

BREAKING & ENTERING: Story Secrets – Don't Write What You Love. Love What You Write!

By: **Barri Evins**

I was sitting in my current favorite coffee shop, working on an article for my [ScriptMag column](#), when the guy in the seat next to me turned, asked if I would look at three loglines and tell him which I thought was best.

Okay, it *is* Los Angeles, but I swear I wasn't wearing my "Pitch Me: I'm A Story Consultant!" T-shirt.

Nevertheless, I gave him some feedback, because working on loglines – [both for free and for hire](#) – is part of what I do. I enjoy it and believe I'm pretty good at it. It was easy to pick the best logline of the three.

But then the writer told me that, while he had fun writing the spec script, *it wasn't a movie he would ever choose to see*.

WHAT? I was floored.

I wasn't looking to get into a heated debate with a stranger in a coffee shop, but heck, why write a movie you wouldn't even watch?

"Write what you love," is simplistic advice.

Advice that doesn't work.

Really and truly.

You should love what you're writing.

Ten Reasons You Should Love What You Write:

Love Your Story

Completing an entire screenplay is an arduous and lengthy process. Be passionate about getting your story out into the world. That passion will help keep you going until the end. And that passion can help elevate you beyond being a good writer to becoming a great storyteller.

Love the Premise

The idea you choose for your screenplay is the single most important decision you will ever make as a writer. Devote more time choosing what to write next, and spend less time ripping up and rewriting one hundred plus pages of script.

Love the Genre

Your enthusiasm for the genre is essential.

Hopefully, as a fan, you love what makes it work when it is at its best. You've watched countless films and read scripts in the genre. You know the tropes – the popular conventions that we expect of the genre – inside and out.

As a fan, you know what you expect the genre to deliver and that means you know what audience expects, so you can deliver rather than disappoint.

Love the Theme

Compelling movies have something to say. Define what you want to say, the message supported by your entire story, the point you want to make about life as you know it. When you know the heart of your story, it informs all the other decisions you make. But it has to be personal to you. It has to be meaningful to you. Or it will ring hollow. No half measures here.

Love the Hero

The hero of your story is the most powerful way to draw us into the story. Your job is to make us care about them, and to make us root for them to succeed, even if they are an antihero. To achieve that, the hero needs to first strike a chord with you.

Love the Hero's Flaw

I believe that the hero's flaw is one of the essential elements of creating a story. My structure template ([now available on the Big Ideas website](#)) requires that you figure this out – along with logline, tone, arc, and theme – before moving on to the story beats. And then, as you add beats, it keeps popping up at the top of the page so you can't overlook it. Flaw is essential because it illuminates the collision between the hero's aspirations and their fear – their external goal and their internal obstacle.

Love the Hero's Goal

This needs to be something you feel is worth striving for. Worth fighting for. Worth risking it all for. That's what it should mean to your hero and to you – both of you will be giving it your all in the effort to achieve that goal.

Love the Conflict

Without conflict, you don't have story. When you love your conflict you explore it from every angle. You exploit it for everything it's got. You play it out fully. And, most importantly, you keep it escalating.

Love the Twists

There are two ways to look at twists – plot twists and the fresh spin you bring to familiar elements.

Human brains love the rush of surprise that we experience when a story event happens that we didn't see coming.

As much as you love the genre, you want to find ways to make it unique and distinctive to your story. That fresh spin comes from choosing elements that could only come from your specifics, from taking the tropes that you know and flipping them on their ear, so the result both surprises and satisfies.

This is how your story makes a splash.

Love the Ending

Like a delicious dessert, we want our endings to be a satisfying caper to the story. We want to leave the theatre with that sweet taste in our mouth. That means the hero achieves their goal, or has evolved to a new perspective, the villain gets their comeuppance, and all seems right in the world. Tie up the loose ends, but don't take it too far and wind up with a gaudy bow at the end. When every conflict is quickly and neatly resolved, the ending feels saccharine instead of sweet.

And finally, one extra reason:

If you don't like it, how can you possibly expect audiences to love it?

Case closed.

Go find a story to fall in love with!