

SELF-EDITING

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3. Overcoming Fear of Self-Editing

Are you afraid to self-edit? Try these tips to overcome your fear:

Practice editing someone else's work, or work on editing exercises in a handbook, or even edit magazine articles, anthology stories, or blogs you notice need improvement. You'll feel less self-conscious as you practice on others' writing.
Practice self-editing with small pieces of writing you've created: flash fiction, short stories, articles, poems, blog posts, even emails or letters.
If you only have a book-length manuscript, do a thorough self-edit on just one chapter. Go through the whole self-editing process, step-by-step, then apply what you've learned from that section to the rest of the manuscript—chapter by chapter if you're still nervous. Finally, self-edit it all the way through.
Teach or mentor young or beginning writers, individually or in a group. You'll become a better writer, too, and you'll discover self-editing is a valuable learning experience, even a fun adventure. If you work with children, you'll find they admire your skills, which can be very encouraging for you.
Hire a writing coach (or editor who also coaches) to take you through the process step-by-step.
Attend conferences, workshops, or courses led by experienced editors. Ideally, search out sessions that include hands-on practice or at least lots of Q&A time after a lecture.

Don't forget to place this exercise in your binder or Duotang.

And now go on to part 4 in this series: Self-Edit With Fresh Eyes, Mind, and Body