

## SONGWRITING EXERCISE

### “Remodeling a Song”

This is not an original idea – I got it from songwriter Joel Mabus, who claims it’s been around for a long time and that this is an “old trick”.

A good song offers structure, repetition, form and balance. This is not always easy to create in a single song; however, it IS easy to borrow. You can build on the frame of another song, without sounding at all LIKE that song. Much like a scaffold is used to frame a skyscraper, the scaffold may look familiar, but when removed it yields a unique building.

Here’s how you apply that idea to “remodel” a song:

1. Pick one of your favorite songs – any song from any era in any style – just as long as it is familiar to you.
2. Write a new lyric to that song’s melody and structure – verse for verse, chorus for chorus, bridge for bridge.
3. Take that new lyric and write completely new and different music to it, experimenting as you go – try switching keys, changing time signatures, etc. to remove your new lyric from the original song.
4. EDIT. Adjust your new words and melody to fit your newly established mood, or do whatever else is necessary to make YOUR song work. REWRITE AS NEEDED.

#### *SUGGESTION:*

Alternatively, you could do 1, 3, 2, 4 – write the new music to the “scaffold” song and then write a new lyric.

What remains is a new song with only a hint of the “ghost” song that acted as a scaffold for the process!