



Nonfiction Book Writing Sample

***Change Your Frame, Change Your Life* by Christine P. Rose**

You see, it's easy to blame others for something that happens to us. We're walking along and trip over our own shoelaces and inevitably it's someone else's fault. Even the inanimate sidewalk's, or the tree root that bumped the concrete up, or a pinecone that had the nerve to fall to the ground. But it's never our fault, at least, for a lot of folks. It's simple to blame the dog for scaring you when he barked, rather than acknowledging that you were daydreaming while walking down the street. Had you been paying attention to your surroundings you would've seen the dog and not been startled when he yipped.

If someone is saying something us humans don't like, we tend to call them names or at least think badly of them. It helps us feel better. It puts us in the power position, higher up than them, because they're obviously defective and we are obviously perfect. The only reason people put others down is to elevate themselves. Hence the phrase "put down" to begin with, you see? Dr. Robert Fuller, author and former president of Oberlin College, asserts that "rankism is the source of most manmade suffering. So, if we could get rid of it, we would be a lot happier." Rankism, to be clear, Fuller describes as "an assertion of superiority" which "typically takes the form of putting others down." (Fuller, 2010) I could go on about rankism for miles, but Fuller's done that quite well in his books and television appearances, so you can easily look him up on the 'net and get it straight from the horse's mouth.

What I have observed in the corporate environment alone, let alone often enough outside of the work world, is that we shut down mentally, emotionally, and sometimes even physically, the moment we're confronted with what we deem to be an unpleasant situation. Notice I didn't say that it WAS an unpleasant situation, only that we DEEMED it to be.

Someone tells you that you answered a question incorrectly and you start breaking out in a fight-or-flight response. Look, I don't enjoy being embarrassed any more than you do, but I've learned to laugh it off, thank the person for pointing out my error, mention how



I'm happy that they were the one to provide me with the one new thing I learned today, and move on. I don't dislike them for it, I thank them for it! That's how I reframe it so instead of being embarrassed, I'm both grateful and amused.

We often don't trust other people, many times with good cause. "My parents were evil and never had my best interests at heart, so there's not one person in this world who will." Real statement from a close friend. Thing is, not every single person in the world is the same as her parents, but even so she discounted every human being in existence because of an abusive childhood. As difficult as abuse of any kind is to overcome, not every single person in the world is out to abuse you. That's statistically impossible, and if you stop focusing on those who are, they will quite literally no longer have power over you or even be in your life anymore. Simply put: do not make broad sweeping assumptions and judgments about others as a result of having experienced a related type of negativity at some point in your life. Verdict: bad habit.

Finally, we label situations as unpleasant for a variety of reasons, many of which we say are justified as a result of previous experiences. This habit makes us unpleasant, too, the moment that label is slapped onto the person, place or thing. And when our thoughts go to dark places, well, they tend stay there. They run with it. We start telling ourselves Negative Nellie's story and pfft to anyone who tries to yank her from our thoughts.

An example: have you ever been cut off on the road (freeway, highway, your own residential street) and that's made you so angry that you proceeded to your destination in a bad mood, told everyone you encountered about the "idiot driver" who cut you off and went on and on and on about what a menace he or she clearly was? Do you see how you getting cut off spiraled into you remaining negative long after the event was over, and then going on to share that sludge with others? Reframe what happened and anger dissipates. What if the guy driving the car just got a call from his wife during his commute to work that their child had been taken to the emergency room after falling down their basement stairs? What if the woman behind the wheel just heard over the radio that nobody in her hometown survived a natural disaster that just occurred?



I'd like to say something here that you really should try to memorize and always keep at the forefront of your mind: You have no idea what's happening in someone else's life. You have no idea what's happening in someone else's life. The young man who just hurled an epithet of some form at you may have had a lifelong pattern of abuse, been forced into a gang, been harmed in any number of ways by someone who looks, acts or seems to be like you, and seeing you stirred up his pain, anger and frustration. Is that your fault? No. But it's not about you.

And that is the next thing I need to emphasize with respect to reframing. There are a few magic things that will help you navigate your life on Earth, and here's one: Not everything is about you. If you remove yourself from the equation, you are no longer affected. If you're x and other people are y and z : $x + (y+z) = \text{rage}$ – look what happens to this algebraic equation when you remove yourself from it: $y + z = \text{rage}$. Now the rage belongs to the other people, not to you. You are quite literally picked up and out of the equation and as such, the emotion is no longer possible because you are no longer there with it.

I've seen this happen: If you ignore your child enough, they'll stop coming to tell you things. That can lead to some awful consequences. Same if you only pretend to listen to them. I know that it's not always the case, but when I hear stories of bad things happening to kids where the parents say they "had no idea" what the child was up to, I always wonder if they would've had an idea if they'd actually listened to their child at some point in the proceedings, or asked them probing questions and really and truly engaged with them and their responses. It's like getting mad at your dog for peeing on the floor when he's been trying to get you to let him outside for the past 30 minutes but you've been "too busy" with other stuff to open the door. You can say you had no idea he had to pee but it's not his fault you didn't.

If you hear only what you want to hear when your spouse talks to you, you might become responsible for a huge misunderstanding with unhappy results. Whether it's



because you're daydreaming or you're just disinterested in what the SO has to say, that doesn't bode well for your union.

People who are typing madly on their laptops or perusing their Smartphones during meetings aren't paying full attention to both things because that's physically impossible. The human brain can only actually focus on one thing at a time. Homo sapiens "don't do lots of things simultaneously. Instead, we switch our attention from task to task extremely quickly." (Hamilton, 2008) So when I see people looking at their computers, phones, the television or whatever else they have at hand, I know for a fact they are not focused completely on the words coming out of my mouth no matter what they might say to the contrary.

If you talk over the top of someone, they feel unimportant. Unwanted. Unloved. Unworthy. That's not only sad, it could also lead to some terrible outcomes. Nobody likes to be devalued. If that happens often enough, a person's self-esteem could tank and that is not a good thing for anyone. Imagine as a manager of a whole team of employees if you push your own agenda and only allow what you want to say and what you want to hear to be talked about, and if the conversation in any meeting goes any other direction, you bulldoze over top of whoever is speaking to redirect things back to what you want.

When did it become okay for that kind of abuse to occur in the workplace? Because it is abuse – both emotional and psychological. The hard part of this is that most people aren't even aware that they're doing it, or that it's having a negative effect on the other person. This is because they are truly that unaware of themselves and their impact on others. That, you cannot control, because – and here's another gem of wisdom – you do not have the ability or the right to control anyone but yourself. You are only in control of you.