The Rant

The rant isn’t necessarily controversial. In fact, you may find that the overwhelming majority of your readers (as well as others in your niche) completely and 100% agree with you. Nonetheless, the rant is still an opinion (rather than a fact). What makes it unique, however, is the way it’s delivered. Let me show you what I mean…

If you write a “how to” article, some of it will likely be based on opinion. For example, let’s suppose you’re writing a “how to” article on the best way to drive free traffic to a website. Obviously, what you consider the best way is not necessarily everyone’s idea of the best way. Nonetheless, if you write a pretty tame instructional article no one is going to give it a second thought.

Now let’s compare this to a rant. A rant is where you might do a little complaining about something. You might poke fun at another group that believes differently than you. You’ll likely purposely use emotionally charged words to get your point and your opinion across.

You see, while a “how to” article (even if it is based on an opinion) is intended to teach someone how to do something. A rant, however, is designed to create an emotional response… a reaction. Since a rant isn’t necessarily controversial, that emotional reaction often coincides with agreement.

Let me now give you a couple specific examples…

* You publish a newsletter for experienced hard-core bodybuilders. You publish a “rant” about beginners who do hours upon hours of cardio, which strips away their muscle. You’ll have your audience nodding with you while shaking their heads in disbelief about these “clueless newbies” that are sabotaging their own efforts.
* Let’s suppose you publish a newsletter for people who sell stuff on eBay. You can publish a rant about how eBay “steals money from your pockets” every time they raise their fees. You’ll have your readers getting riled up and agreeing with you.

*TIP: Notice that word choice impacts how people perceive your article. You could write a bland article about eBay raising their fees, but your market would hardly take notice. If you use a phrase like “steals money from your pockets,” it upsets your subscribers. And that’s a good thing.*

You see, while posting a controversial article is a “divide and conquer” polarization strategy, a rant builds rapport by tapping emotional buttons while simultaneously getting people to agree with you. If you can get them riled up and upset at some extraneous “enemy” or outsider, you’ll develop a loyal readership.

Once again, the best way to profit from these types of articles is simply by enjoying the indirect benefits. That is, use the rant to build rapport with your readers. Indirectly, this will lead to more sales.

<http://listbuilderclub.com/how-to-write-a-good-rant/>

**Rick Mercer: Why I rant. And why you should too.**

**Ranting is a ‘skill’ the comedian learned from his mother—and he says Canadians don’t do it enough**



**Rave on: Mercer thinks Canadians don’t rant enough, with dire consequences**

September 21, 2012

I didn’t come out of the womb ranting but chances are I heard a few good ones while I was in there. Indeed, if my instinct to rant comes from anywhere it’s my mother. One of my earliest life-defining memories as a kid was being dragged against my will to the bank because Mom had a meeting.I can remember sitting in a chair next to my mother while she had an excruciatingly dull conversation with a banker. I remember wondering what I had done to be forced to sit through this and if it were actually possible to die from boredom. And then everything changed. I will never forget the moment. The banker leaned forward and said, “Now Mrs. Mercer, do you have your husband’s permission to do this? Perhaps we should give him a call.”

From my point of view the day just got a whole lot better; for the man behind the desk the opposite was true. He had no idea what he had done. He had unleashed a hell storm that he had absolutely no chance of surviving. The poor, hapless man. To say the oxygen was immediately sucked out of the room would be an exaggeration. To say that the blistering rant my mother delivered to the dumb creature made his ears bleed would not be. Needless to say very soon we were no longer in a cubicle but in a much nicer office upstairs, with a different banker who was doing everything he could to stop my mother from closing every account and going across the street. The dude who suggested Mom get her husband’s permission to open a chequing account was sent to “get the lad a fudge stick.”

Go Mom!

Everyone should rant. Ranting not only makes you feel better but occasionally, as my mother proved to me many times, you might get results—justice, satisfaction or a fudge stick.

Canadians don’t rant enough. We are busy people and I get that. We don’t necessarily have the time or the inclination to come across like mad people who are constantly barking about waste, corruption and lack of transparency in three different levels of government. You may not want to be that guy who is constantly ranting about those people who drive their car into an intersection on a yellow light knowing they will get stuck in the middle and block traffic for everyone else and they don’t care. And I don’t blame you. I am that guy, I’ve been ranting about those people for decades, and they are still allowed to walk the earth and drive a car.

