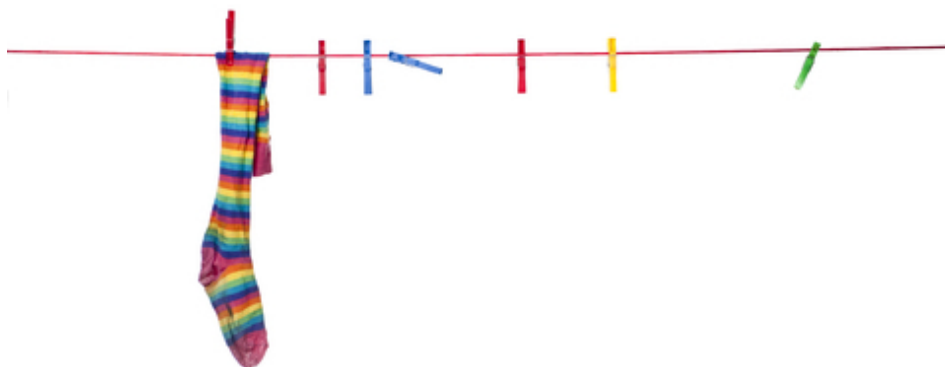


Love, Socks and Dental Surgery

By Martin Sutton



Why are there so many songs about love? Well, I guess the obvious answer is that we love the feelings that surround it. We love falling in love, we love being in love and although nobody likes a broken heart we do love to tell people about it!

But many songwriters think that it's just cliché and boring to write about love because it's been done a bajillion times already, so they spend hours trying to write songs about something completely different that no one else has written about, just to be original.

And that's all good and well, but the subject they spend so much time avoiding is the very subject that nearly everyone in the world can relate to in some way, shape or form, whether it be from the love of a soul mate, a parent or a friend.

Universal themes are the bedrock of successful songwriting, because as much as you may have created a completely original lyric about socks on a washing line or how you felt when the dentist drilled into your tooth, far fewer people are likely to buy into it.

The World is your audience and the more of that audience you can get to relate to your song, the more chance you stand of having a hit record. It's maths.

But subjects like love have been done to death right?

Yep!

And therein lies the challenge. And is this is one of the biggest challenges faced by songwriters; that of conveying a universal theme like love in a brand new way. The good news is that your innate desire to avoid the cliché and to create the unique will be your strongest ally here.

So my advice is don't force yourself away from song subjects that have been done before. If you want to write a song about love, write it! But...find a new way to say it, like the sock and dentist ideas. And bear with me here because I'm now in busking mode:

If you've just fallen in love, you could use lines like:

"I fell for you like a sock from a washing line" and then call your song "Washing Line" (sounds quite Ed Sheeran to me)

"You dug deep like a drill, straight into my heart" and call your song "Drill" (Follow up to Wrecking Ball?)

If you've just had your heart broken you could use lines like (still busking)

"There's just one sock left on the washing line" (poor Ed)

"I can feel the drill digging deep and it hurts like hell" (now a bit Eminem-esque)

These are clearly not current lines that I'm working on right now, but you get the idea right? *It's about using the unique to say the obvious.*

So where do we get our ideas?

- **Papers:** I scour the sensationalist red top newspapers for puns and wordplay, they are rife with great lines.
- **Movies:** Next time you watch a movie and a line makes you go "ahhh" and you get a lump in your throat or laugh out loud, WRITE IT DOWN. You don't have to use it verbatim but it could inspire a hit song!
- **Conversations:** When someone says something smart and unexpected WRITE IT DOWN.

- **Advertising:** Some of the best writers work in advertising, coming up with original ideas on a daily basis to sell the same old thing again and again.

Remember this though. *Whatever you do write about, make it real. If you don't feel it when you write it, no one is going to feel it when they hear it!*

Try not to crowbar an emotion into the cool idea you heard just because it's unusual. Work the other way around and find an unexpected way to deliver a universal theme that's real to you, like love, happiness, unification, empowerment or just wanting to dance...

You might want to forget about the socks and dental treatment though!



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