

Everyday Inspiration for Increased Ah-ha! Moments

Believe it or not, triggers for Ah-ha! moments are all around us.

You know, that instant you make a bounding leap forward on an issue you've been pondering over, or make an exciting breakthrough on how to word that piece of copy you've been working on.

But because we as copywriters internalize a lot of the writing process, we inadvertently shut out these potential light bulb moment triggers, not only lengthening our writing process considerably, but also resulting in weak, limp copy.

This article will focus on the surprising potential of everyday life to trigger these essential Ah-ha! moments and how to maximize your own potential to receive them, thus increasing your own productivity as a copywriter and the potency of your copy.

We all got into copywriting for our own reasons.

For some it's the freedom of setting your own hours, for others it's the excitement of being your own boss, not having to answer to anyone.

For me, it's the time I get to spend with my daughter.

And she loves it. She appreciates it. Despite being just 5 years old, she still remembers the days of being hurriedly piled into a nursery bus to school, then being taken to after-school care for another few hours so I could squeeze in a full day of work, before rushing off to collect her.

And that was our life. Every work day. What a horrendous time that was.

Things are a thousand times better now. And the inspiration I get from her is like a sign that I did the right thing.

We came home after school the other day. I sat back down at the laptop, trying to break through the writer's block I'd suddenly developed, always at the most inopportune time I might add, while she was humming away in the background.

I was reading the same paragraph over and over again in my head, until the words meant nothing anymore. A fruitless exercise of course, which unsurprisingly didn't help me at all. My mind floated off into the room and I suddenly focused on what my daughter was singing, over and over again...

"There's water, water of life, juices gives us the water of life..." she was absent-mindedly droning, oblivious to the fact that she'd substituted the word 'Jesus' for 'juices'. The fact that her absolutely innocent error still made sense had me rolling on the floor laughing for a good ten minutes or so, believe me!

After regaining composure, I was considering how changing just one word in a sentence can have such a profound impact, when 'bam'! Suddenly I had the answer. I sat down and typed out my freshly inspired paragraph, changing nothing but a single word.

Ever watched House MD starring Hugh Laurie? It's fantastic, I love it. Hugh Laurie's character Dr House works on medical conundrums, ploughing through a variety of possible medical causes for a patient's cocktail of symptoms, usually resulting in himself and his team being totally flummoxed.

House will then be seen partaking in something completely unrelated to the task of diagnosing the patient, such as bouncing his ball off the wall, flicking nut shells at janitors and hiding or psycho-analysing his friend Dr Wilson, when 'bam!' – the answer hits him.

Hugh Laurie does it fantastically, capturing that moment of elation as it dawns in House's mind and casts its rays across his face ever so subtly.

Watching House's Ah-ha! moments is a pretty cool experience in itself as it often makes me think of my own light bulb moments.

The point here is that these Ah-ha! moments can come from anywhere. The danger for us copywriters is that since we internalize a lot of the writing process – that is, a lot of our writing comes from our thoughts – we can become oblivious to outside influences that could be screaming at us as a potential light bulb moment trigger.

So next time you're stuck on a particular paragraph of copy or you just can't seem to find the right words to get an idea across, leave it and go for a walk or play with the kids, watch the TV or read a book. Do something completely unrelated and focus on what's around you.

You never know when that everyday inspiration is gonna trigger your next Ah-ha! moment.