

Orange Guide N<sup>o</sup>. 11:  
**3 Simple Steps to Writing a Charming Homepage**



**with Stella Orange**  
*Your friendly neighborhood wordsmith.*

## Before we get started...

### **Pop quiz!**

#### **A girl's guide to soap boxes:**

Where's the best place to put your soap box?

- A) In your laundry room.
- B) In an ad with a Stepford Wife.
- C) Under your feet.

*If you answered C, we're going to get along just fine... and your homepage can be really, really awesome.*



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### 3 *Simple Steps to Writing a Charming Homepage*

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Welcome to Charm School! You're about to join a backstage tour of how charming, money-making homepages are put together, so you can ramp up the return on your website, and learn some nifty "tricks of the trade" that will have your cash register singing in no time. Goggles on, my dear, because here we go...!

#### **None of us are born knowing how to walk.**

Imagine coming into the world fully clothed. Not only that, imagine knowing how to walk, talk, drive, and **cook a mean beef broccoli stir fry** from the get go.

That'd be kind of weird, wouldn't it?

Well, websites are like that, too.

You don't need to have a perfectly complete website from the beginning.

You just need it **good enough**. And to do what you want it to do. More on that in a moment.

But first, is it possible you're making your website more complex than it needs to be?

When I set up my first website on WordPress, I hired a graphic designer to make a "**splash page**." A splash page is a single page—like a billboard—that doesn't change.

All it had on it was my business name, email address, and phone number... and a picture of an orange unpeeling.

If you're creating a website for the first time, maybe you just want a splash page for awhile. So you can go out networking and setting up appointments with potential clients.

At that stage, there's a good chance you're still learning about your target market and who you like to work with. It doesn't make sense to spend a lot of time creating a website at that point. Because you're still in **discovery & research phase**.

After that, maybe you just want 3 pages on your website. Your homepage, your Services (or Programs) page, and your About page. Nothing to make you crazy. But enough to give your visitors a clear sense of how you work with clients... and what kind of clients you work best with (I call these your "favorite clients").

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Business owners—even those who have been in business for awhile—tell me all the time: “I NEED to have my website done before I \_\_\_\_.” They are lying to themselves. And if they are my clients, I lovingly tell them so. Service professionals don’t NEED a website to do anything.

What they NEED is to **gather their skirts** and get out there in the world and meet people, which can be a scary, dizzying task. So making THAT hinge on finishing their website **keeps them safe**... or so they tell themselves.

Really, it keeps them stuck and not attracting as many clients as they’d like.

Please **promise me** you won’t let this happen to you.

The truth is, you can absolutely fill your business without a website. In fact, I’d rather you work on that before you slave away, perfecting every last word.

Why? Because the same skills you use in real life to attract clients will come in handy when it comes time to write. But writing isn’t your fastest path to cash. Meeting people who need your help and making it easy for them to hire you is.

**Most of us crawl before we learn to walk.**

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## **Step #1: Think.**

When you write a homepage (or any of your marketing materials, for that matter), your first step is to THINK.

Why? Because too many service professionals mistakenly believe that they are writing about their SERVICE.

In reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

No one cares about your service but you.

What they care about is the RESULTS of your service.

Simply put:

**It's not what you do, it's what you do FOR me.**

To craft a charming homepage that makes a real connection with your **ideal clients**, you need to show them that you GET their challenges, problems, dreams and desires.

As a copywriter, I call this "getting inside their heads."

And just HOW do you get inside someone's head? For starters...

