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**Critique Guidelines**

The purpose/goal of a critique group is to get feedback from fellow writers to help improve your writing craft and/or manuscript. Analyzing the work of other writers will also help you develop better editing skills; seeing their mistakes will better help you see yours. NO bullying, harassing, or belittling will be tolerated – by anyone.

**Responsibility of the person giving the critique…**

1. Don’t be afraid to critique something, even if it is outside the genre that you typically read or write. There are basic techniques that are important to all types of ﬁction.
2. Don’t be falsely flattering. Insincerity is unhelpful.
3. Be professional and focus on the writing – not the writer. Better yet, focus on the story and not just the words. Do not make harsh or personal comments.
4. Don’t try to make someone else’s story into something you’d write or try to rewrite or restructure another writer’s manuscript.
5. Don’t dwell too much on spelling or punctuation issues, unless asked to. Line-editing is fine but shouldn’t be focused on during the meeting. The writer should be able to look at your marks at home and understand your suggestions.
6. Give suggestions and not just criticisms; make notes on the manuscript, whether a hard copy or through tracking software. Be sure to return the pages to the author.
7. Back up broad or general statements with speciﬁcs. (i.e., “I liked it” (the piece) is not a critique. What did you like? What needs improvement?)
8. Don’t forget to point out the positives. What works well? What impresses you?
9. Be humble. Be respectful. Chances are you’re not the end-all, be-all expert on writing. Remember that.

**Responsibility of the person receiving the critique…**

1. Provide an ample number of hard copies.

2. Make sure your submission is free of as many typos/grammar errors as possible. Think of your critique group as a dry run for an editor/agent, even if your pages are in the “early draft” stage.

3. Do not take the criticism personally. Remember, it is words on a piece of paper, not you as a human being.

4. Ask questions to get clarification on comments, but do not argue, justify, or defend. It is best to remain mostly silent when you are being critiqued.

5. Take time to consider all the comments, decide which apply to your work, then move forward with your revisions. If more than one person has the same response to your work, that is probably a sign that you need to revise.

**Critiquing Basics:**

* Describe your general reaction to the piece.
* What was your reaction to the characters? Were they convincing given the context of the story?
* Is the dialogue natural for the characters speaking it?
* Is the plot clear and believable?
* Does the chapter/story begin where it should? Does it have a hook to interest the reader?
* Is there conflict?
* Is the setting described with sensory detail?
* Is the Point of View consistent?