"Its not about the money."

In interviews with superstars, you have certainly heard the person say something similar. They never started considering that there was money in what they were doing. They would, if they had had the opportunity, do the same thing again, even though they had never made money. It's easy to say afterwards, we think. Once the money has rolled in. But the fact is that most people never started with a goal of making money. The money was something that followed the success. And the success came because they were dedicated.

Elon Musk put it this way:

For me it was never about money but solving problems for the future of humanity.

Many people believe that money and fame are the goal. I think they are wrong. You must have a message. Those who get their five minutes on reality TV will never be known for anything else. Simply because they have no message.

Creative work is a process, not a product.

When you work creatively, create something, write something well-founded, something you believe deeply, you do not think that this should be creative. You just do what you feel you have to do to make it good. Afterwards, you see that you may have created something unique. Something that has a sting in it, something that is bigger than the words, the melody, the voice, the visual all together. Something holistic that touches and thus reaches out. That's your reward. And it is worth much more than fame and money.

#Tip 4: Have respect for the process. The results will come.

The Greeks did not write obituaries. Their only question when a person died was, "Was he passionate?"

For me personally, this meant that I suddenly found out that I wanted to write, but in my own way. I no longer wanted to write material aimed at a specific audience because that was where the buyers were. (By the way, I never got so far that I did.) I wrote a series of books that did not hit the target audience very well. But someone liked it and I got my "tribe". In recent years, I have thought more and more that I will continue to write books, but also share my thoughts on how to write books, with others. Maybe I get input and feedback that will help me further, while helping others to achieve their dream.

"Yeah," you say. "All right. But what do I do next?"

#Tip 5: Change the way you think.

At the risk of sounding like an American self-help book, I would encourage you to avoid negative thoughts about your writing. Forget those who are famous, and the fact that they probably do not write better than you. (And they probably don't - there is so much else that has to come in place) Jo Nesbø, Harlan Coban, John Grisham writes well. No one is in doubt about that. But when Jo Nesbø launches a book, everyone knows it. How can you avoid getting what I call wall-to-wall coverage of Nesbø's launches? Because: Jo Nesbø sells super well and that means that the "food chain" makes good money. This again means that everyone has an interest in Jo Nesbø selling even better. That's why the media writes page after page about him, the booksellers put out pallets of his books, even TV reviews launches etc...

The reason for this gathering of power to tell the world that Jo Nesbø has a book ready, is because the newspapers sell more newspapers, the booksellers base much of their budgets on Nesbø selling and television attracting more viewers.

You see the picture?

Cut out the bitterness and envy. Talk positive instead of negative about the so-called winners. Give advice, gifts, find out how you can best give people good tips on what they should do to become better writers, more than keeping everything to yourself, because no one should know the "secret" behind writing;)

In short:

Write because you like it and not because you want to make a lot of money from it.

#Tip 6 Make a plan for your writing.

Set aside, for example, half an hour every day or every other day for writing. Stick to this for a few weeks. And all the time you have to think that I write because I think it's funny and not because I have to.

Write something that is controversial. Something you know some people disagree at.

Do not be controversial at any cost, but if you write about something you mean strongly, someone will necessarily disagree, and you will get backlash. This is a great way to practice not always writing what others expect. Do not be concerned about getting acceptance from everyone all the time.

Sometimes you should write something that makes you think: What will people think about this? Do I dare this?

Once you have finished writing it, think about how good you feel.

Then ...

do it again the next day.

#Tip 7 How do you get others to listen to you?

Today it is a challenge.

The loudest are heard first. But even they sometimes drown in the noise. With so much information from so many different platforms, it should be well done to be listened to. At the same time, many of us who engage in creative work believe that the world owes us attention. The world should automatically notice us.

Well, wrong again. The world owes us nothing. We should all have liked to believe that what we are doing is unique and that it in itself would have been duly respected. That's not the case.

No one owes you that.

You do not decide what is special or what is amazing or what is incredibly interesting. It's your audience that does that. And if no one cares, you have a problem.

