

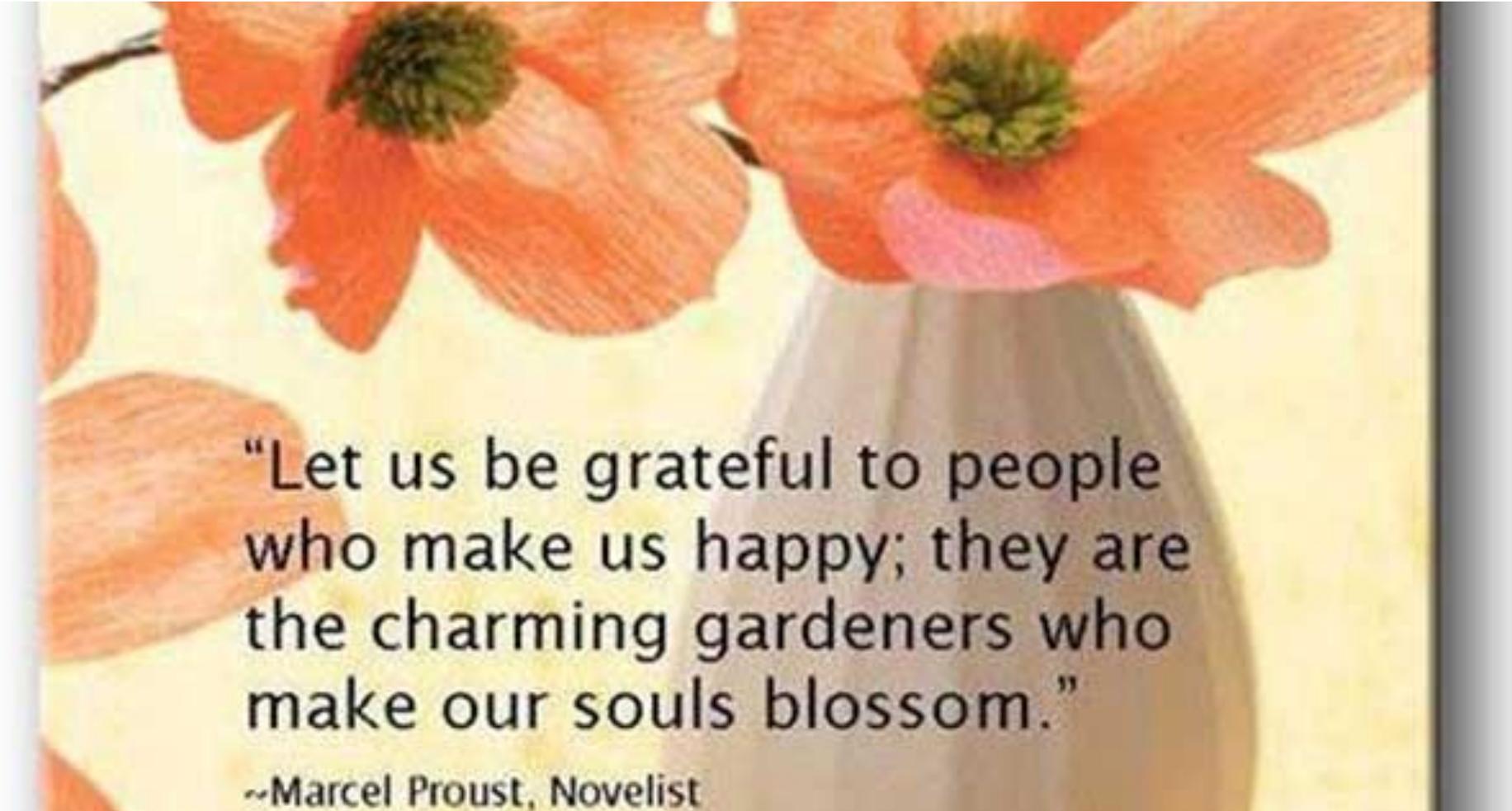
Building Relationships Through Professional Writing

University Life Success Symposium

George Mason University

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7 Thank Yous



“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”

