

CHAPTER 8:

DON'T EDIT YOURSELF

“Don't think. Thinking is the enemy of creativity. You can't try to do things. You simply must do things.”

—Ray Bradbury

The title doesn't mean don't ever edit yourself. The adage 'writing is rewriting' is a truism as vital as blood to the human body. Whether it's nonfiction, novels, screenplays, short stories, outlines, documentaries, pitches, query letters or poems, my first drafts are often riddled with issues. The drive and willingness to critically edit one's own work is a formidable tool in the writer's box of tricks to stay alive.

However, there is a magical time in the writing process when all that matters is the unedited flow of getting whatever is inside, out. On paper. On the computer. Chiselled on a cave wall. Somewhere, get it out.

Writing without editing yourself is needed to feel creatively alive and vital for reaching the end of a draft. If you haven't yet got to the end of a draft, trust me, there is magic in writing *The End*, even on an unpolished draft. Two of my three novels were rewritten, every line. *Every* line. Doesn't say a lot for my first drafts. But getting to the end of a draft is like being a child again and feeling praise from someone whose praise matters to you. There is a sumptuous release of dopamine in the brain when this happens. I think it's dopamine. I can't go to the Internet to find out because I will never return from its grip.

I have to be strong, I'm writing **tips** and **prompts**.

Tip: you can deliver this rush of praise to yourself by getting to the end of a draft. To get there, minimal editing on route could help immensely. I just erased the last line, but that's a minuscule edit. I'm going forward. This tip will not be further edited. Hardly.

One important tip to remember while flowing: create drama and tension between your characters as soon as possible. It will be the engine that drives your flow forward.

Tip: don't spend forever describing your characters' feet or the town they were born in. Give the characters laser-sharp dilemmas related to your epic and let them burn and let them flow (see the chapters SHOW SOME CHARACTER or BE A DRAMA QUEEN).

Flowing is magical and it can be experienced by choosing to not edit yourself. Get to the end. If *not* editing along the way freaks you out, I promise you this: there will be plenty of editing in your future.

Exhale the yearning to edit and replace it with affirmations: *I am a writer and I am in the flow zone! Look out, Stephen King, you're blocking my path with your bestsellers!*

Did you ever hear the story of Bill Gates earning so much money at one stage of his life that if he dropped a \$10,000 bill it wasn't worth his time to bend down to pick it up? That's you writing the first draft. Say it: *I'm so damn on today I don't need to bend down and edit.*

Leave out the bend down part. It doesn't make any sense.

To repeat: a time to edit will come, either by you or some other smarty-pants reading your greatness. But *not* today.

Here's the **prompt**: today, by this order, *Write without editing thyself.*

Write wild truth with sentences that scare you.

Do it. Follow the helpful **tips** and **prompts** from the previous chapters and start a fire with your quill or your fingers on the keys, by moving them as fast as you can. If you still haven't started writing without editing, laugh like a maniac who believes one day they will rule the world with their un-edited writing. That is you.

After one more rule-the-world laugh, go flow. Don't edit your laugh or your writing. You think I edited this chapter? I'll never tell. Another manic laugh.

Today, write *without* editing yourself. See how it feels. Repeat tomorrow. And again until you're at the end of your finished draft. I'm serious. Today, we flow.