

Your Story Opens Doors of Opportunity

BY ROMNEY NESBITT



Words matter. What you say about yourself and your career can open or close doors for you.

At every club meeting, holiday party and family get-together the conversation is sure to come around to work and the economy. It's important to offer a positive viewpoint. Why? Because the stories you tell about yourself and your career get told.

What's your story? What will you say the next time you're asked "How are things going with your writing career?"

Imagine you overhear this conversation between two writers:

"My queries keep getting rejected. My income has been down this whole year." (Writer A)

"Mine too." (Writer B)

"I've been so depressed I've stopped writing. What's the use? The industry has changed so much new writers just don't stand a chance." (A)

"Yeah, sales are down but I'm still working. It took me a while to

think my way through this whole recession thing, but I found a way to make it work for me." (B)

"What do you mean?"

"I've shifted my focus away from what I can't control to what I can control. I'm using my time to work on my novel. I'm entering more contests. I'm doing the kind of work I said I always wanted to do, but thought I didn't have time to do."

Which writer would you like to get to know better? Writer A has allowed the recession to drain his creative juices. He's joined the country-wide gloom and doom club. Writer B found a silver lining in today's economic cloud. Her words reflect a positive mental attitude and flexibility. She knows everything's temporary and sooner or later things will turn around—and when it does, she'll be ready.

Choose to be proactive rather than reactive. If breaks aren't coming your way, create your own. Comedian Milton Berle said it this way, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door."

10 WAYS TO BUILD A DOOR: Instructions for Writers

1. Have a positive attitude about your work and your goals. Be ready to share your enthusiasm with anyone, anywhere.

2. Be realistic. Highs and lows in the economy are to be expected.

This current economic downturn is temporary. Work today for tomorrow's upswing.

3. Realize that every person you meet is important. Everybody knows somebody. To reach your career goals you're going to need contacts.

4. Don't miss an opportunity to make a great first impression. Be friendly, positive and enthusiastic. Convey confidence when you speak about your work.

5. Expect to do business. Give a business card to every person you meet. Keep your website current.

6. Keep current on market trends. Reread past issues of your professional magazines for inspiration and information.

7. Surround yourself with positive people. Guard your creative energies. Don't hang out with complainers.

8. Define what success means for you. You can't reach a goal unless you set a goal and create a plan to reach it.

9. Try writing in a new genre. Take this pause in the rush to experiment.

10. Put yourself out there. Put your production in high gear by entering a contest. Look for a writing accountability partner or join a critique group that meets regularly.

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Playing Cupid

BY LYNN SOMERVILLE



As romance novelists we often write or blog about writing: the process, the challenges, editors, agents, the characters, POV, and all the various elements that go into creating our novels. But in order to be a romance writer, one must first be a romance reader.

I believe the world is divided into two types of people, those who like to read romance and

those who don't. Call me prejudiced, but the folks who don't like romance are the same ones who can walk by a rose bush and only see the thorns. Fans and writers of the genre often hear that "romance novels are really just all about the sex." My response to those critics is to direct them to the Inspirational sub-genre of romance.

Trust me, there's nothing wrong with sex. Personally, I'm a big fan. J But those who would dismiss romance novels as just about the sex, miss the point. Romance is about love and the beauty it brings into every life. We humans are hardwired to find our mate. If love makes the world go round, romance is the fuel that keeps it cranking.

Several years ago, my DH (Darling Husband) and his buddy had a boys' day out. This male bonding time included a trip to the gun show, beer and Mexican food. Sadly, my DH's buddy and his wife were going through a heartbreaking divorce. My DH patiently spent the day listening while his friend, literally and figuratively, cried in his beer. When my husband returned home that evening, he walked straight into my office where I was writing...my romance novel. He knelt before me, took my face in his hands and planted a big wet one on my lips. Then he pulled back, and with tears in his eyes, said, "Thank you for putting up

with all my sh*t."

One of these days, that scene will show up in one of my novels.

I'm fortunate that my DH supports my writing. He lovingly calls me his "smut monger" and daily asks me how much "smut" I've written. He tolerates the mountains of romance novels stacked in my office. Long ago, he accepted the fact there is no such thing as quick trip to Barnes and Nobles. When we go to a bookstore, we pack a picnic lunch and stay...for hours. He regularly jokes that I should buy stock in Amazon.com, since I am singlehandedly responsible for their financial success.

The delight of reading romance novels is just that...pure delight. Whether the situations the hero and heroine find themselves in are true life or fantasy, suspense or comedy, there is something incredibly joyful in watching two people, page by page, fall in love. Being a voyeur in that process of discovery is the grandest adventure. And as a writer, there is nothing that compares to the sheer fun of playing Cupid.

**Article submissions for
the October issue of
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Friday, Oct. 2nd.**

Your Story... Cont'd

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Take charge of your career one conversation at a time. It's your job to say who you are and what you do. You are the only one who can instill confidence in you and your abilities. Tell the story you want repeated. Your words and actions can build doors of opportunity that open wide!

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