~Marcel Proust, Novelist

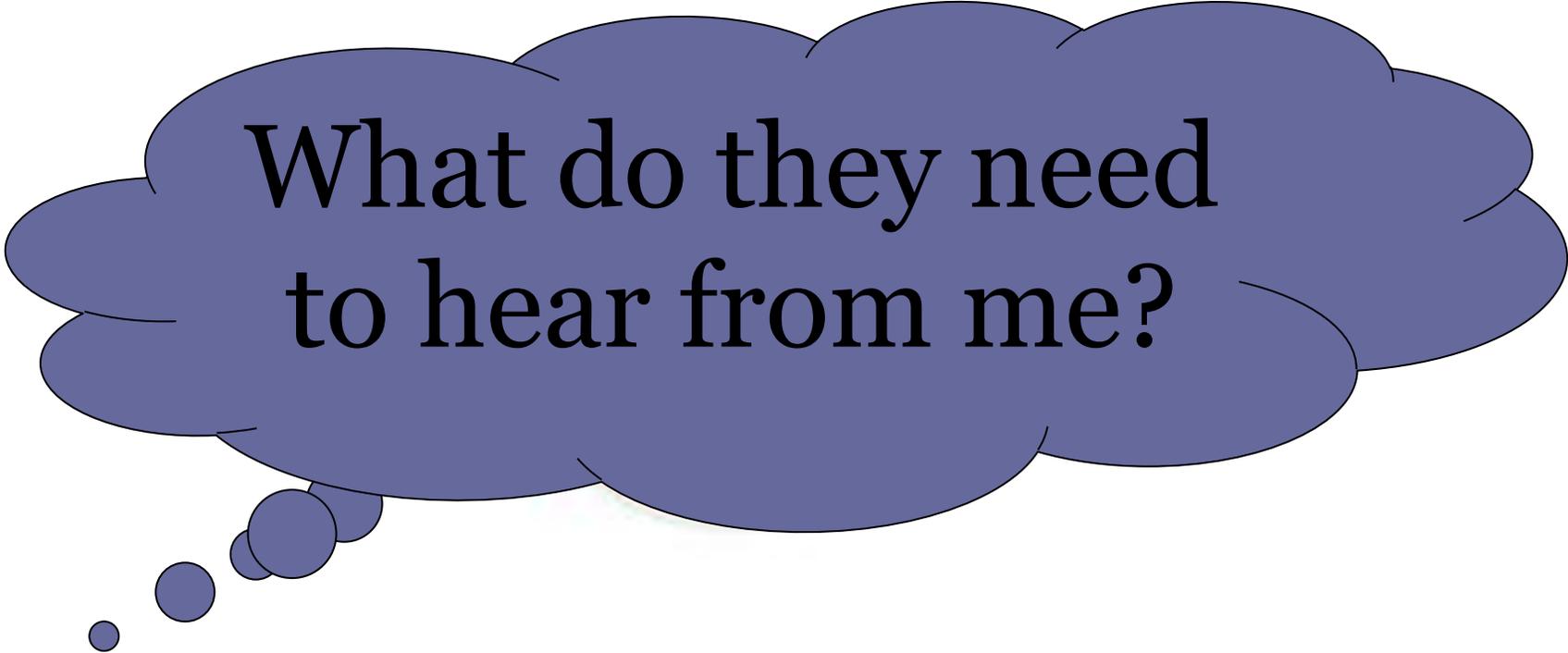


We'll discuss how to...

- Identify and write for your audience
- Focus on your purpose and message
- Create a professional and approachable tone
- Build relationships through writing

Purpose

- Why am I writing this document?
- What does my reader need to know?
 - Remember, audiences are all about WIIFM



What do they need
to hear from me?



