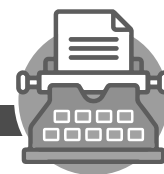


True Voice Checklist



True Voice comes from knowing who you are, and being open and honest in your writing. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when searching for your true Voice.

☐ **Commit to Self-Discovery**

Voice is Discovered, NOT Invented. An invented Voice feels counterfeit, one person pretending to be someone else. Your true author's Voice is a combination of the deepest parts of what makes you you. It's already inside, waiting to be brought to life.

☐ **Commit to Patience**

Voice is nurtured, NOT immediate. It develops over time. The better you know yourself, the more you'll understand the limits, strengths, and growth opportunities of your Voice. It can also evolve, in the same way a visual artist's work shifts, but is still recognizable as their signature style.

☐ **Commit to Imperfection**

Voice is imperfect, NOT impassive. Readers trust writers who have overcome trials and have the scars to prove it. It's okay to let the cracks show. Cold perfectionism, on the other hand, puts you on a pedestal readers know they'll never reach and therefore won't want to try.

☐ **Commit to Vulnerability**

Voice is vulnerable, NOT powerless. A strong Voice has power that comes from being self-aware and unafraid. It refuses to play the victim, dealing with difficult truths honestly, courageously, and head on.

☐ **Commit to Originality**

Voice is distinct, NOT affected. Some standout Voices are immediately recognizable. Sometimes we'll try to mimic our favorites, which can create an unnatural affectation. To ultimately stand out on your own, your Voice needs to evolve into something unique.

☐ **Commit to Keeping your Ego in Check**

Voice is confident, NOT cocky. Overconfidence, presumption, sarcasm, and hubris are great tools for character development, but get old quickly in an authorial Voice. Make sure you're saving those qualities for your cast of characters.

☐ **Commit to Learning**

Voice is wise, NOT all-knowing. No one wants to hear an author recite everything they know about everything. Hundreds of intricately researched details are no substitute for deep understanding and fresh ways of exploring a topic.

☐ **Commit to Objectivity**

Voice is honest, NOT needy. Writers can be so passionate about a topic that they try to nudge the reader towards their point of view. But emotion experienced through the character invites the reader to join the story instead of being told how to feel.

☐ **Commit to Authenticity**

Voice is the deepest part of you, NOT what's popular or trendy. You are the world's only collection of your own experiences, emotions, triumphs, and defeats. That's where true Voice is found. Trying to be anything other than yourself reads as inauthentic and may be holding you back.

☐ **Commit to Balance**

Voice is in your head AND heart. Strong Voice leads with deep emotion and applied knowledge to reveal universal truths. Even the most intellectual author needs to show their heart to make their Voice compelling.