

Platitudes to Do Not Do
by Dennis Payton Knight

The writer's life is a negotiation of many clichés. I've taken one of them, the to-do list, and turned into a to-don't list of some of them. "Let's put this into perspective." That's an example, and a "good candidate" for our list. Who's perspective is it we're going to put "this" into? A close cousin is to get to no point at all by saying "it is what it is."

A "journey beginning with a single step" is another. Step-then-another-step is obvious, unless you own a Segue. And the more profound the author considers himself to be, the more likely all his paragraphs will be journeys, from blowing his nose to leading an exodus.

Another pet don't for this list is the word "like" used as a spoken comma. Every time I hear the word like, like, spoken in the middle of a sentence, I'll tell you I don't and I won't. Fortunately writers don't do this, unless they're, like, talking to another writer about taking another, like, journey.

There are some clichés that serve as warnings. "Thanks in advance" means you are about to be nominated as a fellow's lending officer or substitute dog walker. If you thank me in advance I'll tell you you're welcome to look elsewhere.

"I, personally." Another one for the list that I personally can do without. When does I personally ever mean anything more than the unadorned version of I. If I tell you I love you, I score a lot of points. If I tell you "I personally" love you you'll likely surmise you are telling me something others won't.

When I start a new job and learn I have just been "onboarded," I know I'm in for a career of "herding cats," "connecting dots," and "flying under the radar," or "being on the radar," but never more than a "blip". That is unless I can first "gild the lily." "and/or" "butter the bacon" (and where the hell did that one come from?) Tell me before I'm hired whether it's my job to "think out of the box" or to "check all the boxes" on my don't-do list. And when the "rubber hits the road," shall I "stay in the groove" or "move the needle?"

"It is what it is." I say that myself, because it makes me sound smart, Yet no one ever asks me to define either "it" or "is," Fortunately, I've never been told it isn't what it is, nor it is what it isn't.

And now, "having hit the ground running," "leveraged the synergy," "teed up," "synched up" and "ramped up" "the bandwidth" it is time for this essay to "cross the t's and dot the l's," "honor the vision" and fulfill the "mission statement." "Let me make this perfectly clear." You don't need to ask permission. Just say what you're going to say anyway, and make it perfectly clear.

"What a concept!"

"Get a Grip!"

"I know, right?"