

How To Choose A Topic

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Dear self-publisher / zine maker,

I see that blank look on your face when I ask you what your next zine (or other publication) is going to be about. You don't think that far ahead, and neither do I, until inspiration strikes. Well, that is, at least until I decided to figure out how I would decide on the ultimate topic. I haven't gotten that ultimate topic, the one every person on this green Earth (at least some of it's still green) and everyone in the inner and outer atmospheres and underwater or underground can relate to. That likely will never happen, not because the system is faulty, but because there's bound to be people who dislike what is said for as many reasons as there are people. What does that leave us? Pleasing oneself. But, you say, what is the purpose in expressing it then? Pleasing those that think like oneself and connecting on that universal level, to whatever extent you allow yourself to. Surprisingly if one chooses to allow oneself to choose the topics that not only one believes in, but that hold the core values that the most others believe in, one doesn't have to write for others but still can write for oneself.

How to choose that essential topic, that you believe in and others will connect to? The first step (as a right-brain dominant person it may hard to put things into a linear order, and try to multitask with every step

at once, and while that may give a bigger picture it won't get things started and completed, so work with me here) ... the first step is to make a list (whew! for a moment there I thought we were going to make something from nothing! Hey, wait a minute!) this may require brainstorming (see the zine in this series on *How To Brainstorm* for more info) or it may be just a simple sheet of paper writing down the ideas you think might work, as they come to you. Write as many as you can think of, and keep the list. Then, before bed, write any others you can think of. Then, in the morning, write any others you can think of. Once you've written these for a couple days (or if you're in a hurry done just one quick list) you should rewrite the list in order of preference, from the one(s) you like the most to the ones you like the least.

Now for step two. Ask people you're friends with (not someone who is connected by circumstance but actually connected by sharing similar interests with you) ... ask them, handing them a pen and paper and a copy of the list, to help you decide on which one of the topics to write about. Have them either put the list from first to last in their order of preference, or have them circle their favorites, or number them, rate them, however you want to poll their interests against yours.

Step three, the final step... this is rather easy... after you've polled as many friends as you value the interests of, as to what interests of yours they value, see if there's any surprises in the results, and choose one of the topics you share priority in common with them.

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How to Self-Publish, the zine series

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