





# **Developmental Editing: What, Why, When**

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# Overview

- Non-editor critique ideas
- When & Why to go pro
- Editorial Expectations
- Case Study
- Making an editorial investment



# Non-professional feedback options

## Critique Partner

Person you swap work with  
on a regular basis.  
Specific, in-depth feedback..

## Writers Group

Group of writers you share  
your writing with.  
Breadth of feedback.

## Beta Reader

An avid reader of your genre.  
Does not have to be writer.  
General Feedback

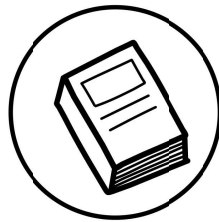


# Types of Feedback



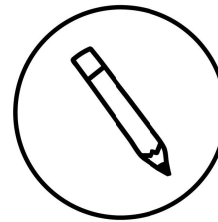
## Positivity Pass

What you are doing well.



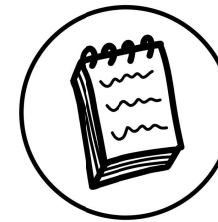
## Big Picture

Overall flow, pacing, emotional resonance.



## Line review/ Proofread

Word usage, style, grammar.



## Proof of Write

Confirmation of words on a page.





# Time to go pro?

## When

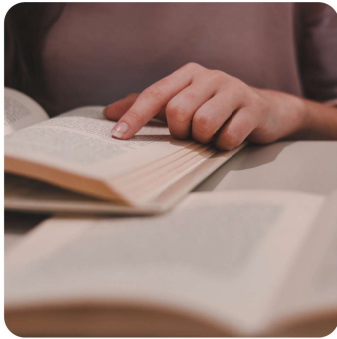
- Finished MS to best of your ability, ran through non-pro resources, validation, know something is still wrong, or think the book is perfect

## Why

- Industry Insights, Educational Investment, Highlight themes & confirm if they're coming through in line with your vision



# Types of Editors/Edits



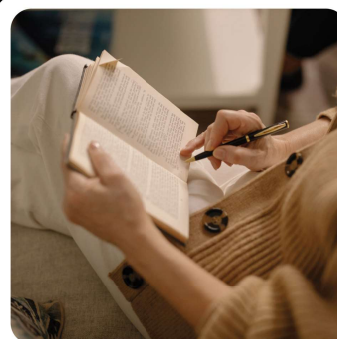
## Developmental

Big picture, structural,  
theme, & genre



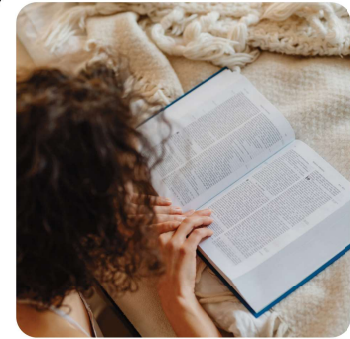
## Line

Language, voice,  
& style review



## Copy

Grammar, style,  
& punctuation



## Proofreading

Typos, formatting  
inconsistencies, etc.





## Entering into Developmental Edit



### Writer's Job

ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED

- Themes I want to convey
- This part feels broken. I tried to fix it. Did the fix work?
- Show me strong places I can build on



### Editor's Job

ASK QUESTIONS TO HELP BRING OUT YOUR VISION FOR THE M.S.

- Pacing
- Emotional Resonance
- Themes that are coming across
- Character Arc
- Resolution satisfying
- Highlight what you do well



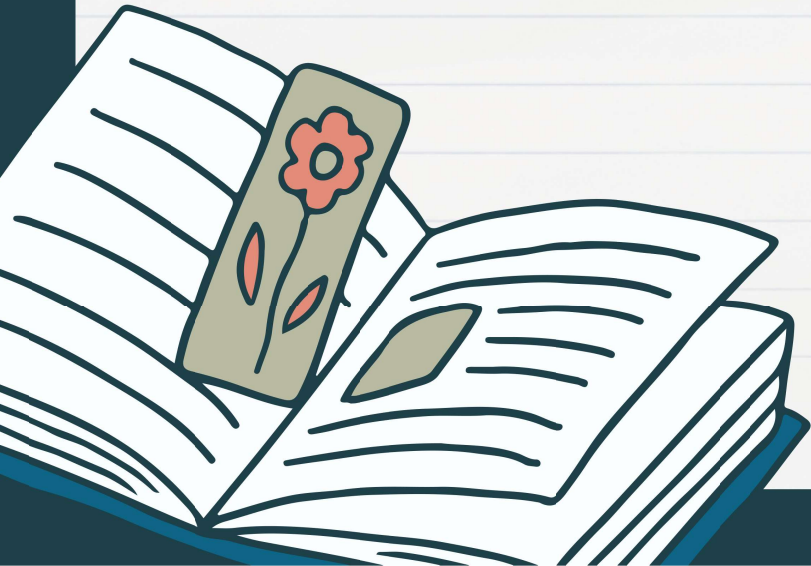
# Case Study

Working title: Accidents

Synopsis: I totaled half a dozen cars. There was a story there!

