

Remind yourself why your story matters.

What to Do:

Answer the question: Why are you writing this story?

There are a lot of layers of nuance wrapped up in that one little question. Here are three of my favorites:

- *Why* are you writing this story?
- Why are *you* writing this story?
- Why are you writing *this* story?

And here's another variant, expressed in different words:

- Why does this story matter to you?
- Why are you drawn to it?
- Why is it *so important* that you've invested years of your life into telling it well?

Why This Matters:

There are two reasons why I begin the clarity phase with this question.

First, because the revision process is long. It's an endurance sport, a marathon, not a sprint.

This transitional moment is a great time to pause, reflect, and remind yourself why your book is so incredibly worth all the time and effort you're investing in it.

And second, because great stories aren't just made of high-stakes plots and cool explosions.

The stories that resonate with us, the ones that stick with us long after the final page, the ones that we revisit again and again until they become part of the DNA that shapes *who we are* and *how we think* and *what we believe* and *how we navigate our lives*—

—*those* stories, the ones that *matter*—

—they carry an undercurrent of meaning hidden deep beneath the superficial plot.

And the source of that meaning is *you*. It's what *you* believe about what it means to be a human being in this world.

The goal of the clarity phase is to unearth what that meaning is. Later, in the next phase, we'll shape your story so that the meaning shines radiantly through, so brightly that your reader can't miss it. But right now, our task is simply to find out what it is.

And the first clues about the meaning you're infusing into your story might just be hidden right here, inside your why—the reason you're telling this story at all.