

PEDICURE FOR PAGES: FIRST PAGE POLISHES AND SECRET SELF-EDITING TIPS

with Tina Yeager 4-5 PM 1 hr

Relax in the gentle hands of an empathetic, fellow writer who served on the first page critique panel at Florida Word Weavers Retreat for many years. In addition to clipping and shaping your first pages, we'll soak in the learning of best manuscript-polishing tips. Walk out of our class with confidence in the beautiful messages of divine blessings you have to share. As Romans 10:15 reminds us, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

First Page Polishes

Remove.

Eliminate old ugly p's

- Passivity
- Present participle (ing)
- Prattling narration
- POV shifts
- Past life discussion (rubbernecking, backstory)

Kill the clichés. Axe the jargon. Reword the Christian-ese.

Limit use of exclamation points! "The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools." (Ecclesiastes 9:17)

Shape.

Set the hook. Your first line matters.

Set the tone, voice, and mood.

Paint.

Capture and immerse your reader.

WHO – Audience (nonfiction) or Characters AND Setting (fiction)

WHAT – Set expectations with the story genre or topic.

WHERE – Even nonfiction has a geographic target audience.

WHY – Why do we care?

HOW – How will we attack this? Promises and intrigue to draw the reader

Self-Editing Secrets

Self edit first.

Join at least one professional writing organization. Consider your audience, genres, calling. Add new ones as you go, but find one to stay with and attend local/online connective events. You'll learn and network and improve.

- Word Weavers Int'l –Christian community, conferences, critique groups
- ACFW – Christian fiction
- ACW –Assoc of Christian writers
- The Christian PEN – editors
- Realm Makers –Christian Spec Fic
- MWA – mystery
- FWA - Florida
- SCBWI – children and illustrators
- Serious Writer
- CIPA

Continue learning your craft. No one should stop reading or training. *

- Ernest Hemmingway, “We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”
- Craft books
- Read current books in your genre
- Writer podcasts and video chats
- Online or local workshops and Conferences

Good books aren't written. They're rewritten. Self-edit first, then hire another set of eyes. Every sacrifice to the Lord must be your best product. No matter how good you become, resist the temptation to let the editing slide.

- Jesus, the Word, is Author and Perfecter (Heb 12:2)
- “Form is as important as function.” Writing with Quiet Hands by Paula Munier
- Ecclesiastes 12:10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

DETAILS DETAILS

- Every detail matters in film. If it sounds too lofty, you're probably overwriting. Let your precious writing simmer alone for a while. Come back to kill your darlings.
- Simplify. Mark Twain, "Use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English--it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it; don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in."
- Ground the reader in each scene, but avoid stalling the plot.
- RUE
- Stop that echo! Keep a list of your weasel/weed words. Search for them.
- Be PRO ACTIVE. Search and destroy all possible adverbs and passive verbs.
- Watch for tricky -ing structures.
- Show vs. Tell, filter words

LOVE THY READER

- Add white space.
- Beware of distracting dialogue tags.
- No POV shifts in a scene.
- Vary sentence structure. Watch pacing.
- Monitor your readability. Word has a function to check for it. Ecclesiastes 6:11 The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone?
- Note: Readability monitors ease of reading and flow of writing. It is NOT a lack of sophistication in style or vocabulary. Please do not confuse the readability with an actual child's reading level. Ideal readability is 4th and should never go higher than 6th.

INK WELL

- CMOS
- Use grammarly, Hemmingway, or autocrit.
- Do your research. Make sure you've checked your sources Ecclesiastes 10:12-14 Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips. At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness— and fools multiply words.
- Know when to break the rules. Contractions, fragments, etc.