Persuasive Communications for Alumni/Donors

Or, why my mother-in-law is my writing muse

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This is NOT a crash course in:

• Writing
• Fundraising
• Alumni relations

Instead: **Way of thinking** about how you communicate with your alumni/donor audiences.
Meet my mother-in-law, Sandy
But there is one other thing you should know about Sandy...
She doesn’t care about my writing. And most people don’t. Ouch.
And a writing muse is born!

When I write, I ask myself: How do I make Sandy (and everyone else) care about this topic?
The answer: Make Sandy (and others) feel something.
Tip 1: Paint “happy trees”

Welcome to the Joy of Painting

with Bob Ross

All you need is the desire to make beautiful things happen on canvas. With Bob's fantastic Wet-on-Wet Technique® and a little dedicated practice, masterpieces that you never dreamed possible will flow from your brush.
Forget show don’t tell…

• Don’t just show, describe!
• Fancy yourself a creative writer rather than a reporter.
• Paint a picture with words. Make your writing as touchable as the snow on Bob’s happy trees.
• Help the reader enter the room, hear voices, smell things, touch things.
Tip 2: Find the hidden soap opera plot
Focus on emotion

• What is your subject’s everyday life like?
• What obstacles must they overcome?
• How does the subject feel about his or her situation?
• What would make it better?
Tip 3: There is a reason why pictures of kids and puppies sell newspapers
Focus on students

Probably 90 percent of the time, the best and most compelling angle you can take is a student. Why?

• Students are accessible to people. No matter who you are, you were probably a student once.

• Students have dreams. You probably had one too, once!

• If you can show the university is helping a student, you are putting a human face on our mission that most people can relate to.
And in the end, you may just get this lady to care about your writing!
Questions?

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