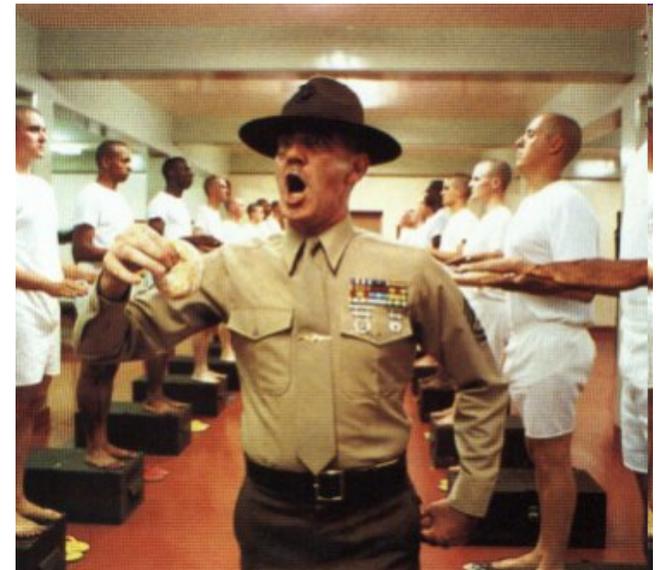
Message

“The medium is the message.”

-Marshall McLuhan

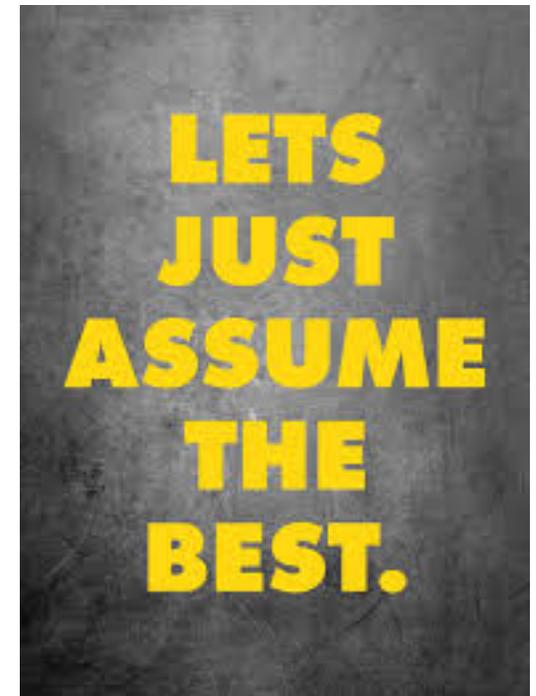
Tone

- Formal vs informal
- Mind your manners
- Don't be a drill sergeant



Tone

- Positive Intent – what do you really want? Who do you want to be?
- A new approach for responding to an upsetting email...



Exercise



Tone

- Be confident
- Be courteous and sincere
- Use non-discriminatory language
- Stress the benefits for the reader
- Write at an appropriate level of difficulty

Courtesy of Purdue's Online Writing Lab:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/652/1/>

Catching Their Attention

Just a reminder that the add/drop deadline for this semester is January 29th, this coming Tuesday. Please make sure you are registered for all the classes you need, otherwise you will have to pay some steep fines to make changes afterwards. And to make matters worse, all of that penalty money will go straight to me, at which point I will withdraw it from the bank for cash, and I will swim in it, Scrooge McDuck style. And nobody wants that to happen. Except me. I kind of want that to happen.

-j

Jay Patel

Graduate Academic Coordinator (English)

How do you improve your tone?

- Do you have a writing partner or mentor?

Exercise

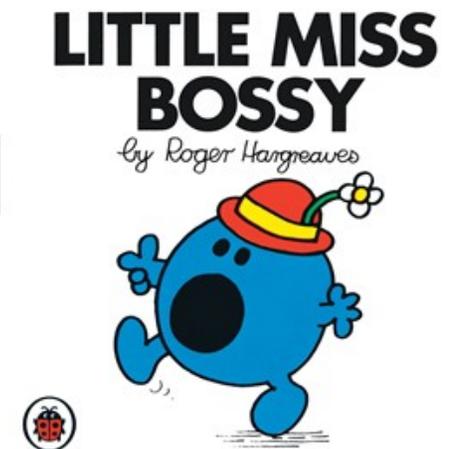


The “best thing” game



Asking for something

- Ask, don't tell
- Provide specifics, but also keep it simple
- Remember manners
- “Would it be possible for you to send me those numbers before 5:00 today? I really appreciate your help.”