Rewrites included:

- Deleted accident details
- Deleted secondary characters
- Added MC emotions
- Added back story





# Case Study

## MIDDLE SECTION OF THE ORIGINAL SUBMISSION

*(Author's note to the editor) No line edits. Big picture only. Mainly looking for the best order.*

*Where's the best place to start. Where's the best place to end?*

I traded the Nissan for a silver Honda Prelude, a car that sat as low to the ground as a sled. ... Come spring, I rolled down the windows and opened the sunroof, as I crept through midday traffic. We were bumper to bumper on a six-lane boulevard. A delivery van whipped out of a driveway to make a left turn while the coast was clear. The coast was not clear. The van slammed into my right front fender and skidded me across three lanes onto the curb.

Sirens brought the police. There was talk of an ambulance, but I asked them to call my husband instead. ... I wanted to go home....

We bought a two-seater silver Honda CRX that looked like a wind-up toy. I drove safely through another winter, plowing through snowy residential streets as though I'd been born to it.

When my husband got promoted, it meant a transfer to Kansas City.

As I was cruising down the street to the laundromat, a car turning left hit me on the driver's side front corner. ...

## MIDDLE SECTION REWRITE

*(note to myself) Dawn—too many accidents. Consolidate. Delete secondary characters.*

*Expand MC's emotional reaction. How did you feel? back story?*

After the T-boning of my first car, I totaled my next one in an icy spin-out. And the next one when I was side-swiped—thrown across three lanes of traffic. A bystander called 911, but I declined the ambulance; I was fine. And the car after that, when a driver turning left smashed into me. And the car after that, another left-turning driver knocked me through an intersection. Both times, I ended up in the emergency room and ignored advice to get follow-up treatment. I was fine. *look back from present-day for insight?*

But the fuzzy edges of a pattern materialized. Maybe all my cars were too small. Other drivers couldn't see me. I bought a bigger car.

I had to replace that one after I turned too fast off a fog-shrouded county road and skidded into a drainage ditch. I hit a pole dead center between the headlights, my car's third eye. For a second, in the fog that had obscured my view of the road, the view of my pattern became clearer: sabotage. I'd left the house too late, gas gauge in the red, and an un-read map tossed on

# Case Study

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When my husband got promoted, it meant a transfer to Kansas City.

As I was cruising down the street to the laundromat, a car turning left hit me on the driver's side front corner. ...

The other driver hurried toward me, papers in hand. "Are you okay? God, I didn't see you." The furrowed brow, the set of her mouth, and the softness in her eyes signaled worry.

... And slid off the road straight for a sign pole. I braced for the impact dead center of the hood, between the headlights. **Third eye. I jammed the brake and lived the slow-motion moment of hopelessness, while my mind screamed stupid, stupid, stupid. Impact.**

**The pole flattened without a sound. When I backed up, it rebounded like an air dancer at a car dealership. That was the first miracle.**

**declined the ambulance; I was fine.** And the car after that, when a driver turning left smashed into me. And the car after that, another left-turning driver knocked me through an intersection. Both times, I ended up in the emergency room and ignored advice to get follow-up treatment. I was fine. **look back from present-day for insight?**

But the fuzzy edges of a pattern materialized. Maybe all my cars were too small. Other drivers couldn't see me. I bought a bigger car.

I had to replace that one after I turned too fast off a fog-shrouded county road and skidded into a drainage ditch. I hit a pole dead center between the headlights, **my car's third eye.** **For a second, in the fog that had obscured my view of the road, the view of my pattern became clearer: sabotage. I'd left the house too late, gas gauge in the red, and an un-read map tossed on the passenger seat.**

**The thought blinked on, bright as a neon beer sign, then immediately winked off. I didn't have time to wonder why I'd sabotaged my day. I needed to get to my job. Why? Expand?**

**I needed to get back to work after every one of my accidents. Get back to work, get back to work, unaware that my real work was the job of numbing out to East 15th.**

# Case Study

## CLOSING SECTION OF THE ORIGINAL SUBMISION

Like a gunshot, a section of tire tread flew past my windshield. My heart stopped. An 18-wheeler right in front of me on the interstate had a blowout. ... My first instinct was to brake. But that would do no good. The truck would surely lose control, jackknife, and I'd end up smeared onto the backside of a jackknifed 18-wheeler. There was nowhere to go and no time to get there. The truck floated into the right-hand lane, as I kept going straight. He slowed and came to a perfect 17-point landing on a triangle of space between the highway and an off ramp. ...

