

## Rules for Jewish Writers

### **Don't worry about finding your voice.**

You won't lose your personality when you write correctly. Speaking is different from writing. Know that. Run-on sentences, poor grammar, and excessive adverbs work when you speak. They are clutter when you write.

### **Speak to your audience. Don't be awkward or indirect. Don't say "one" when you mean "you."**

For example, don't say: "When *one* asks a question." Say: "When *you* ask a question." Say, "you." Speak to your readers. Show you care.

### **Be direct.**

Forget qualifiers like "a little" "a bit" – don't demean your ideas. Be clear, direct, and concise.

### **Get rid of useless adverbs.**

An adverb is a word that modifies a verb or any word other than a noun. Adverbs are almost always unnecessary. Don't use them unless you have to. Adverb abuse is a sign of poor writing.

### **Write like you speak.**

Be normal. Nobody says, "She had milk-white teeth." They say, "She had white teeth."

### **Use words people use.**

For example, if you are raising money for your building, say "building" – don't say "edifice." No one says "edifice." You don't sound intelligent. You sound like an idiot.

### **Don't be PC.**

The default singular pronoun in English is "he." Use it. Don't use "they" when you mean "he." Its ok. You won't offend anyone.

### **Translate everything.**

Don't say Moshe, say Moses. Don't say Yisroel, say Israel. Certain words like Torah and Shabbos are considered English. Most others aren't. Transliterations are confusing and clumsy.

### **Don't put slang or hip terms in quotes.**

If you use a slang term, use it and don't be afraid. State it clearly. And please be advised that no one has used the term "with it" since the early 70s.

### **Use the active voice.**

Don't use the passive voice unless you have to. You can almost always rewrite using the active voice.

### **Don't beat around the bush.**

Be direct. If you don't like my book don't say, "The feeling is that your book is not appropriate." Say, "I don't think your book is appropriate." Don't be a wimp.