Saying “no, that’s not possible”

- Be genuine
- Stick to the facts
- Try to offer another solution of what would or might be possible
- Don’t embarrass the reader for not knowing the obvious (for instance, how to find a conference room) or criticize the reader for asking for something inappropriate (for instance, a person’s password)
- But also don’t blame yourself for saying no.



Saying no

If you are hesitant to write no messages, remember that individuals are waiting for your response. When you send the no, you have satisfied their need for information. They will be able to move on--and so will you.

– Lynn Gartner-Johnson, *Better Writing at Work* 1.9.2014



“That’s against the policy.”

- Provide a link or reference to the policy
- Try to explain the “why” of the policy (WIFFM)
 - how the policy protects or benefits us
- Provide alternatives if possible



Please
and
Thank You

ARE STILL MAGIC WORDS.



Did you know?

- Most people don't read past the first 3 sentences of an email
- Include WIFFM right away!



Email Etiquette

- Respond promptly
- Confirm receipt and action
- Address courteously
 - Salutations
 - Proper titles vs. using first name
 - Check spelling of names
- Signing off



Email Etiquette - Efficiency

- Short paragraphs
- Lots of white space
- Quote original text
- Clear subject lines
 - Re: Basketweaving 301 Meeting 3/8
 - **NOT:** Re: FW: FW: FW: Your message

Please DO NOT ask me
where Pat and Dan are.

Thank you 😊



PLEASE KEEP
THE DOOR
CLOSED!!!
THANK YOU!!!

Please don't use
Comic Sans—we
are a Fortune 500
Company, not a
Lemonade Stand.

“Feeling *gratitude* and not
expressing it is like wrapping
a present and not
giving it.”