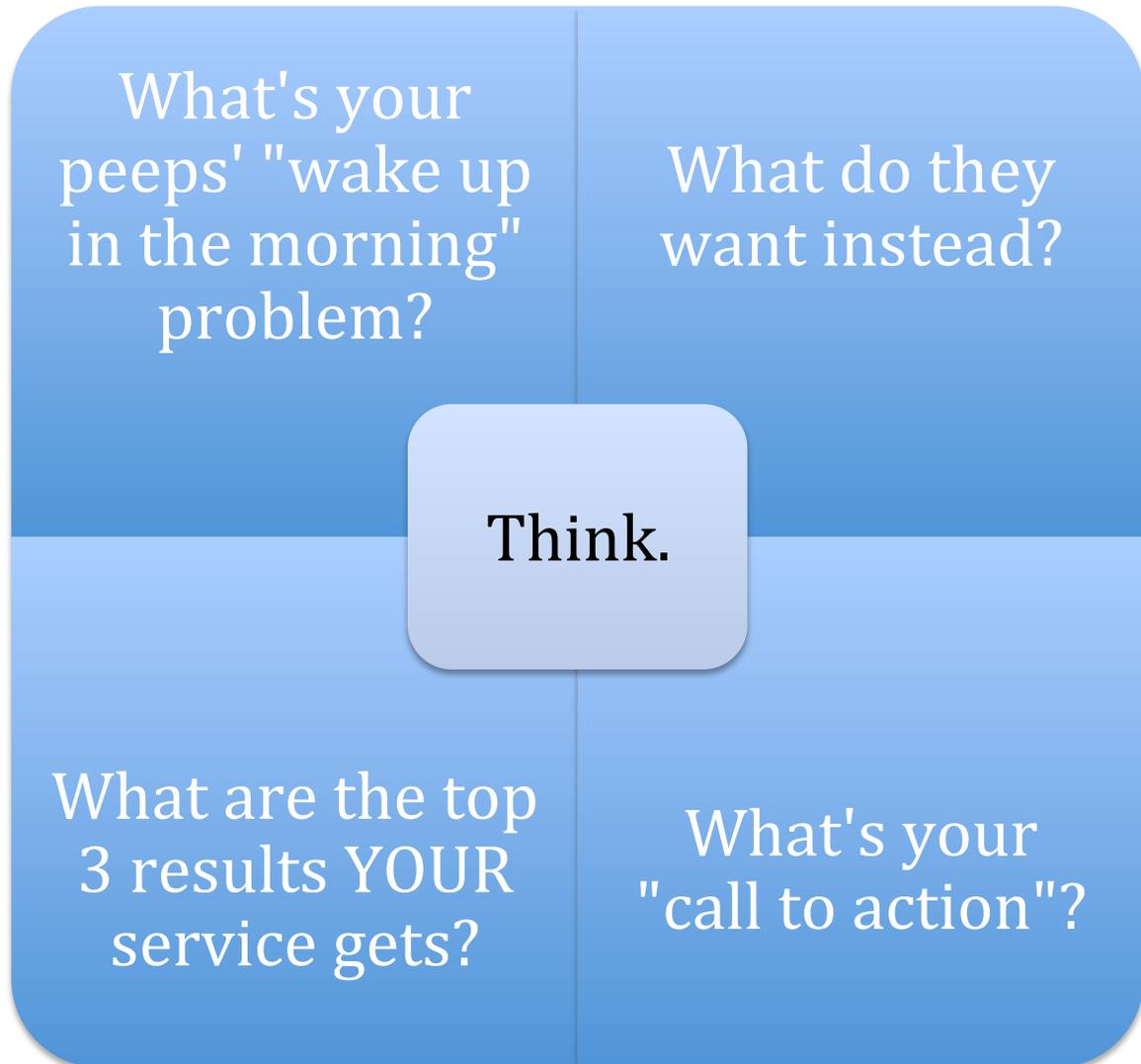
1. You listen to the clients you have.
2. You ask questions of the kinds of people you'd like to have as clients.
3. You get still, quiet & grounded and imagine that you are your **ideal client**.

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### **Exercise #1 – The THINK box**

Here's a quick + dirty exercise to put your focus on the RESULTS your ideal clients want. Go ahead + sketch this out on a piece of paper, with your answers.



Note #1: The “wake up in the morning” problem is a very real problem your clients face on a DAILY basis. It isn’t “pie in the sky” like they aren’t “thriving” or they want to “transform.” It’s more of a trigger—**the hot + itchy reason they are motivated to change**. Like: they just got divorced. They feel dumpy. They are broke.

Note #2: Your “call to action” is the one next step you invite your reader to take. Ideally, I want to see 3 of them on your homepage. This is because most people don’t buy from strangers. You must build a relationship with a regular newsletter, sharing a free gift with your wisdom, or interacting on social media.

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## **Step #2: Translate.**

Here's how I invite you to think about your homepage... and ALL your marketing materials:

**Everything you write gets "run past" your Translation Desk.**



Your Translation Desk

What's your Translation Desk? It's the editors that review your writing and ruthlessly make sure that you answer one question:

**"What's in it for me?"**

This is the question that your reader asks herself, when she sees your writing.

Your Translation Desk knows that this is what your potential clients will be asking themselves when they read your marketing. So, to save you from heartbreak and minimal response down the road, your Translation Desk takes a red pen to anything you write that isn't about your ideal client.

