

“Can’t NOT Write”

By Carol Ann Erhardt

Why do you want to write? Have you asked yourself that question lately? Is it because you want to make a lot of money? Is it because you want to be famous? Is it because you have a story to tell? What exactly is the reason you want to write?

Writing means submitting your story for strangers to pick apart. You’ll receive tons of rejections, some not even worth the canned post card response. You’ll send your masterpiece off into the world to sit on an editor’s desk for months—or years—sometimes never to hear another word. Sometimes, you’ll receive a detailed letter telling you that if you change your plot and your characters and rewrite your sweet romance into a vampire novel, they’ll look at it again. Or, you might get lucky and have a request for a partial or a full. Elated, you send off the requested pages only to receive a “thanks but no thanks” response.

Writing is a hard career. It’s full of negativity. And, if you become lucky enough to have your manuscript published, you still haven’t “made it.” What about those reviews? Some people make a living out of trashing authors in reviews. Not everyone is going to like your book. Reading negative comments leave wounds. It’s really true that the pen is mightier than the sword. I recently received the rights back to my first two published books. I was given a specific time to remove the ISBNs and cover work from my website. Books do not stay on the market for a long period of time, even if they are with a small press. As an author, you must have a steady stream of books coming out, or you can lose your fan base.

And, then there is promotion. Marketing. Branding. Blogging. Editing. All of these things take time away from writing new pages. Writing is a stressful business. It’s lonely. It’s time consuming. It’s painful.

But, it is also rewarding. There is nothing like writing the last word in a novel. You can look at the stack of pages and know you’ve accomplished a dream. You’ve brought your characters to life and told their story.

Writing is risky, but it is also a burning passion residing deep in the soul of a person born to write. I have no illusions of becoming rich and famous. I wouldn’t be comfortable with that lifestyle. I’m a shy introvert, not someone who enjoys being in the limelight. I write because I can’t NOT write.