William Arthur Ward

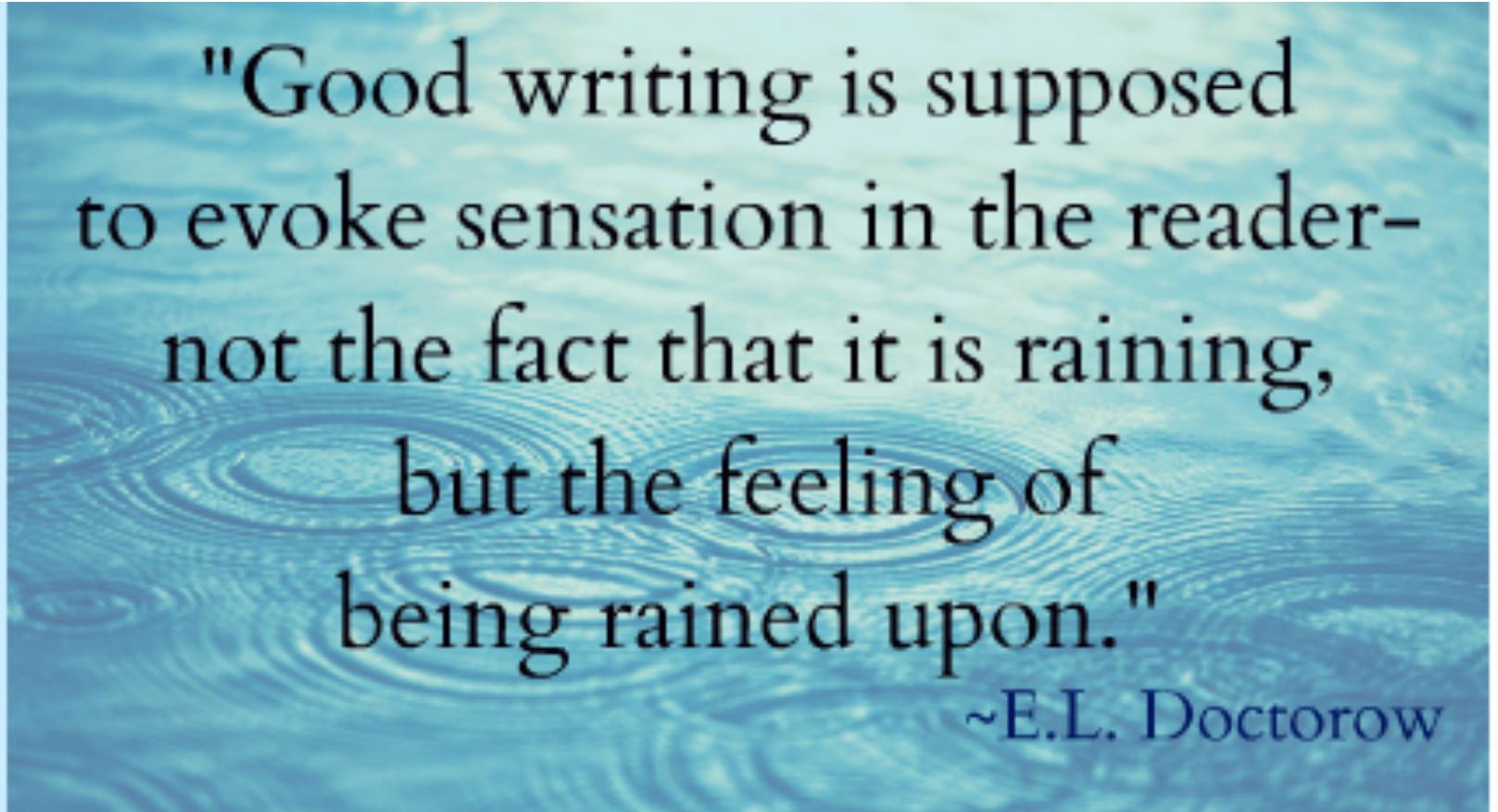




Build Relationships

Writing can build relationships!

- Write thank you notes (and copy their boss!)
- No, really: let's write some thank you notes.



"Good writing is supposed
to evoke sensation in the reader—
not the fact that it is raining,
but the feeling of
being rained upon."

~E.L. Doctorow



Build Relationships

- Thank you notes...
- Send congratulations
- Share positive feedback
- How else?

Gratitude Walk





Back to the calendar page

- A challenge

Resources



Mason's Writing Center:

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

For style guides, including Mason's Visual and Web Style Guides:

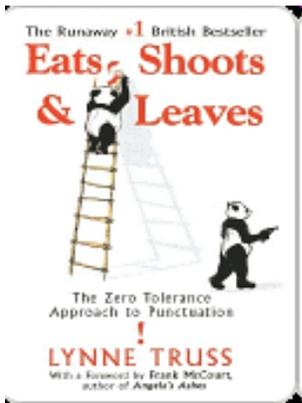
<http://ur.gmu.edu/creativeservices/>

Resources

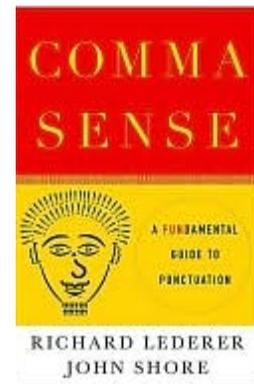
- HR & Payroll Reward and Recognition
 - Beth Baroody: bbaroody@gmu.edu - 3-2739
 - <http://hr.gmu.edu/awards/DIY.php>



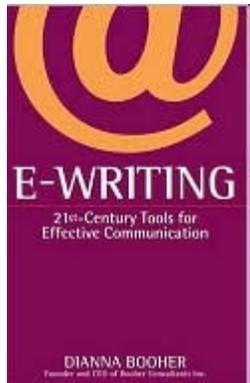
Some great books...



