**The 3Cs that will tell you if your blog post is any good**

If you've ever had the pleasure of purchasing a diamond, you'll be familiar with the four Cs -- Cut, Clarity, Colour and Carat -- that determine its value.

As Editor of a national online publication, I'm faced with the task of assessing the 'value' of articles that are submitted to me every day. This usually comes down to the article's ability to resonate with readers.

Any editor will tell you predicting what will strike a chord with an audience is an inexact science. But, over the years, I've developed my own system of 3Cs that allow me to stack the odds in our favour.

And the beauty is you too can use them to decide whether your work is ready to be published. Let's break them down:

**1. Clarity**

There are two ways an article can lack clarity.

The first becomes apparent when I read it through and can't pin down exactly what the writer is trying to say. What idea are they trying to communicate? What behavioural change do they want to effect? If I can't gauge that, it means the writer doesn't know either.

The second is when a writer starts off with one idea and then veers off on a related, but separate tangent halfway through. We've all done it – even me.

[My first post for Copyblogger](#), for instance, was about getting comfortable with throwing away your words. In the first draft of that post I also talked about self-editing. Those two ideas are related, sure, but the introduction of that second idea was weakening my *main* message. In my second draft I threw out everything related to the second idea to bring clarity back to the first.

Here's a quick, three-step system for bringing clarity to a piece of writing. (NB: They are best applied after you've written your first draft.)

1. Be very clear about the one big idea you're trying to communicate. If your article contains two big ideas, save the second one for another piece.

2. Check your headline makes a strong promise around this idea. If it doesn't, re-write it.

3. Eliminate every word that is not delivering on the promise your headline is making.

Once you've brought clarity to your article, you can move on to the next C.

**2. Continuity**

This C relates to the structure of the piece. Now that your headline is making a strong promise and you know the big idea you're trying to communicate, it's time to ensure your article takes the reader on a logical journey.

Here's a basic structure I find very effective:

1. **State your premise.** As an example, the premise of this article is that it's necessary to have a framework that will help decide whether something you've written is any good.

2. **Introduce your big idea.** The big idea of this article is that the three Cs of Clarity, Continuity and Connection combine to make for a kick-ass article.

3. **Support your big idea.** Use subheadings and bullet points.

4. **Give the reader a payoff.** Highlight how the big idea will make their life better and give them something that inspires/motivates them to take action *now*.

In short, your blog post needs to be structured in such a way that it naturally leads the reader to your desired conclusions and delivers a genuine payoff for them; a big 'aha' moment.

**3. Connection**

This final C is the key to creating an article that will be *shared*. It doesn't matter how clear your ideas are, how well structured your article is, or even how informative it might be… if your reader doesn't connect with it, they won't feel compelled to pass it on.

The fastest path to connection is to show vulnerability. The easiest way to get vulnerable? Share a story. This story doesn't need to be long, but it must be honest – just like my confession above about messing up the first draft of my first post for Copyblogger.

Speaking of that first post – I told a longer story there. One about getting critiqued by a writing teacher and being told my work was completely vanilla. That made it *very* easy for readers to feel connected to me because we've all had a cringe-worthy experience like that, right?!

**Use the 3Cs to stack the odds in your favour**

It would be nice to think that if you follow the 3Cs, you'll get 1000 shares on your posts every time. Unfortunately, I can't promise that (no matter how much I'd like to). Experience has taught me that even the most well-written pieces require a certain combination of distribution, timing and luck to go 'viral'.

What I *can* promise, however, is that applying the 3Cs to your writing will stack the odds in your favour. They'll ensure that when that curious mixture of viral luck comes your way, your piece will be ready and willing to take advantage of it.

In the meantime, you can use the 3Cs to press publish on cracking, well-crafted pieces every time. Pieces you can be truly proud of, no matter how many or few people get to read them .