In essence, your Translations Desk is the ultimate advocate for your ideal client. It wants to make sure that you don't go on & on about yourself, because your **homepage is really all about what you do for your ideal client.**

Other questions your Translation Desk likes to ask on behalf of your ideal client:

*Does she understand where I'm coming from?*

*Does she get what's getting in my way?*

*Do I feel like she's "my kind of person"?*

*Do I want what she's offering? Would I spend money to get those results?*

*Do I like her "energy"? Do I think she's awesome?*

*Does she convince me that I can't wait to solve this problem? (Or to fulfill this desire?)*

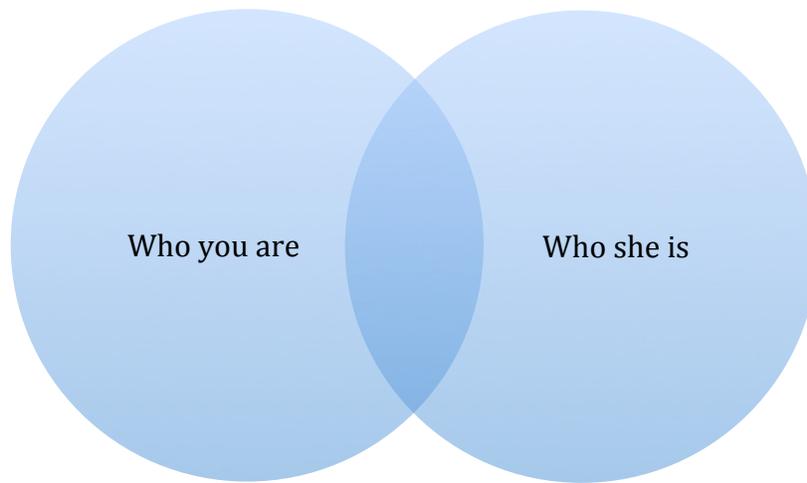
*Does she say something that feels like she's read my mind?*

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## **Exercise #2 - The “You + Me” Exercise**

Often, it’s hard to switch between our own thoughts + egos, and the thoughts + egos of the people we wish to serve. This exercise helps you see the difference between writing from YOUR ego, and writing to speak to the problems, challenges, desires and dreams of your ideal client.



*Write your answers in the circles above:*

Who you are:

- The service you provide
- How you work with people
- How much it costs to work with you
- What you believe in

Who she is:

- Her biggest “wake up in the morning problem”
- The thing that’s getting in her way
- What she dreams of being, doing, or having

Who we are (this is the place where you overlap):

- You can help her get from where she is, to where she wants to be
- She doesn’t know “how” she’ll get to her goals, but you do
- She can’t afford to wait to address this (and YOU help her see why)
- She CAN afford to invest in your services (and YOU show her why)
- Together, what she wants IS possible
- You have a system and will show her the way to get what she wants

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Okay, so maybe at this point you feel like I've invited you to do a lot of work that has NOTHING to do with actually writing your charming homepage.

*Au contraire, ma soeur.*

What you've just done is started to protect your writing from the most common mistakes that business owners make when it comes to writing copy:

**Mistake #1:** Writing about themselves—and very little about the needs + desires of their clients.

**Mistake #2:** Boring the very people they seek to charm with their certifications, trainings, and step-by-step process.

**Mistake #3:** Believing “if my homepage is good enough, people will just buy from me right on the spot.”

The truth is, you want your homepage to be charming so that people “get” what you do, who you do it for, and if they are in that group—they know it, and take the NEXT step closer to working with you.

This is why once your homepage is written, you want to have a really juicy freebie—so potential clients who like what you've done on your homepage then opt-in to your house mailing list.

And why I'm one of those people who also believes that you need to update your blog & send out a newsletter on a regular basis. You need to build a relationship with people who are in your target market. They need to see the value in what you're doing, and receive some fruits of your work FIRST, before they buy from you.

Put another way:

**Write Your Website >>>**

**Write Your Awesome Free Report (so people opt-in) >>>**

**Write a Newsletter + Blog (regularly, so people get to “know, like, and trust you” ... and get used to seeing offers for your programs + products)**

**= A solid marketing platform to promote your work**

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### **Step #3: Let it fly.**

Okay, so now that you've done the thinking work and added a Translation Desk to your team, it's time to write.

