

THE GARY HALBERT LETTER

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The Boron Letters - Chapter 12

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Dear Bond,

Let's get right back to that real estate letter. I've already pointed out how that little baggie filled with dirt will attract and focus our reader's attention. Now, let's talk about the other particulars of the first page of that letter.

I think I left off in my last letter where I was just about to comment on the part above the salutation, the part that tells the day of the week, the exact time, the day of the month and the year. Why is it important to put these specifics in the letter?

Well, it makes the letter a little more personal, doesn't it? I mean seriously, don't you feel a little closer to me because I put all this data in each of my letters to you? I think so. I think this way of doing things bonds the writer and the reader closer together. It also gives our transmission the quality of immediacy. And, while I'm on the subject, it just occurred to me that I should tell you that another additional way to achieve this bond of intimacy and immediacy in your letters is to describe where you are and what you are doing as you are writing the letter.

For example, right now I am sitting cross-legged on my back here in room 7 of dorm 6 in the Boron Federal Prison Camp. I have just finished running the hill five times (4-miles) and I did it in 57 minutes and 5 seconds.

Do you see how this type of personal specific info bonds the reader and writer closer together? You do? Good. I'll continue.

Now, here's another little thought: When you tell the day of the week plus the exact time you are writing the letter, it makes it seem a more important communication too, doesn't it? Sort of like a telegram. There's no doubt about it: A time-dated communication carries considerable more weight than one which is not.

Onward.

Now let's talk about the salutation. Notice that the salutation addresses our reader by name, just like I do in these letters to you. "Dear Bond" gets a certain quality of focused attention that is not enjoyed by "Dear Sir" or "Dear Occupant" or "Dear Reader".

Think about it. When you read the words "Dear Bond", you know my letter is for you personally, don't you? It's not for Kevin. It's not for whoever owns the house. Or anybody who lives at the address on the envelope. No. The words "Dear Bond" indicate that this letter is for you and you alone.

And this makes you pay more attention, doesn't it?

Now, if you will look in the lower right hand corner of the letter in my illustration and, also, in all of my other letters, you will see, in parenthesis, a tiny little instruction like this: **(over)** or like this: **(go to page 7)**. What I am doing here is taking the reader by the hand and leading him exactly where I want him to go. It seems like a small point and, maybe it is, but is the little touches like this that keeps the letter flowing, the reader moving along, and, it relieves him of the burden of trying to figure out what he is supposed to do when he finishes reading a particular page.

Don't scoff. Quite often (most often) your letter will arrive when your prospect is busy, when his mind is on other things. Therefore, you need to work hard to make reading your letter pleasant, easy -read, interesting and unconfusing.

Well, here I am once again starting to write without knowing where I am going. All I know is that when I keep moving and writing and flowing that generally something decent emerges. We'll see.

No, wait. I know what I'll tell you. How about what else goes inside the carrier envelope in addition to the letter? One thing for sure is that you must include a reply envelope. Now, when it comes to reply envelopes, you basically have two choices. The options are to make the reader pay the postage when he mails the envelope or for you to pay the postage for him. There are two ways for you to pay the postage. One of these is to simply put a "live" stamp on the envelope so that it will be all ready to mail when he receives it.

There are a couple of advantages to this strategy and one big disadvantage. The disadvantage is cost. Right now, at 20¢ per stamp it will cost you \$200.00 extra per thousand to do business this way. And, naturally, because of this, most mailers never even test this option.

That's too bad. Really. Because sometimes, this strategy will pay off. Therefore, I believe, when either or both of the following conditions exists you should test a SRE (Stamped Reply Envelope):

Condition #1: You are selling a high-ticket item where the profit structure is such that one additional sale per thousand letters mailed will yield more than enough profit to pay for your SRE's.

This means, of course, that each sale you make has to have a mark up of at least \$200.00.

You know what? What I just wrote may not be quite accurate. Because, if you think about it, if those SRE's bring in two or more orders per M, then your mark up on each sale would only have to be \$100.00. If they bring in three extra orders per M, the mark up would only have to be \$70.00 per unit to make it feasible.

And so on.

Condition #2: You should test a SRE whenever you can make the recipient of your letter feel guilty if he doesn't reply. This works especially well for charity or fund raising letters. For example, you might have a line in one of your letters that goes something like this:

"...and those pitiful children need your help right now! So please send a check immediately and send as much as possible. That's all you have to do. I have already addressed the reply envelope and I have even gone to the expense of putting a stamp on it so you won't have to hunt for one!"

Pretty good guilt, eh? And you can also use guilt in a regular sales letter. Here's how:

Continued Tomorrow

I Love You and Good Luck!

Dad