BEING A GOOD CRITIQUE PARTNER

Here are some general rules to being a good critique partner.

When Critiquing

- **BE HONEST:** Be gentle but tell the truth. Editors don't have time to tell you what they think--critique partners do.
- **BE KIND:** Honest doesn't mean brutal. It's important to point out what's working as well as what's not. Some people use the "sandwich technique," where they start and end with positives and place the constructive criticism in-between.
- **BE ENCOURAGING:** One of the biggest benefits to having critique partners is having others who understand what you are going through. Encourage one another to your best writing and help one another when you face a nasty case of writer's block or rejection. Hang in there together!
- **REMEMBER, IT'S NOT YOUR STORY:** It can be tempting to tell others exactly how they should change their work, but it's important not to be too prescriptive.

When Receiving Critiques

- **TELL YOUR CRITIQUE PARTNERS WHICH STAGE YOUR WORK IS AT:** It's helpful for others to know if they are looking at a first draft or a manuscript that you feel is submission-ready as this will influence how they review your work.

- **BE THICK-SKINNED:** If someone reacts negatively to your material, it doesn't mean you're a bad writer. It's sometimes hard to separate our writing from ourselves, but it is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY that you learn to do so. Even AFTER you're published, editors will want to change things.

- **CONSIDER COMMENTS CAREFULLY:** Not every comment a critique partner makes will apply to your manuscript. It could be just a personal preference. YOU are the final judge of what to change and what to keep. HOWEVER, don't blow off a comment because it hurts your feelings. If possible, let it be for a while, and look at it again later. Often you'll find at least a shred of wisdom in the critique, especially when you notice you receive similar comments from multiple people.