

# Making Murder Easier/Killing Your Darlings.

**“Off with their heads!”**

When it comes to your writing, editing your completed work is one of the most important, and the most daunting, tasks ahead. If you really think about it, you're essentially killing your children; your words are essentially your children after all, and nobody likes to think of doing that!

As a writer myself, I can attest to the much needed murder of many a sentence. I have even killed off characters to meet a desired end in my work. Despite the pain editing may cause, it is important to realize the creation of beautiful, flowing prose is the ultimate goal of every scribbler and every successful writer on the planet. And so, without further adieu, I bring you a relatively valuable list (let's not be silly and bookmark it or anything) of suggestions regarding mass murder.

Trust me, you'll like it.

## **Make Time.**

First and foremost, set aside time to edit. Prepare an editing schedule. Write it down. The beautiful thing about editing schedules is you get to choose when you feel you'll be most productive. If you're more productive in the evening, set aside time after dinner. If you're bright eyed and bushy tailed before 7a.m., break out your laptop and get in a little of the old “snip and chop” before breakfast. Don't force yourself to work. A creative mind will not be at optimal productivity if it is forced into servitude. As a rule, my editing skills are off until after I've had my breakfast and third cup of coffee.

## **Find A Place to Edit.**

I love my office. I've filled it with things that inspire and brighten my life. It's important to have a space that speaks to you. It can be a room in your house that you've “claimed” as your own or a particular chair at your local bookseller. For years, I'd go and sit at my local Chapter's store and edit my work. There's just something about the smell of a bookstore that sparks the imagination and makes you feel ready to take on your work. I generally frown upon coffee shops, but I suppose if you can find a quiet space away from the grinder you *\*could\** be productive there. The local library, particularly spaces within that are close to large windows and shelves of old editions that smell like a chip shop, can be another good option as a quiet place to edit your work.

## **Disconnect.**

I know, you're already hyperventilating at the thought of losing your connection to the world at large, but *\*trust\** me. Turning off your internet connection can be a freeing experience, not to mention the added availability of your time to, well, yourself! Let's face it. As writers, we're writing and talking to our friends via messenger and posting our thoughts to Twitter, all while simultaneously frying an egg. It's distracting, this thing we call social media. No writer can be productive while connected. Shut it off.

## **Seek the Criticism of Your Peers.**

When I say "your peers," I mean people who will be entirely honest and unbiased. Choose avid readers and writers from your social circles or your extended social circles. Don't get me wrong, choosing members of your family and close friends to criticize your work is a great way to garner gushing reviews, or reviews without substance, but these people are only there to boost you up. Join a local writers group (or start one of your own). Reviews of your work will be more honest and far less frilly than the suggestions you got from grandma. Remember: You're looking for people who will cut you up, thereby making you a better and more efficient writer.

## **Read Your Work Aloud.**

Talk to yourself. It's actually *\*exactly\** like the crazy kind of talking to yourself, especially to friends and family who might be close by and witness this event. Choose a chapter and read it aloud. Add the flourishes you would expect your characters would add. Allow your characters to speak in a way you believe they would speak.

## **Stop Talking. Start Editing. Stop Procrastinating.**

"Oh, I'll take care of editing my novel this weekend."

"I've only got four chapters to wade through, I can do that later."

The Procrastinator's Anonymous meeting might meet tomorrow, but you won't be there. Get editing! Stick to your schedule and stop putting your edits off. Remember that, as a dedicated writer, it's important that you stick to the schedule you've laid out for yourself. You know your availability and, unless someone's baby arrives early, a comet strikes the earth, or the zombie apocalypse begins (the last two might be a little farfetched), you've made the commitment to yourself. When you procrastinate, you're letting your creative-self down and, more importantly, you're letting down your potential reading audience. You could be the next Kerouac, but you'll never get there if you don't care enough to put in the required work.

"I wrote my novel in six weeks, smoked, drank, and celebrated this completion, and didn't edit a word and I have a million dollar book deal," said no successful author ever.

So pull up a chair in your favorite place, the oasis you've created for yourself, and start editing! In the end, you'll thank yourself for taking this time to refine your work. But just in case, make sure to have a bug out bag at the ready 'cause I might not be joking about the zombie thing.

Happy scribbling!

Janine Mercer AKA Typing Tyrant

EIC-CR

[www.corev.ink](http://www.corev.ink)