But the danger in not ranting is dire. If we as a nation don’t rant then the powers that be will use that complacency against us. Take for example the last federal budget. The omnibus budget. When I ranted about that budget to my Tory friends in Ottawa, when I said, “Why in hell does Jim Flaherty’s budget contain a provision that allows the FBI to operate on Canadian soil?” they said what they always say, “People don’t care.” Turns out they were right. When I asked them why are there hundreds of environmental regulations being changed without any discussion whatsoever, they said again, “People don’t care”—and it turns out they were right again. In fact, the government is so convinced that we don’t care they loaded the budget with so many items that had nothing to do with a budget that even MPs had no idea what was in there or what passing it could mean.

Now occasionally Canadians do suddenly care about the nation’s business and it always catches the government off guard. Remember the Speech from the Throne when, out of the blue, it was announced that Stephen Harper’s government would be rewriting the lyrics to O Canada? You just know the Prime Minister was convinced we wouldn’t care, that he could do what he liked; but, we did. The country exploded with people ranting about our national anthem and oh, what a beautiful sound. Turns out nobody, left or right, liked the idea of the Prime Minister sitting around with paper and pencil trying to figure out a way to rhyme the nation’s name with his.

As a result of these occasional examples of the country standing up and saying, “Wait a minute,” the government has a strategy to deal with anyone who doesn’t play the part of the complacent Canadian. They like to play whack-a-mole with the heads and reputations of anyone who has an opinion or a question.

If you in your capacity as a Canadian citizen, taxpayer or Grade 10 student doing a social studies project ask any questions about any pipelines anywhere in Canada, you will be branded by the government as a dangerous radical or a vicious cruel monster in the same league as Saddam Hussein, Moammar Gadhafi, or David Suzuki.

This is a pretty effective strategy but I doubt it will last for long. Hopefully it will dawn on Canadians that the one thing we shouldn’t care about is what the government thinks of us or what names they call us. Prime ministers, premiers and cabinet ministers aren’t our friends; they are just people in bad suits who work for us.

We are the boss. And if they want to work for us they have to listen to us, answer our questions and occasionally, like all employees, listen to the boss rant.

**The Rant’s Ancestor – The Bdelygmia**

Early in 2007, disturbed by reports of John Edwards' $400 Beverly Hills haircut, *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts expressed his exasperation at the "fake authenticity" practiced by today's politicians:

*I do know a con when I see one. And in politics, I see them all the time.*

*We are courted by blow-dried, focus-grouped, stage-managed, photo-opped, sloganeering, false-smiling, hand-clasping, back-slapping would-be leaders who say they feel our pain and understand our concerns and maybe sometimes they do, but all too often, it seems they feel little and understand less.

Superficiality gleams in their perfect teeth and scripted lines. They work hard to make style look just like substance.*

That's good, vigorous writing: a pair of short, direct sentences on either side of a classic [bdelygmia](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/bdelygmiaterm.htm) .

A classic *what*? Pronounced "de-LIG-me-uh" and derived from the Greek word for "abuse," this rhetorical device is a form of [invective](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/invectiveterm.htm): an exuberant rant, a litany of disparaging remarks, a string of stinging criticisms.

Back in 1604, King James I of England employed bdelygmia in the conclusion to his "Counterblaste to Tobacco":

*A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the Nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the Lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.*

Bdelygmia remains a potent verbal weapon. You could often hear it unleashed on MSNBC when newscaster Keith Olbermann identified the "Worst Person in the World." Or on HBO's *Real Time* when comedian Bill Maher announces "New Rules." Or on the radio when Rush Limbaugh launches into a rant against liberals.

But what may be the best known modern specimen of bdelygmia falls well outside the realms of politics and social commentary. It's a song, composed 40 years ago by [Dr. Seuss](http://grammar.about.com/od/advicefromthepros/a/seusswrite09.htm) (Theodor Seuss Geisel) for the animated version of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. An extended litany of abuse, the song concludes:

*You're a foul one, Mr. Grinch,
You're a nasty wasty skunk,
Your heart is full of unwashed socks, your soul is full of gunk, Mr. Grinch.
The three words that best describe you are as follows, and I quote,
"Stink, stank, stunk"!*

"You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" may not be the most sophisticated lyric ever composed, but then bdelygmia is not a particularly sophisticated rhetorical device. It's up front and in your face.