Here are the steps I use with my private writing clients to prepare for this step:

- 1) Pick a format (for starters, try a letter format. See sample from my website, on the next page)
- 2) Get in the mood (Move around and feel good. Stretch. Put on some uplifting music. Invoke your muses. Light a candle. Eat some gummy bears.)
- 3) Set a timer for 45 minutes
- 4) Write what Annie Lamott calls a "Shitty First Draft" (SFD, for short)
- 5) Go do something fun + let that draft sit for 1-3 days
- 6) Show the SFD to my Translation Desk
- 7) Write a "Much Improved Second Draft" (MISD, for short) – 45 minutes
- 8) Go do something else + let THAT draft sit
- 9) Make a decision whether the MISD is "good enough" OR...
- 10) Write a final draft + celebrate!

I call writing "flying" because over time, you can train yourself to get "in state" in your writing. And that "state" is a lot like flying. Or soaring, really.

Because what you really learn to do is to "plug into" your passion for your work, and your genuine desire to see your clients kick ass and reap all the benefits of working with you.

Learning how to write from this place takes practice, but the benefit is that you get in the flow... and the words come from an inspired place within you. And they are spot on, and resonate with the people you are meant to serve. This is one of the things I like to share with my students in my production labs.

Many service professionals know how to share their passion about their work with people when they are "in person" ... but they are still working on how to do it in their writing. This is a big part of what my production labs help service professionals do.

Would it be helpful to see this in action? On the next page, I'm sharing my homepage with you. Take a look...

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## **Sample homepage.**

*Hello, my kindred teachers, healers, and creative folk!*

**Want more clients, referrals, and joy?  
Quit marketing and learn to tell the truth.**

**Ready for a *real* adventure?** Quit forcing yourself to “do marketing.”

**One, forcing anything is a ticket to misery.** You know this already. But I'll remind you anyway: you can't attract your ideal clients if you are miserable, self-doubting, muddled, or hung up on perfection.

And two, there's a better way to make wheelbarrows of money. It's a simple alternative to marketing that I call “**being fabulous, knowing enough to be dangerous, and telling the truth.**”

Do this, and every last piece of marketing, sales, and promotion you send out into the world will dance circles around the stuff the other folks create. **And make you rich, noticed, AND better looking.**

This is what I teach biz owners and entrepreneurs how to do. How to write, sure, but how to THINK and how to be in the world, too, so that their ideal clients fly to them, like moths to a flame.

**Curious?** Get to know me & what we're up to here by poking around the website, or go ahead and [join the good people](#) across the country who are getting richer and better looking every time they read another Tuesday letter from me.

Adventure awaits you, too. Especially if you've been avoiding "marketing" like the plague 'til now. (Oh yeah, I see you there. ***Olly olly oxen free! Come out, come out wherever you are!*** Or at least [stay in touch.](#))

Winking and waving,

Stella

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## **The “Observe + Report” Exercise**

1. What strikes you about this homepage?
2. Do you like this homepage? Why or why not?
3. What’s missing that you’d like to see?
4. What’s one thing you’d take out?
5. What’s the “call to action”—that is, what’s the one next step you are invited to take?
6. What’s one good idea you can use on your homepage?

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## **Sample homepage, explained**

*Hello, my kindred teachers, healers, and creative folk!* ← **This identifies who's in my target market. It also shows that I'm not using words everyone uses.**

**Want more clients, referrals, and joy?**

**Quit marketing and learn to tell the truth.** ← **This is my headline. Simple formula: Say "is this what you want?" and then give a snappy way to get it. The "snap" gets their attention. See how short & direct these are?**

**Ready for a *real* adventure?** Quit forcing yourself to "do marketing." ← **The question here is my "hook." See how short it is? It may even be surprising— why would I be talking about adventure here? Interrupting people's expectations gets their attention. Plus, I'm dangling the idea that the best way to market is to stop marketing. See how that builds curiosity & drives someone to keep reading?**

**One, forcing anything is a ticket to misery.** You know this already. But I'll remind you anyway: you can't attract your ideal clients if you are miserable, self-doubting, muddled, or hung up on perfection. ← **I've found that many of the students I attract are getting stopped by their own perfectionism. I used to be a perfectionist, too... so this is one of the things I write about, that resonates with my favorite clients.**

And two, there's a better way to make wheelbarrows of money. It's a simple alternative to marketing that I call "**being fabulous, knowing enough to be dangerous, and telling the truth.**" ← **This is what I call the "rule of 3s." Our brains love things listed in 3s. Especially when they are as curious as the 3 things I've listed here.**

Do this, and every last piece of marketing, sales, and promotion you send out into the world will dance circles around the stuff the other folks create. **And make you rich, noticed, AND better looking.** ← **I am signaling to my favorite clients that I know what it takes to bring home the bacon, but I like to have fun, too. Because I am silly, they relax and have more fun learning along with me.**

This is what I teach biz owners and entrepreneurs how to do. How to write, sure, but how to THINK and how to be in the world, too, so that their ideal clients fly to them, like moths to a flame.