That was the third miracle.

I was no longer an accident waiting to happen.

(-end-)

## CLOSING SECTION REWRITE

*Dawn, too many accidents. delete truck. Tie back to childhood violence. adult safety?*

### *Miracles or insights?*

My energetic place in the world had shifted. My childhood conditioning exploded into bits of irrelevance. Like second-hand tire tread.

The chaos of construction and midtown traffic surrounded me. Violence of city sounds, horns blasting, construction workers yelling. Chaos resounded all around me. The potential for violence unfolded all around me, a near miss around every corner of life. Violence was part of life but no longer part of mine.

This stretch of road I navigated was safe.

(-end-)



# Case Study

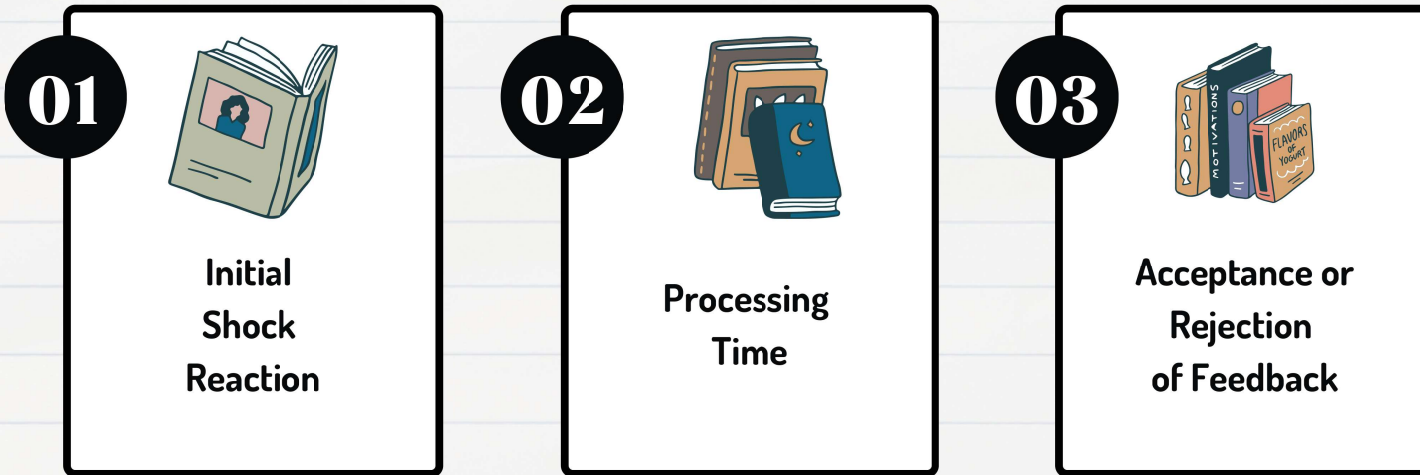
**Final title:** How to Remember

**Synopsis:** Childhood memories stored in the body affected my adult life, causing a string of car accidents.

**Takeaway:** Developmental edit revealed the real story.



# Getting Edits Back



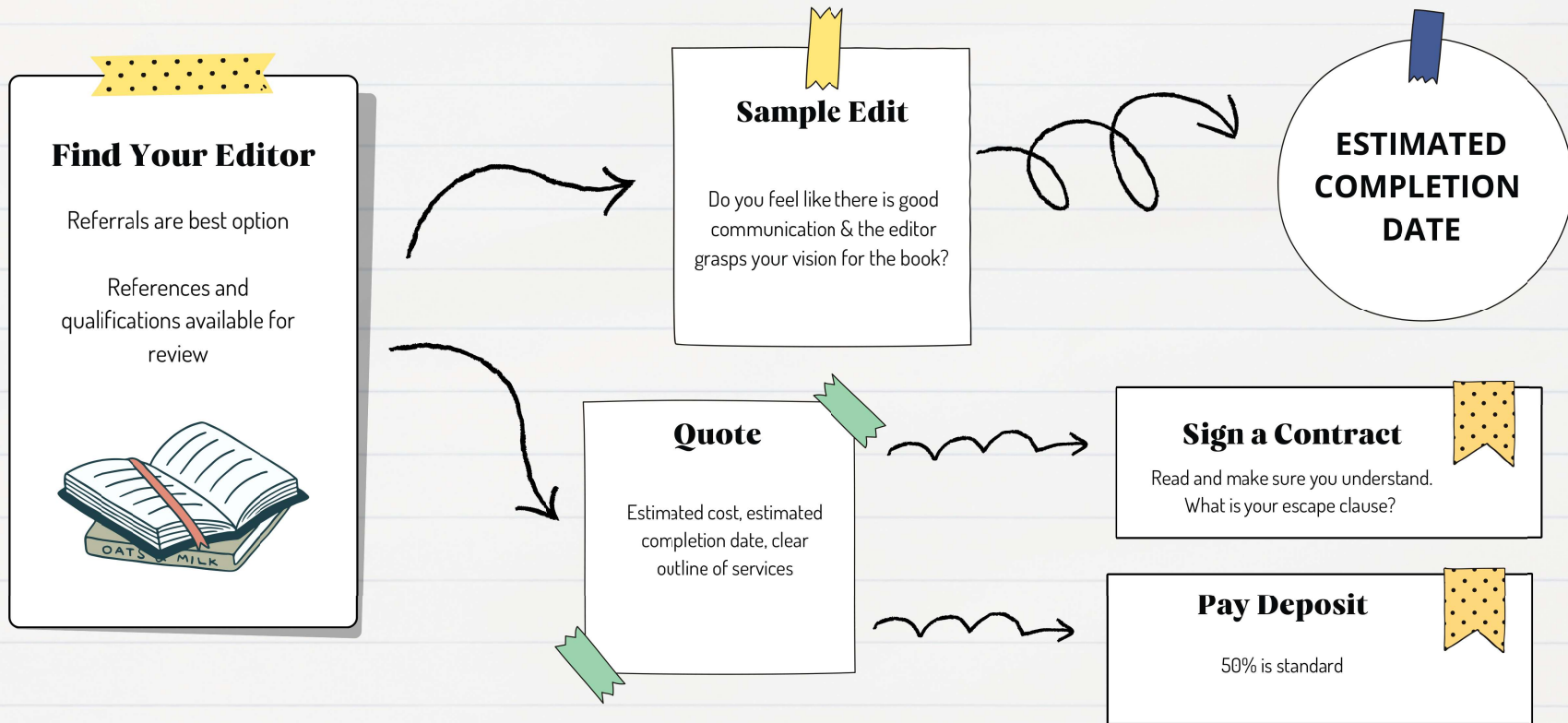
