How to Write a List of 30

The method behind 500+ blog posts and two books, condensed from *30 Principles for Writing Lists of 30* in *Our Life in Lists of 30*. The value isn't the finished list. It's the mental gymnastics of looking at one topic from 30 angles.

THE ANATOMY

30 <Your Topic>

Why This List?
The real reason you're writing it. 2-3 sentences. A trigger, a question, a moment.

1. **Bold the key word** - then a line or two of honest commentary.

2. **Lists are great** - keep it short, skip the fluff.

...

30. **The one you saved** - a personal joke or a step back to look at the whole list.

Random Observation/Comment:
One line. Insightful or funny. Ideally both.

~See Lemons <Verb Phrase>

> **Why 30?** Honestly, it's arbitrary. It matched a 30 day challenge. But 10 is easy, 20 takes effort, and the last 10 force you to think in ways you wouldn't have.

THE THREE LAPS

1-10 Go with your gut

- Pick a topic you know (or at least like).
- Write anywhere comfortable: a phone note, a whiteboard, a mindmap, a commute.
- Write off your first instincts. Getting to 10 should be easy (right?).

11-20 Work the angles

- Ask Who, What, Where, When, Why, How about the topic.
- Ask yourself questions and let the items answer them.
- Look at your everyday life through the topic. Talk to people about it.

Half Re-read and regroup

- Re-read what you have.
- Dive deeper into a few answers and expand them.
- Regroup items to spot patterns and gaps. Mindmaps help here.

21-30 The stuck kit

- Zoom in, zoom out, or look at an adjacent topic.
- Walk away for a few hours. Play a sport and forget about it.
- Reinvent the topic. If you're really stuck, make ridiculous jokes about it.

THE FINISH LINE

Save your favorites for the **top 5** or **final 5**. Those get read most closely, especially #30.

Accept that the list won't be perfect or cover everything. Be proud you finished.

(This always happens...) You'll end up with 31. Cut one.

HOUSE RULES

One day.
Write your list of 30 within a day.

No peeking.
Don't research the topic by looking up other lists.

Inspired, not copied.
Borrow energy from other posts, never items.

Quiet mode.
Turn off the music. Close the tabs.

Keep it secret.
Don't announce the list. That's extra pressure to finish with style.

Don't quit at 26.
Don't give up when you're almost finished.