

# How to Un-Suckify Your Bio

By Deborah Kevin

[www.deborahkevin.com](http://www.deborahkevin.com)

Have you ever been asked to provide a bio, only to think, “Bio? Why do I need a bio?” You may also be wondering how a bio is different from a résumé or C.V.

**A bio**, short for biography, is a promotional summary written in essay format highlighting the most important aspects of you and your experience. Bios come in varying lengths from 50 words to 250 words. (Goddess trick: your compelling bio can be the basis of your website’s About page.)

**A résumé** (or C.V.) is a linear, bulleted list of accomplishments and jobs held, typically used when seeking a job.

If you’ve come from the corporate world, it’s likely that your bio may sound rather stilted and résumé-like (that’s code for uninteresting). Non-corporate types may also suffer from the résumé-style bio. We’ve been conditioned to justify our experience by listing our degrees, certifications, and accomplishments. I’m here to say that it’s time to “wash that stuff right out of your head.”

So, how do you cut through the mumbo-jumbo to reveal the real you? Let’s be honest, connecting with a person through a bio can be a tough task if it bores you to tears from the get-go. On the other hand, if you can build on a strong opener, you may be able to grab that short MTV-induced attention span for just a little bit longer.

Here are a few guidelines to follow to make your bio shine. The KISS principle (**Keep It Simple Sally** – for those uninitiated) applies here. Keep your bio brief and leave your reader wanting more.

## 1. Welcome, Stranger!

Invite your readers in with an intriguing question or statement, or even a bit of self-deprecating humor that tickles their curiosity and gives them insight into your personality. Think of your bio as the door into your home — you want your readers welcomed warmly. That way the right people will trust you and want to work with you. Start your bio in a way that has your readers saying, “Hey, I **must** work with her.”

## **2. Avoid Corporate-Speak**

Be real and share a tidbit of what inspires you. Try to explain that warm, fuzzy feeling of satisfaction you get when a plan comes together or your client's eyes light up overseeing the fruits of her labor. Be real! If you're the kind of person who regularly drops the f-bomb in your speech, don't write as though you're part of the royal family. In terms of blue language, a little goes a long way.

## **3. Keep it Conversational**

Create a comfort level and entice your reader to learn more. You don't want to speak above the reader, so bring your bio down-to-earth. If a future client or strategic partner were sitting in your living room drinking tea, what would you say about yourself? Tweak the tone and hone your message.

## **4. Share a Philosophy or Value**

People appreciate people who can see the bigger picture. Share a philosophy or value that shows you understand life, why things happen, or what it all means in the long run. What keeps you from running back to a corporate gig? (Free K-Cups in the company break room aside.)

## **5. What Makes You Different?**

No, we don't mean the strange sound you make when you get up off the couch or the weird condiment you put on an otherwise traditional food, but rather what qualities do you bring that helps you get the job done more effectively than others in your field? Is it your ability to get results? Or the way you can relate to and ease a worried client?

## **6. Be Vulnerable**

Share a one of your quirks or short story that demonstrates a situation where your direct action resulted in success. Real people love real world examples of getting the job done in an out-of-the-box manner. They may not remember that name of the award you won, but they'll hold onto a success story. (Goddess trick: nothing cements a relationship faster than being vulnerable enough to share a story of failure, which was ultimately overcome.)

## **7. The Like Factor**

People want to work with people they like, plain and simple. Even I want to steer more work and referrals to people I care about – and even bring them in on

projects of my own. (You want to create the opposite feeling of working with the cable company, am I right?) So, without sounding like a desperate teenager looking for a prom date, come up with something that portrays your likeability. You know you're a cool cat, so relay that in a subtle manner.

## **8. Break it Down for Your Audience**

Grab a big o'can of "Jargon-B-Gone" and use it liberally when writing your bio (or any writing for that matter). People may not know your industry's jargon. Break down your bio in real, easy-to-understand simple English. (Goddess trick: think about how would you explain what you do to your grandmother.)

## **9. Ease the Ego**

Instead of a laundry list of your accomplishments, give a broad view of why what you've accomplished matters *to your clients*. This is a subtle switch from the "here's what I'm all about" to "here's why you should care." Brené Brown has a great mantra by which she lives, "Don't shrink, don't puff up, stand in my sacred ground." How can you be authentic without shrinking or puffing up, while honoring yourself and your experience?

## **10. Would You Read It?**

Finally, re-read what you wrote. Share a draft with two or three trusted readers. How do they respond? They may even give some insight into the way you operate that you may not have even been aware of. If they do, incorporate those details.

Here are brief examples of a sucky bio and a riveting one:

### **Sucky Bio:**

Jane Flugel graduated summa cum laude from Florida State University with a degree in psychology. After working in the corporate world for 27 years as a clinical psychologist, Jane launched her own coaching business, HeadShrinkers, which helps middle-aged women tap into their power and take decisive action.

### **Compelling Bio:**

When Jane Flugel rappelled down the side of Mount Rushmore and felt a burst of adrenaline, she knew she could no longer be held captive by "The Man." Shedding her clinical psychology practice of 27 years, Jane launched

HeadShrinkers, a private coaching business which supports middle-aged women transitioning from “meh” to “Shazam!”

It's time for you to take action. How can you “un-suckify” your bio?

Download my FREE “[How to Get Noticed](#)” guide, which includes detailed instructions for writing your sparkling bio.