**Curious?** Get to know me & what we're up to here by poking around the website, or go ahead and [join the good people](#) across the country who are getting richer and

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better looking every time they read another Tuesday letter from me. ← **This links to the sign up to my house mailing list.**

Adventure awaits you, too. Especially if you've been avoiding "marketing" like the plague 'til now. (Oh yeah, I see you there. ***Olly olly oxen free! Come out, come out wherever you are!*** Or at least [stay in touch.](#)) ← **This links to the sign up to my house mailing list, too.**

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## **P.S. Put down the bull horn.**

For some reason, business owners think they have to shout in their marketing. I don't know why, but I suspect it's from watching too many local mattress and car commercials on television, where the owner is super excited for no reason.

**FREE GIFT!**

***Are you STRUGGLING to FIGURE OUT how to MAKE BIG MONEY ASAP?***

***FIND OUT the secret to getting slim, hot and rich in 30 minutes a day!!***

You know that relative or acquaintance who TALKS SO LOUD ALL THE TIME IT'S REALLY GRATING TO BE AROUND HER... AND YOU JUST END UP TUNING OUT AS SHE GOES ON AND ON AND ON ABOUT HERSELF AND WHAT SHE THINKS YOU SHOULD DO WITH YOUR LIFE???

That's what many folks do with their marketing.

Which is why I say: put the bull horn down. Step away from the CAPS LOCK. And put the exclamation points back in their box.

The real trick to marketing as a service professional isn't to be loud or pushy.

It's to turn the volume down and master the **art of connection**.

What we're really doing when we write a homepage is having a conversation with our potential clients. That's why it's so important to use your voice to express who you are, and how you can help your favorite clients of clients.

And that's also why it's so important to **know who your favorite clients are**, too. And what challenges they are facing (or what dreams, problems, or aspirations they have).

Because you need to be able to **simulate a conversation in your writing**.

How do you do this? It takes practice. But remember, you weren't born knowing how to walk. Or ride a bike, for that matter. You learned.

Same goes for writing your homepage.

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One of the first lessons I teach my students is to stop writing to a group of people. And to imagine one favorite client (even if you haven't met her yet)... and start "talking" to her in your writing.

**You don't yell at your favorite client when you're talking to her, do you?**

**I SAID: you DON'T YELL at your FAVORITE CLIENT when you talk to her... DO YOU?????**

So why not take the voice and conversation you have with her, and just write it down?

Chances are, you already know what she's working on. What her dreams are. What she's learning how to do. Why she wanted to work with you in the first place. And what is really challenging for her.

So, put that into your copy.

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#### **What's next?**

I know I've just given you a lot of information.

I hope that's sparked something wonderful for you.

Now, maybe you can take my sample homepage and write YOUR charming homepage. You're off to the races... and that's awesome!

But if your brain is feeling a bit full, please don't let yourself go into overwhelm.

Take a deep breath.

*What kind of support or guidance would feel awesome right now?*

I offer a 4-week "Write Your Website" production lab that might be helpful. I take my students through writing their homepage, Services (or programs) page, and About page.

It's a super affordable program, and you can find out more on my website: [www.stellaorange.com](http://www.stellaorange.com). Or, feel free to ask when the next class starts by shooting an email to [concierge@stellaorange.com](mailto:concierge@stellaorange.com).

Until then, I wish you many charming returns.

Keep up the good work,  
Stella O.

*Stella Orange dares business owners to find the message that makes their hearts + cash registers sing. As your friendly neighborhood wordsmith, Stella reminds you that it's not just what you say... it's how you say it. Based in Coconut Grove, Florida, Stella spends her summers in Bozeman, Montana, and has a habit of popping up at kitchen tables across the country to talk message, making money, and what's for dessert. Stella is a member of the International Association of Women in Business Coaching.*

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