If you do not add anything of value, then you have no reason to get the audience. People will read your text as long as it gives them something. They will read your blog if you can solve a problem for them or create something for them. It does not have to be physical things. It may be that you give them an experience, a picture, a laugh, something thought-provoking or a recipe for how to fix a specific problem or challenge they have. (How many videos on YouTube are about how to do things? And have you seen the number of views such videos have?)

The food bloggers, who have such success, have figured it out. They solve a problem for people, they provide their readers with a solution, they provide a good experience and bring joy. Then we are talking about a lot of value at once.

So, here's the concept: Give something of value.

No one (except your loved ones) cares about you because of you. In a world full of distractions, it is quite important how you deal with this.

The answer is simple:

The way you get people to care about you is that you care about them first.

Many of us who communicate talk broadly about two-way communication, while we actually run one-way communication. We only care about what we say ourselves and never listen to what the other party says.

Did I do something different?

You must have guessed what I want to achieve. When I started this blog almost 18 years ago, I thought I would tell people what I needed to tell. Many years later, I realized that maybe I should rather find out what people wanted to know and how I could help people.

I cannot ask each one so I asked myself: What would I benefit from knowing when it comes to communication, writing and getting an audience?

Then I started putting together a package that would provide something of value to those who wanted to create something, to those who wanted to become better writers, or to those who wanted to write books, or who wanted to get their message across on other platforms. How could I help these? What problems could I solve?

The answer was simple:

Share what I know, what I have learned and still learn. With everyone. Free. Always.

And people responded immediately.

(As an old internet man, I realized that I needed to establish an email contact because people might want to know when and where things appeared. It actually made it easier to hand out something of value.)

In addition, I started thinking about how this could be done on other sites. I also asked myself and asked all my readers if they could be helpful in sharing everything, they find on my blog with others who might benefit from it. (If they like it)

And preferably on Twitter and Facebook as well.

My point is: Hear what people want first, then you can do something: (write, film, create)

What can you do?

So far down in the text, you probably already have a fair idea of where I want to go. Do you have a book, film, picture, or anything you want to create - a song, an idea that you want to be spread, then follow the advice above?

Engage others, connect with those you want as an audience and give them something they want.

Something of value.

In this media-controlled world, where everything that happens at the moment is forgotten in the next, where ex on the beach participants' sex lives become more important than famine disasters in Africa, not to forget those who worry that the Mediterranean is polluted by boat refugees - In such a reality you really have to mean something over a long period of time to the right people to be heard. And once you have an audience, you can start influencing. (And feel free to tell those who think boat refugees pollute the bathing water and that the victims of famine can do it themselves - exactly what you think about them.)

Because then you have an audience and then you have influence.

A summary (First part)

- Find a niche, a discussion, a dialogue. Spend some time getting acquainted with the topic. Write some posts, factual posts, important posts, thoughtful posts on some selected blogs. Read other people's input. Get informed.
- Engage with others. It does not have to be a serious matter. But you have to mean something. Think about what you say and when you say it. Take some time to come up with well-considered feedback. Do not leave names and URLs on blogs, just to do so. Let people find you because what you say is interesting.
- Subscribe to blogs and newsletters run by people with authority. Preferably people with easy access to mass media.
- Write articles if you think it works. (Chronicles are often difficult to get into the newspapers, but feel free to try.)
- If you have nothing to add, move on. Do not think you have to have an opinion on every topic. It must always be sincere. Do it over and over until you are heard. Why? When people listen to you, it's because they know you have something to contribute.
- Do not spend time on blogs that are not really about communicating or listening. Find the places that has Value and that gives Value.

The world is full of people who want to be heard. But how many actually says something? There are today about 600 million blogs in total in the world. Most of them are dead. And in a significant portion of the blogs that still exist, people are mostly concerned with conversing. One would think the competition was great, but it really is not. In Norway, this is very easy to see. The biggest blogs are so-called pink blogs. Nothing bad is said about these, it is mostly girls who show themselves and who tell something about their everyday lives. The value of these lies precisely in the fact that they convey an everyday life, pictures of themselves to readers who find it fun, interesting, and educational to see. So, it has a value for some.

