

# Pseudonyms

The Craft of Writing · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

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I advise against fake names

Regarding pen names or pseudonyms . . .

I strongly recommend against the idea of you using a fake name and being anonymous.

It's a crazy concept!!

Firstly, editors have a stake in your name. Say you have become a valued writer. Readers are attracted to articles partly because of your name. That's good for the publication.

Secondly, lots of publications like to run a photo of you next to your byline . . . and the publication is going to look silly if someone recognises YOU and writes a "correction" letter saying the publication has got the name completely wrong!

Thirdly and most importantly, a suspicious editor asks: "What has this journalist got to hide? Does this journalist want to avoid being held accountable for his/her writings?"

Serious publications rarely agree to run a serious letter to the editor without the writer's real name (except perhaps in the case of sexual matters).

If readers aren't allowed anonymity, why should paid journalists be allowed to hide behind pretend names?

Another important point is that when phoning a new contact for the first time, your job will always be easier because that new contact recognises your name from already having seen it published.

- Be proud of your name.
- Be proud and willing to put your name on your writings.
- Be ready to be held accountable for what you write.
- Be ready to accept an award for your writing!!

That's my advice.

Also, think about copyright: the copyright in your writing cannot belong to a fictitious person - it must belong to you in your real name.

Last matter: some freelancers quite correctly regard themselves as being a one-person business and register a business name. I recommend against a business name and urge you to use your own name. And anyway, all those pun-names are gone, such as Write About Now, Write Angles and Do the Write Thing.

I still say: "Pushing your own name is best."

Email me and let me know your reaction to all this advice.

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