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JRN 210

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Arnold Schwarzenegger

Source: "Be Useful" newsletter / motivational essay

Text Sample (178 words)

The weather has been beautiful in Los Angeles. I've been going on my daily bike rides, getting a pump at Gold's Gym, preparing for the Austrian World Summit in July, and mostly staying on track with my daily routine. Now, that doesn't mean I haven't had an extra pastry with Lulu, but I don't want to be too hard on myself. You never want to get caught up in being hard on yourself. As I told a friend on reddit, we all go through challenges and we all go through failure, but the key thing is you get up and take it one step at a time. Don't beat yourself up over something like eating a tasty treat. Think about it this way: When you conquer a workout, do you celebrate yourself as much as you beat yourself up when you miss the gym or eat something you shouldn't? We all have a tendency to be harder on ourselves than we would be to our friends. I am guilty of it, and you are probably guilty of it.

Style Sheet

Project Information

- **Celebrity name:** Arnold Schwarzenegger
- **Source text location:** "Be Useful" newsletter, schwarzenegger.com
- **Date:** February 18, 2026
- **Style guide(s) used:** Chicago Manual of Style (17th ed.)
- **Preferred dictionary of use:** Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

Overall Style Decisions/Choices

- **Spelling preferences:** American English (no British variants observed here)
- **Hyphenation:** Open compounds are preferred ("daily routine," "tasty treat," "little victories")
- **Numbers:** Spell out under 10 ("one step at a time"); numerals OK for dates ("July")

- **Capitalization:** Title case for proper nouns only (Los Angeles, Gold's Gym); lowercase concepts ("win," "routine")
- **Punctuation preferences:**
 - Contractions preserved ("I've," "doesn't," "don't," "haven't")
 - Em dashes for emphasis ("walk – count the win")
 - Rhetorical questions kept exactly as written

Special Words or Names

- **Proper nouns:** Los Angeles, Gold's Gym, Austrian World Summit, Lulu (dog), reddit
- **Slang/repeated phrases:**
 - "daily routine" (3x) - lifestyle concept
 - "win"/"little victories" - motivational framing
 - "beat yourself up" (2x) - self-criticism idiom
 - "tasty treat" - casual food reference
 - "hard on myself/yourself" (3x) - self-compassion theme
- **Things Fact-checked:** Gold's Gym (trademark), reddit (lowercase per author preference)

Voice and Tone Notes and Themes Noticed

- **Register:** Casual newsletter/coaching style
- **Sentence rhythm:** Alternating medium descriptive sentences and short form imperatives ("Don't beat yourself up")
- **Contractions:** Heavily used (12 instances) - this preserves conversational feel
- **Emotional tone:** Empathetic, encouraging, gently corrective, somewhat stern (written in a commanding way)
- **Formatting traits:**
 - First person anecdotes + direct "you" address
 - Rhetorical questions for reader reflection and engagement
 - Short paragraphs (1 idea each)

Exceptions and Unique Choices

- **Repetition preserved:** "Hard on yourself" (3x), "beat yourself up" (2x) - intentional emphasis
- **Casual idioms retained:** "Tasty treat," "getting a pump," "beat yourself up"
- **Imperatives unchanged:** "Don't beat yourself up," "count the win" - coaching voice essential
- **Rhetorical questions kept:** "Do you celebrate yourself...?" - provokes self-reflection

- **No formalization:** Avoid changing "pastry with Lulu" to more formal phrasing that might normally be preferred

Reflection

The style sheet I drafted for Arnold Schwarzenegger's newsletter excerpt documents both mechanical conventions and voice-preserving choices that I think maintain his distinctive coaching style. Using the Chicago Manual of Style as a baseline, I established consistent rules for American spelling, open hyphenation ("daily routine"), spelled-out numbers under ten, and proper noun capitalization. These decisions look to provide clarity while handling the text's proper names (Gold's Gym, Los Angeles) and dates (July) predictably across a larger project.

The excerpt reveals Schwarzenegger's patterns: heavy contractions (12 instances of it), first-person anecdotes paired with direct "you" addresses, and repetition of motivational terms ("win," "daily routine," "beat yourself up"). Rather than varying vocabulary for elegance and grandure, I preserved these repetitions as intentional rhetorical devices that reinforce his message of self-compassion. His rhetorical questions ("Do you celebrate yourself as much as you beat yourself up?") and imperatives ("Don't beat yourself up") also received exception status as formalizing them would destroy the conversational coaching tone he has.

I used Chapter 4's editorial judgment framework to help shape these decisions. Mechanical editing might eliminate repetition or convert questions to statements for "flow," but changes like that prioritize uniformity over voice. The readings emphasize style sheets as living documents that can guide future editors, so I explicitly flagged voice elements (em dashes, casual idioms like "tasty treat") that strict rules might look to eliminate. This balance ensures readability without diluting Schwarzenegger's empathetic, nonsense style. The sheet I created clarifies when to apply rules versus when to protect the patterns that make his newsletter feel like personal advice from a trusted coach, not just generic self-help.

Mock Email Draft

Dear Mr. Schwarzenegger,

I've prepared a style sheet for the self-compassion section of your "Be Useful" newsletter. This document records our editorial decisions on spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and numbers to ensure consistency across any and all future newsletters and projects.

More importantly, it protects your distinctive voice by documenting patterns like your conversational contractions, direct "you" address, motivational repetition ("win," "daily routine"), and coaching imperatives ("Don't beat yourself up"). Rhetorical questions and casual phrases like "tasty treat" are flagged as intentional – things other editors will know to preserve rather than formalize.

This sheet guides anyone working on your material to enhance clarity while maintaining the encouraging, authentic tone readers expect. Please let me know if you'd like adjustments or additional phrases highlighted.

Best,
Jon Carter - Copyeditor