



## Rest Stop 3: Revision Best Practices

Like editing, revision is complex and idiosyncratic. Here are some helpful approaches to try.

*Be patient.*

Revising takes time. Give yourself that luxury. When you receive an edit back from your editor, don't rush to revise it. Work within your publishing deadlines, of course, but try to allow yourself the time to re-read and re-work until you are absolutely satisfied.

*Consider reading your revisions aloud.*

This is standard advice from established writers—the argument is that it forces you to read more slowly, which can sometimes reveal when a word or idea has been left out. Of course, Deaf authors—who some studies indicate are keener readers to begin with—may not find this helpful. Hearing authors who are self-conscious about reading aloud might consider text-to-speech software, which is now standard in most word processors and operating systems. But all authors should practice reading their work aloud if their goal is to eventually do a book tour!

*Kill your darlings.*

It's a cliché because it's true! Don't stay attached to something you've created—a character name, a title, a plot twist, a detail of setting—if you know in your heart that it isn't working for your manuscript. You may have an emotional connection with that thing—maybe your original title was what inspired you to write in the first place—but if it doesn't fit what your manuscript has become, don't hold onto it. Just remember that there's a caveat for this:

*Protect your darlings.*

That's right: if you truly believe in a part of your manuscript that your editor or some other reader has questioned, fight for it! It's your book. Just be mindful—identify a clear and compelling reason for your decision. And remember: a manuscript can be just as damaged by unthinking allegiance to every suggested editorial change as it can by ignoring every suggested editorial change.

*Consider a second opinion.*

In traditional publishing, it is standard to have a manuscript reviewed by several different people—a developmental editor, a line editor, a copyeditor, a proofreader. This is great for quality control, but it can be cost-prohibitive for self-publishing. Still, if your budget allows, consider at least hiring a proofreader after an initial edit. This can give your book the sheen that takes it from good to excellent. Just remember that there's a caveat for this, too:

*Too many editorial cooks can spoil the manuscript broth.*

Awkward metaphor aside, it's possible to be overedited. It's possible to seek edits until you find the one that confirms your biases. It's possible to find two editors who give you conflicting advice on some detail of your manuscript. In the end, you're the one whose name will be on the book, so you must decide the way forward. Learn how to trust your gut.

*Have fun!*

Easy to forget, but important! Publishing can be a strange and stressful experience, with high highs and low lows. But it's also full of amazing people—and just by getting this far, you've joined a unique community. Remember to celebrate that! We will, too.



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