Eats, Shoots & Leaves
by Lynne Truss



Comma Sense
by Richard Lederer
& John Shore



E-Writing
by Dianna Booher



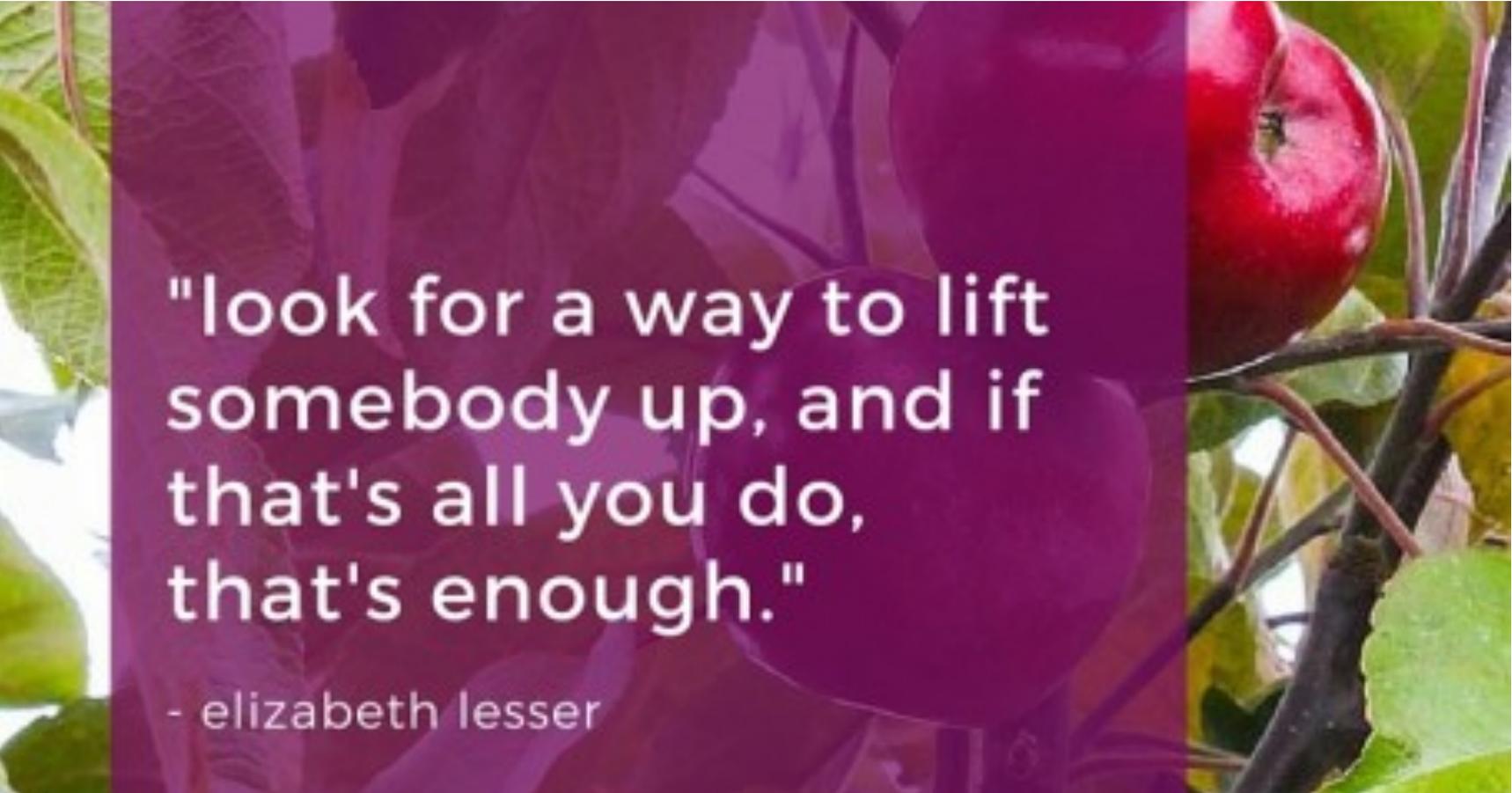
The Elements of Style
by William Strunk
& E.B. White



Great sites...

- Purdue's Online Writing Lab:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- <http://www.businesswritingblog.com/>
- Grammar Girl

Thank you!



"look for a way to lift
somebody up, and if
that's all you do,
that's enough."

- elizabeth lesser