

FEBRUARY 2016 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY

BEING WILLING TO STEP BACK AND START OVER

BY CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER PHILLIPS

Yep, I did it. I joined the [12x12 challenge](#). That means **I'm** trying to write 12 rough picture book drafts over the next 12 months. **I'm** pulling from the Picture Book Idea Month (PiBoldMo) lists that I previously shared.

The cat meme in the slides expresses how I felt within a week of signing up. Even though I thrive under pressure, my life is super busy and I worry that **I'm** being overly ambitious. But **I'm** only competing against myself, really. This challenge is about keeping motivated while meeting and learning from other writers. You also can choose to revise existing drafts. **That's** where **I'm** starting to buy time for research on some of my totally new ideas.

For January, I revised a manuscript I really love about a little girl who yarn bombs her town (see some yarn bombing pics in the slides and more on [my Pinterest creativity board](#)). My early versions, well, seemed to bomb. I was trying to be super innovative in how I wrote the story. The idea got interest during pitches, but my approach was not living up to expectations. I revised countless times based on input from other writers and even one agent. I finally had to step back and start over. Ironically, **it's** like the advice from a master knitter friend of mine who says you have to be willing to rip out your knitting and start over if you **can't** fix a mistake. I'm not always patient enough and it shows in the end.

I **don't** feel bad about trying something new. But it's a reminder about the importance of learning from feedback and being willing to consider alternatives. Okay, **I'm** off to claim my first monthly 12x12 badge. And **I'm** posting the new version of the knitting story for critique by other writers. **We'll** see what they think. **I'll** let you know if my willingness to reconsider my approach pays off.

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