And while it may be ignited by anger or frustration, the sheer excess (or [hyperbole](http://grammar.about.com/od/fh/g/hyperboleterm.htm)) of bdelygmia--of insults and aspersions piled sky high--often creates a comic effect in the end. So take a deep breath before letting it all out with bdelygmia--and proceed with caution.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/rhetoricstyle/a/BdelygmiaRant07.htm>

## How to Write (Better): How to Write a Rant

 By [Her Bad Mother](http://www.blogher.com/member/her-bad-mother) on July 28, 2010

I love a good rant. I love to read them, and I love to write them. I love to read them, because a good rant is smart and energetic and inspiring and often funny. I love to write them, because I get to practice creating something smart (and energetic and inspiring and funny), and because it feels so good to let an argument hang out.

But rants can go off the rails really, really quickly, not least because they are, usually, driven by excessive emotional and intellectual energy. We usually write rants because something has provoked us; that's a good thing -- provocation fuels some of the best discourse -- but it can also be, you know, a little problematic. Ever come to after arguing so passionately about the evils of veal production to the other guests at the dinner table (at that veal-parmigiana-serving wedding that you hyperventilated and passed out), only to find out that you called the groom a baby-cow-killing monster who should never be allowed to procreate? That can happen when you get carried away with a rant. Don't ask me how I know.

So here are some tips for doing it well in writing:

1)    **Never write a rant in the heat of passion**. Or, if you do write in the heat of passion, don’t publish. Wait until you’ve calmed down and given your outburst a good edit or six. It’s the rare person who can be reasonable and coherent while gripped by anger or outrage. And a good rant – no matter how passionate – is always reasonable and coherent.

2)    **Yes, reasonable**. This might sound counter-intuitve, but the point of a rant is not to vent your emotions (okay, that’s part of the point, but not the whole point; more on this in a moment), but to communicate to others why a given issue has provoked your emotions, why that matters, and what we should do about it.

3)    **But also passionate**. When I say to not write in the heat of temper, and point out that the expression of your emotions is not the primary purpose of a rant, I don’t mean that you should excise all feeling from your prose. I mean, keep all that feeling in its place. Focus it, direct it, use it to make a moving and convincing argument. A good rant is a vehicle that is fuelled by passion but driven by a skilled and sober driver.

4)    **Remain aware that there is always more than one, or even two, sides to an issue**. So the ChildFree people are out there comparing children to pets again? Yes, that’s absurd, but if you’re going to do a rant against people who compare children to pets, be aware that although most people recognize the absurdity of that comparison, there are still some who still love their own pets passionately and who won’t appreciate your snarky jokes about dog houses and abattoirs. And that you-just-can’t-know-love-if-you-don’t-have-children argument is hurtful to those who can’t have children. So avoid tilting into ‘that’s just WRONG/STUPID/ABSURD’ arguments, and instead make every to at least make the impression that you’ve considered other sides of the issue.

5)    **Edit, edit, edit**. Because regardless of what I say about not getting carried away by your passion in a rant, it is, after all, a rant.  You’re going to get a little carried away – the best ones often do – and you want to make sure that you’ve cleaned the spittle off of your screen, figuratively (and literally, if it comes to that.)

6)    **End with a flourish**. Being tempered in making an argument sometimes warrants a conclusion that suggests that whatever is under discussion is open to debate, that it's all up for discussion, we're all grown ups here, so let's agree to disagree if we must. But this is a rant. You're writing it because you feel strongly that you're right and you want to say so. So, go for it. After you've nodded your head here and there indicating that you understand that there is more than one side to the matter, go ahead and indulge your impulse to say BUT MINE IS RIGHT, DAMMIT. Because, despite everything that I said above, sometimes [you just want to shout SUCK IT.](http://herbadmother.com/2009/08/its-my-motherhood-and-ill-celebrate-it-if-i-want-to/) And that's okay.