Other well-visited blogs are food blogs, which I mentioned earlier. They deliver things of value. Online newspapers are also blogs. Their value is news and entertainment. My point is that they all have one thing in common: They deliver something that people want, something that is valuable to the target audience. There is no need for more.

Build content and you will be heard. It's better with twenty readers who are really interested in you and your opinions than with 200 random people who actually wrote the wrong URL or are looking for the latest news about something that is not really interesting to you at all.

I have readers of my books who constantly send me emails with tips on things I should write about, information about things I have written, and corrections to things I have mentioned. Nothing makes me happier than these inquiries. I try my best to answer them all.

Connections are valuable.

I will not write much about connecting, name dropping, using the “network” an so forth, because it gives me an embarrassing taste in my mouth. But I realize that knowing people who can make the road shorter towards the bigger audiences is fine. At the same time, it is perhaps even more important that they know you, than that you know them. Think about that issue.

The difficulty lies in keeping their attention long enough for you to get your message across. One way to do that is to create something people care about, something worth talking about,

something that will make a difference. The Kardashians has understood this. The same goes for a lot of the so-called famous people on tiktok and Insta. They turn something negative into something positive. Many might have kept a disease or problems hidden.

Why? I do not know, but probably as a kind of protection. Perhaps it is a fear of being considered weak, which of course is the opposite of what becomes the final perception. The word brave and strong is probably more correct when it comes to people who confront their illness or vulnerability.

The Kardashians have many opinions and many people who do not think anything good about their wealth and behavior. But at the same time, they have a kind of integrity. They stand for something; they dare to stand for what they mean and are among those who create something of value for many people.

They have their "tribe", like it or not.

What do people care about?

One word: Empathy.

You must have confidence; people must trust you. How do you achieve that?

Show off your weaknesses. Share the uncertainty. Show them your "scars" ;)

The only way you can get people to trust you is to show yourself worthy of trust. And show people that you are just like them.

Here are some tips, so each one can choose how far you want to go.

- Acknowledge the flaws in your life, the wrongdoings you have made, write about a real blunder, talk about the biggest mistake of your life.
- Apologize for something you have never been caught for.
- Share your biggest fears.

If you show that you are like all your readers, a person with faults and shortcomings - you get respect.

Something to talk about.

The publishers' (and sellers' and authors' and media's) big wet dream is "mouth to mouth" marketing. In good English - when a product, a book, an idea, a person becomes a "talking item". For a product to stand out, it must have essential quality. An attribute people want to talk about. Remarkable is the word. It means something special, something worth talking about. Something worth giving Remarks.

So, people have to talk about it. Quite simple. If they do not, then marketing is a longer (and more expensive) path. In return - if you manage to become a word-of-mouth type of thing - then it is much easier to get to success. Many have tried to establish themselves as a item of word of mouth. And almost all fail. If you are exposed, it obviously works against its purpose. Every single day there are someone who try. The newspapers are full of experiments and reality TV is an ongoing experiment.

Here are some examples of talkies (who succeeded): Harry Potter, Chris Guillebeau (Gave away \$ 100,000 to strangers.), Susanne Collins (Hunger games), Standing Wheel, Fifty shades of gray, etc....

Let me sum it up (again).

- Success: (however you define it) begins with having a motivation, a passion, a will, a desire to accomplish something. Pursue it instead of results. If you like what you do, it's reflected in what you make.
- Value: If you want attention, you must add something of value. Help people, solve problems, become available.
- Noise: Until you write or make something completely unique, you really only produce noise. You need something real, you have to become a resource, do something that people remember you for.
- Create: Take these suggestions with you and create a web, blog, write a book. Be sure to use your good ideas repeatedly.

- Be hospitable: Invite people in, preferably in a blog, make sure people like you, make them feel that you are generous. Make sure you give them something they think is valuable
- Be generous: Always give more than people expect

Start creating something, give us something back. And we'll listen to you.

Knut A Braa, author.

I have taken much of the inspiration for this text from Jeff Goins, goinswriter.com. Feel free to visit him.

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