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[THECREATIVESAPPRENTICE.COM](http://THECREATIVESAPPRENTICE.COM)

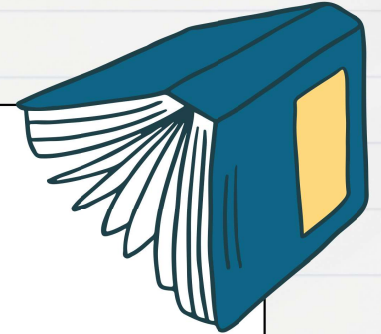


LIVENOTE

# How to Hire



# The Full Investment



## Education

You will learn more about writing, your M.S., your genre, the industry, and more with every professional edit

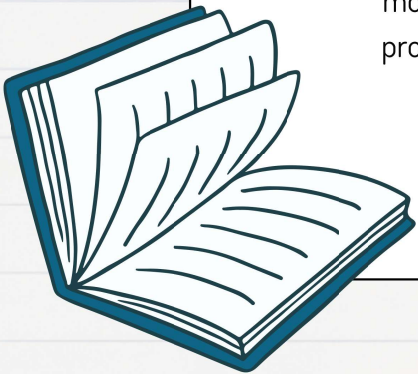
## Expected Cost

\$2,000 - \$3,000  
for a full MS  
developmental edit

## Additional Rounds of Edits

Your editor may do more than one pass depending on your contract.

You will still need a copy edit/proofread after a D.E.





## A Good Developmental Edit

Is thought provoking

Inspires you to revise immediately

Honors your vision for the story

Let's you see structure in different ways

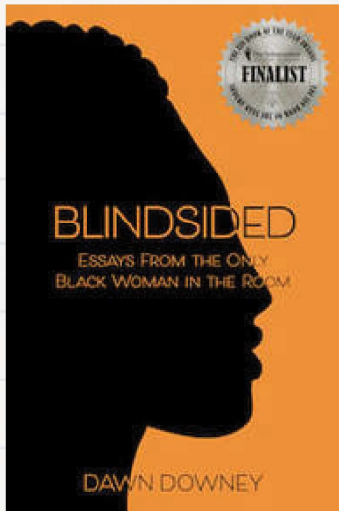
Is Collaborative

Inspires Creativity

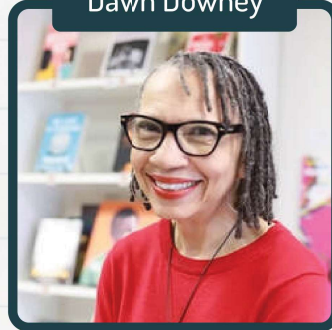




# The Presenters



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*The Creative's*  
apprentice

