

The Talent Factor

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An aspiring author once asked me, ‘How do I know I’m talented enough to be a writer?’

My short answer was, ‘If the desire is in you, you’re talented. Now stop worrying about talent and start thinking about craft and get to work.’ But what I really wanted to say was talent is overrated. I’ve met many talented writers, a number who will never make it to publication or writing success because they lack three things: humility, patience, and determination.

Humility

Some talented writers think their words are golden nuggets nothing can be changed. Working writers see their words as pebbles that can be tossed any time, if it makes their work stronger. Some talented writers don’t listen to suggestions they like to use statements such as: “I wrote it that way because that’s how I like it.” “No, I don’t need to learn grammar, the editor will fix it.” Humble writers, however, know that they can always improve their craft, there’s always something to learn about the industry and they are eager for growth.

Patience

Most talented writers expect success immediately. Because writing comes easily they expect the same of everything else—an agent, a publisher, fame and fortune. They don’t have the patience for a rejection. A rejection is an insult because they don’t understand one key lesson—not everyone will like your work. Working writers steadily move forward in their careers. Yes, some writers gain success right away, most don’t. But those writers who patiently moved forward with each new work can now holiday in Italy and have two homes. Think of Dean Koontz and Sandra Brown as two examples of those who honed their craft book by book until they broke out. Are they talented? I think so, but they also had something else. My number three component...

Determination

Just because you don’t get what you want right away doesn’t mean you’re not talented. Perhaps your work is ahead of it’s time. In this field, be prepared. You’re going to hear the word “No” many times if you let that stop you then I’m sorry I hope you enjoy another career. Those who are hungry succeed. Those who are just talented usually become angry critics and tell others how they should do their jobs. You don’t want to be one of those (or perhaps you do in which case please stay far away from me).

So stop worrying about being talented and continue to hone your craft, strategize your career steps, and keep moving forward no matter what.

