



JANICE THOMPSON, AUTHOR

Dealing with Rejections

 0 Comments



Don't worry about people stealing your ideas. If your ideas are any good, you'll have to ram them down people's throats.

Howard Aiken

Most writers place such emphasis on "getting published." Some of us simply won't rest until that first magazine article or book hits the shelves. For whatever reason, we place more value in a "published" piece than an "unpublished" one. And this raises all sorts of problems, particularly if our work doesn't sell like we hope it does.

And when we attend a conference, we're absolutely sure we'll sell that book right away. That's why we're spending our money, isn't it? So we can sell that book? What happens if you sit down with that editor or agent and he or she doesn't like your book idea? Then what?

Consider this little poem by Verla Kay:

Rejection

By Verla Kay

- *It hurts to get a simple form — You wanted so much more,*
- *A note extolling your great work, A check, and "We want more!"*
- *Instead you read a form that says, "We're sorry this is not — Exactly what we're looking for...."*

- *You shout, "IT WAS! (I thought.)"*

A writer who is also a realist knows that not everything we write is meant to be published. I honestly believe many of the things I wrote in the early years were my "teaching tools." They were never meant to be read by the masses. They were meant to teach me "how to" write. And I learned at conference—otherwise known as the school of hard knocks—that not all of my brilliant ideas were truly brilliant. Or relevant. Or marketable.

But, oh. . .the pain of those first few rejections, especially the one-on-one rejections at conferences. They were like a knife in the heart! My tender spirit was bruised. How could that mean editor not fall in love with my little baby? Didn't he/she know the value of my piece? Couldn't he/she see the brilliance? Wasn't the world waiting in anticipation of the release of my words?

Personal Story:

I remember so clearly sitting across from an agent at a conference, holding my breath as he read the first few pages of my manuscript. What a poker face. I couldn't tell if he loved it or hated it. A couple of minutes later, when he shoved the pages back across the table, I got my answer. He hated it. And he didn't mind telling me so, in a crowded room, with others looking on.

Man. My heart broke. I didn't know what to do next, so I smiled, thanked him for his time, gathered up my pages, and left. The lump in my throat was huge, and I felt the sting of tears in my eyes, but forced them back. No one would see me cry. Nope. The tears would just have to wait till I got back to my room.

Ironically, ten years later, after publishing many, many books with other houses, this same editor came back my way, interested in one of my books. Go figure! (Thank goodness I handled him with grace...right?)

- **Have you ever felt like this?**
- **What emotions went through you when you faced your first rejection?**
- **How do you overcome feelings of rejection?**

Here are some basic facts about rejections:

They are simply opportunities: To re-analyze your work To submit to other houses

Editors rarely (if ever) relish in hurting feelings. After all, they have feelings too!

You can remove the word "rejection" from your vocabulary and replace it with the phrase, "Not right for our house" or "Not right for us at this time."

Publishing has everything to do with timing and placement.

Rejections make you a "real" author (they're part of the package)

All authors go through rejections. In fact, I was told at my first writer's conference that Stephen King went through 500 rejections before selling his first novel. At that time I probably had 20 or 30. Didn't sound so bad in comparison!

A rejection might be painful, but placing your piece with the "wrong" house could be even more painful.

Rejections grow character. I'm living proof!

Rejections get easier with time. Ditto my comment above.

Whenever I get a rejection letter, I say to myself, "Oh my! If that publisher doesn't want it, I can't wait to see who does."

- **What do you think about what you've just read?**
- **Can you begin to see rejections as a positive thing?**
- **What will you tell yourself the next time your piece is rejected?**

Don't get your feelings hurt if that novel or non-fiction book is rejected. Remember, it's just an opportunity to sell it to a better suited publishing house tomorrow.

By JThompson

Published: March 22, 2024 - Last updated: August 21, 2024

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