

ARTICLE DOS & DON'TS

Articles should be educational, not advertorial. What is an advertorial? It is an article written about a person, product or business that is designed as a marketing tool. Our philosophy at E.P.I.C.™ is that our readers are smart! If you write an advertorial, readers know they are “being sold”. If however, you provide the reader with education (in the form of how-tos, tips, inspirational stories that draw conclusion(s) the reader resonates with) there will be an “attraction factor”.

The reader will know who you are and what you do, because that will appear in the bio information after the article. So there is no need to include this information in the body of the article, unless it is directly relevant to telling a story. If you write a good educational piece, the reader will be attracted to who you are and what you offer.

Pick your topic. All of the topics need to relate to conscious living. Well, that’s not too difficult, since conscious living is a broad category that includes spirituality, health and sustainability. So if you are telling a story, bring it back around to how the story informs consciousness or conscious living. And this should be explicit, rather than implied. See *Peace is Learning a New Language* by Rachel Kapustka, Mar/Apr 2012, p. 2. (www.epicmag.org/pdfs/march-april-2012)

Know your audience. Our readers pick up the magazine because they are interested in consciousness. The reader may be a seasoned spiritual veteran, or brand new to the exploration of consciousness. The “middle way” is best. Your title or introduction can be an expression of whom it is you are addressing. For example, *Sticking Your Toe in the Waters of Woo-Woo*, is a great title to grab the interest of “the beginner”. See *Sticking Your Toe in the Waters of Woo-Woo* by Bethany Nicuum, Mar/Apr 2012, p. 23. (www.epicmag.org/pdfs/march-april-2012)

What is your angle? How are you going to grab the readers’ attention to make them want to keep reading? Ask a question. Use a compelling statistic. Outline a problem and promise a solution. Use an anecdote. Open with a short quote. Explain a mystery. Describe your experience with the subject matter. Relate an emotional experience (please note that personal narratives will only be considered if they explicitly convey universal lesson(s) that readers can learn from).

Do some research if necessary. Be as accurate as possible. E.P.I.C.™ states that the article content reflects the ideas and opinions of the authors. Proper citation is the responsibility of the author. If you quote something directly, you must cite it. If you are paraphrasing another’s work, you must cite it. Even if you significantly change the wording so that the *words* are yours but the *ideas* are someone else’s, you must cite the source. If the ideas are yours, regardless of “inspiration,” you do not have to cite a source. There are many spiritual concepts that would be considered “common knowledge;” you do not need to cite common knowledge. Only the author of an article him/herself can know if they are paraphrasing or if they are simply inspired along similar lines of thought. Similar ideas do not warrant a citation. See *Do You Know What You Are Eating?* By Minna Jain, Mar/Apr 2012 p. 4. (www.epicmag.org/pdfs/march-april-2012)

Write an outline. Not everyone writes an outline, but it can be helpful for organizing your thoughts. Start with an introduction that leads to the main point, at least 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Einstein said, “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.”

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE WRITING

Active vs. Passive Voice. E.P.I.C.[™] prefers a direct writing style, using active vs. passive voice. An example of active voice would be, "I'm writing an article." Passive voice would be, "The article is being written by me." You are working within the confines of a word limit, and passive voice tends to be more "wordy". Passive voice isn't wrong, but it's often a poor way to present your thoughts.

Limit the use of personal pronouns. A string of "I" or "my" statements does not an educational piece make. Resonance with the reader is more easily created by limiting the use of personal pronouns. They do not have to be eliminated entirely, but "I" or "my" statements should be followed with text the reader relates to. See *The Transformational Power of Vitalistic Philosophy* Burnier, Sep/Oct 2012, p. 18. (www.epicmag.org/pdfs/september-october-2012)

Write your first draft. Try to look at your writing through objective and impersonal eyes. Good writing is rewriting. Here are some questions to consider: Is the article focused and targeted for the E.P.I.C.[™] audience? Does it make sense? Does it flow from introduction, to body to conclusion? Is critical information missing? Did it achieve its purpose?

Create the title for your article LAST. It is fine, of course, to have a working title. But when you are finished make sure the title reflects the content.

Submitting your article. The maximum word count for Feature Articles is 1250. The maximum word count for Short Features is 600. Include a by-line and a 50 word bio (with contact information) with your submission. Please spell/grammar check your article before submitting. Each submission must be accompanied by a signed form to be considered. Your submission needs to be in an editable format (such as Word or Pages; no PDFs or JPGs). Please save and submit your Feature Article, Poetry or Prose with *your proposed title* or Feature Name (if Health Tip, Sustainability or Empowerment & Inspiration). Submit the file electronically with proposed title as the *subject line*.

Most importantly, have fun! Sharing a piece of yourself with the larger community should not feel stressful or like a chore. Being an E.P.I.C.[™] contributor is a way for you to shine your light!

If you have any questions regarding article submissions please contact:

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