

[Finding Wisdom When the Writing Life Hurts](#)

By edie@ediemelson.com on Jul 24, 2019 06:52 am

by Edie Melson

We writers wear our hearts on our sleeves, metaphorically speaking. We pour our inner selves out on the page, drawing on the highs and lows of life to interpret the world through words. This is an exhilarating journey. The highs are incredible, and the lows...well...they're tough. If we don't take time to process the difficult experiences, those writing wounds can leave disfiguring scars. But when we do evaluate what's happened, there is wisdom to be found in those writing wounds.

Writing Wounds

The Vicious Critique

This one can come from a long-time critique partner or just someone random. Regardless, it's a blog that can set us back from our writing goals if we aren't careful.

- **Tips for Healing:** First of all, consider the source. We can tell if a harsh critique comes from a friend who didn't realize the sharp edge her words carry or someone trying to build their own expertise. Next, think about what was suggested and decide if it's valid. Remember your writing is YOURS. You get to decide what suggestions to incorporate.

The Harsh Contest Judge

If you've entered a writing contest, chances are good you've run into this wound. Generally this comes from one of two types of people. Either a writer who's trying to build his own credibility by being overly critical, or someone who really doesn't know the industry.

- **Tips for Healing:** The best way to move on is to follow some of the same steps as healing from a vicious critique. But in addition, use this experience to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Contests are tough because it's so difficult to find good judges. Take the hard knocks you've encountered to become an excellent judge and help others avoid this wound.

The Form Letter Rejection

This can be everything from a poor copy of a form rejection letter, to a post-it note on an index card. It feels like what you sent was so bad, it didn't even rate a civilized no. In ninety-nine percent of the cases, that's not the truth. This wound has much less to do with what you submitted than the fact that the editor is overworked.

- **Tips for Healing:** Realize rejections aren't personal. The editor (or agent) doesn't have a place for what you submitted. It's not a judgment about the quality of the piece, but a matter of whether it fits or not. The best thing to do to recover from this wound is to send out your submission again. Get back on the horse, and don't give time for doubt to take over.

A Toxic Critique Group

This wound differs from number 1 because it's more relationally driven. There are lots of things that can make a critique group turn toxic. But whatever the reason, the results can be devastating. This wound can keep writers from trusting a group and really delay meeting writing goals.

- **Tips for Healing:** First, find someone to talk to. Sharing your experience can help you process what happened and validate the wounds you're carrying because of it. Trusting someone with what happened will also lead to learning to trust again.

The Voices in Your Head

Yeah, this one's a big one. A lot of writers don't realize it, but they are their own worst enemies. Allowing negative thoughts about what we produce to run rampant, can kill the writer in us.

- **Tips for Healing:** Stop it. It's that simple...and that hard. Replace those negative thoughts with positive ones. We need to be as careful about what we say to ourselves as what we say to others.

No matter which wound you receive, take that painful experience and make something good out of it. Look for other writers who have visible injuries and extend compassion and understanding. Take a chance and share the things that you've overcome. This will help

others who are in the process of healing, and it will help make your own recovery complete.

Edie Melson is a woman of faith with ink-stained fingers observing life through the lens of her camera. No matter whether she's talking to writers, entrepreneurs, or readers, her first advice is always "Find your voice, live your story." As an author, blogger, and speaker she's encouraged and challenged audiences across the country and around the world. Her numerous books reflect her passion to help others develop the strength of their God-given gifts and apply them to their lives. Connect with her on her [website](#), through [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).