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MASTER WRITING COACH

Editors, Tigers, and Bears...Oh My! Get the Right Help for Your Writing Needs By Dawn Josephson, The Master Writing Coach™

Now that you've written the first draft of your book, you're ready for an editor, right? Or do you need a proofreader? Maybe a ghostwriter would be better for you. But then again, you've heard about people who do line editing, content editing, and/or creative editing...what's that all about? And didn't that person you spoke to at the convention say that he hired a collaborator to help him with his book?

When it comes to writing help, you have lots of choices. And just because one person needs an editor doesn't mean you fall into the same category. The key is to know what service you really need rather than just use the term "editor" casually.

Following are some guidelines to help you make the right decision when it comes to your book.

- Proofreading (some people also call this "line editing") – Just as the name implies, proofreading means reading the proof of your book. Typically a proofreader is looking for such things as typos, grammatical errors, and formatting inconsistencies. You'll use a proofreader in one of two circumstances: 1) You're a great writer already and simply need another pair of eyes to look over your book before you send it to press or to your publisher (very rare), or 2) You've already had a detailed edit of your book and are using a proofreader to catch those errors people typically miss when they're close to the work (more common). Proofreaders are typically very detail oriented people who catch the "little things" writers often miss.
- Editing (some people also call this "content editing") – Even though the term "editing" is thrown around rather casually these days, editing is a very specific task. An editor reviews your work and then revises for such things as statement of objective, clarity and conciseness, unity and coherence, style and diction, organization and effective use of transitions, introduction and conclusion. An editor goes beyond basic grammar, revising your words to make them stronger,

more logical, and more reader friendly. Realize that an editor can only work with what you submit. He or she can't take your mediocre ideas and make them brilliant, but an editor can see the diamond in the rough and polish your ideas so they shine. Even though you hire an editor, you may still need a proofreader to do the final read through. Editors focus on the flow and overall feel of the book rather than the minute details.

- Ghostwriting (some people call this “creating editing” or “rewriting”) – A ghostwriter will work with you to determine your target audience, define and project your work's identity, and write and/or rewrite the document to better express your ideas. True ghostwriters rarely receive cover credit for writing the book, whereas a collaborator would. In either case, you would use a ghostwriter or collaborator when you have an idea for a book but lack the time or experience to put your words on paper. Again, even though you use a ghostwriter, you may still need a proofreader to come in and do the book's final read through.

So the next time you hear yourself saying, “I need an editor,” stop and think if that's the service you *really* need. Remember, a proofreader won't tell you if your book drifts off topic, and an editor won't take that idea you scribbled on a napkin and turn it into a manuscript. When you hire the right person for the job, you'll have a much better final product that positively impacts your bottom line.

About the Author:

Dawn Josephson, the Master Writing Coach, has been helping professional speakers and business leaders write better to earn more since 1998. As the author of *Write It Right: The Ground Rules for Self-Editing Like the Pros* and *Putting It On Paper: The Ground Rules for Creating Promotional Pieces that Sell Books*, she empowers leaders to master the printed word for enhanced credibility, positioning, and profits. Contact her at dawn@masterwritingcoach.com.