

## When It Comes To Writing, Show Some R.E.S.P.E.C.T. By: Michelle Cuttino

Writing isn't an easy job. For those who dabble, respect your craft and your readers. Here's how...

### **"R" = Research**

Make sure you know what you are talking about when you begin to write your novel. Especially, if you are true to your craft and are descriptive when it comes to places and things.

No one likes to read a book about their city or town to then find out the writer has made up names of streets and landmarks. To go into detail about an intersection that doesn't exist because the two streets in question run perpendicular, make you look like an amateur. One who didn't take the time to research their facts prior to releasing their novel.

### **"E" = Edit Your Work**

I don't want to read a book with misspelled words and poor punctuation? See what I mean? Painful! If you are not a great speller, have someone look over your work to ensure that all words are spelled correctly. If grammar is your shortcoming, hire an editor and use them always.

A poorly edited book will not go unnoticed. Readers will be reluctant to read anything else from you for fear that it is poorly edited as well and a waste of their hard-earned money.

### **"S" = Story Structure**

The two most important things about story structure are "person" and "tense". When you begin to write your novel, decide if you will be telling your story in "first person" or "third person". *I went to the store with James to buy a box of condoms*, is first person. *Netta and James went to the store to buy a box of condoms*, is third person. If you will be referring to your main character as "I", then you will be writing in first person. If you will be using "he," "she," or "they", then you will be writing in third person.

Figure out if you will be writing in “past tense” or “present tense” as well. *James and I came out of the store and headed back home*, is past tense. *James and I are heading out of the store and are on our way home*, is present tense. Make sure that you stick to one tense throughout your novel.

### **“P” = Plot**

The plot is the action of the novel—everything that moves the story from the beginning to the end. It introduces the conflict, moves towards a climax and ends with a resolution.

There has to be some sort of trial, tribulation or obstacle that the main character must face or go through in order to establish plot. The actions, reactions and repercussions of each character involved in the plot are what help it build towards the climax. The aftermath is what brings you to the resolution.

### **“E” = Emote**

The Golden Rule of writing is showing verses telling. Don’t tell what the person is feeling, show it. *Briana stomped across the room and started pounding her fists into Tyrone’s chest* is a better visualization than *Briana was angry with Tyrone*. If you use the right words, your readers will know how your characters feel without you having to spell it out to them in every sentence.

A “smile” shows happiness, a “frown” shows sadness, a “furled brow” denotes anger, a “kiss” conveys love, while a “kick” communicates rage, and so on. Show your readers what your characters see, feel, hear, touch and smell. Use your words to heighten their senses.

### **“C” = Character Development**

Your characters should have depth and be personable. Your job is to create well rounded, complex but believable personalities. Your readers should be able to understand why your characters do the things they do and think the way they think. They should be able to discern how they will react under any circumstance and be able to relate to them accordingly.

Ask yourself, what type of clothes does this person wear? What type of music do they listen to? How is their relationship with their parents? Where did they grow up? What kind of food do they like to eat? And the list goes on. Write

characters that people want to care about, whether they are the virtuous one or the villain.

**"T" = Theme**

Like Aesop's Fables, if your story has a moral, make sure that it is clear. You shouldn't have to tell your readers what it is; they should be able to figure it out for themselves. You are not writing your novel to teach or to preach, you are merely expressing your viewpoint on how you feel people should behave and on life in general.

Whatever your conviction, take whatever steps necessary to ensure that it is conveyed through the language and actions of your characters.