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Truth!

Should we always tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Emily Dickinson has some ideas. Here’s her poem (#1263) about being tactful and careful when telling the truth so as not to “blind” someone by it. She is *not* saying we should *not* tell the truth, however.

Tell all the truth but tell it slant— (don’t need to say everything)  
 Success in Circuit lies (you will reach them if you tell it indirectly)  
 Too bright for our infirm Delight (truth cuts into our sensitivities)  
 The Truth’s superb surprise (as it has a sharp edge)  
 As Lightning to the Children Eased (you ease children’s fear of lightning)  
 With explanation kind (softening their fear by explaining it mildly)  
 The Truth must dazzle gradually (truth should be meted out gently)  
 Or every man be blind— (so people are not overwhelmed by it)

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Is your lie-detector working today? We all have a sense of who is bamboozling us. Oftentimes, though, we either make excuses for the obfuscator--“He doesn’t know what he’s saying; I’ll just go along”; she just needs to be affirmed”--or we are snagged by their polished rhetoric. Truth is not the winner in either case. The half-truthers are not obstructed from their lying ways due to our going along. In the case of the swindler, not only has your self-esteem (and finances) taken a beating, but the imposters will not truly love themselves. Lies do damage to both parties. When truth is our master we all win.

WORD OF THE MONTH

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Irrefutable [ˌɪrəˈfyʊdəb(ə)l, ɪˈrefyədəb(ə)l]

ADJECTIVE

Impossible to deny or disprove.  
 “irrefutable evidence”

*Synonyms:* indisputable · undeniable · unquestionable · incontrovertible · uncontestable · unassailable · impregnable · beyond question · indubitable · beyond doubt · beyond dispute · conclusive · definite · definitive · decisive · certain · sure · positive · sound · flawless · watertight · unmistakable · palpable · patent · manifest · obvious · evident · plain · clear · forceful · telling · irrefragable · apodictic

*Antonym:* unreliable



About



The **perspicacious** use of words has the potential to generate power to persuade as well as entertain. Using weather as our metaphor, how can we leverage both good- and bad-weather days to bring acuity to our writing.

Myriad aphorisms are based on the weather: "Make hay when the sun shines," "April showers bring May flowers," "Red sky at night: Sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, Sailor's take warning," "If you want to see the sunshine, you have to weather the storm." It's a universal conversation starter--"Wonderful weather we're having, mate!," and fuels our rationale, "But baby it's cold outside." And people take cues from the physical world for their moods and attitudes.

Weather conditions--anywhere from beautiful sunny days to those of gentle rains or fresh ozone air after a rainstorm—are catalysts for hope. People's eyes brighten, and life doesn't seem so bad when accompanied by a pleasant atmosphere. Emily Dickinson elaborates:

Inebriate of air – am I –  
And Debauchee of Dew –  
Reeling – thro' endless summer days –  
From inns of molten Blue – (#214)

The air Dickinson describes can alter even the state of consciousness of her persona who is "drunk" on it.

The energy of the sun also has powerful effects. When the sun shines, it brings internal fortitude and peace. A sense that "there's a God in heaven and all's right with the world?" (R. Browning). Shakespeare even compares his patron's love interest to a summer's day, which makes her the epitome of beauty: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate" ("Sonnet 18").

The whole physical realm is indeed instructive. Thunderstorms and dark days are just as compelling by the moods they produce. Even downpouring rains have the capability of transforming thoughts that override the dullness that our moods are prone to when the weather doesn't line up with our expectations. Lassoing our creative powers to replace dread with yielding, may just be what brings a muse that harnesses beauty amid what seems bleak. "Let it go, Let it go / Can't hold it back anymore" could be the mantra elicited when the weather is not what soothes us but is a catalyst to deeper ideas.

A variety of weather conditions stimulate our writing to arrest the whole scope of human experience and the gamut of our existence. We can pooh-pooh the circling environment or fit whatever it has to offer us into a vast scheme of writing potential.

I'd love to hear from you!  
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Punctuation Personified

**sic** ~ I may seem like a foreign language to you, and, as a matter of fact, I am Latin for "thus." The reason for my existence is nothing to do with being sick, however. I am healthy, thank you, and have a purpose. My literal meaning is "so," "thus," "in this manner," and if used with brackets ([sic]), it is because what precedes is misspelled or is not in the original. To fulfill the job of making sure text is corrected, I clear up any misunderstandings. I should not be abused, however, by overuse. If a manuscript has unconventional spellings, a preface or a note is sufficient to explain them. Here's an example of my being used correctly:

This proved too much for Robert Barnett, the Washington super lawyer and longtime adviser to the Clintons, who fired off an e-mail lighting into her senior staff: "STOP IT!!!! I have help [sic] my tongue for weeks. ..."  
— Joshua Green, *Bloomberg*, 20-26 Apr. 2015

"farther" or "further"

An easy way to remember the difference between these two is to remember that *farther* is used for physical distance (we went farther north of the vacation spot to explore a remote area), and *further* is used for figurative distance (let's look at this further) (I wish to discuss this further than just between you and me).

"foreword" or "preface"

A *foreword* is an essay written at the introduction of a book by someone who is not the book's author. A *preface* is an essay at the introduction of a book that is written by the author of it.

Master the Art of Truth-Telling

Speak and write winsomely, intentionally, and genuinely. What you want to get across is dependent on the words you use; but, other things matter as well: namely, structure, grammar and mechanics. Be error free today!

