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President's Voice

By Lisa Hughey



Welcome back for another fabulous year of Novelists, Inc. Your board and committees are hard at work to bring new experiences and an infusion of energy to our membership. The conference committee is already in full swing, and Programming Chair Tawdra Kandle has an update for you in this issue.

As the publishing world changes, we're always looking for new ways to interact. Look for a NINC Members Only Virtual Tiki Bar on Clubhouse coming in February!

Our new website should be live soon. Terese Daly Ramin, Mica Stone, and Laura Resnick, along with the website committee, are hard at work putting the final touches in place.

Celeste Barclay, our president elect, has taken over as chair of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. The committee is ready to build upon the ideals and goals we began with when the committee was formed in 2020.

After a rough year in 2021, I've been filled with new momentum and optimism for the future. I've gotten excited about writing again and am working on my craft, encouraging creativity in all areas of my life, and moving forward with joy. Much of my attitude comes from the friends I have made through NINC. If you are still stuck in a pandemic slump, check out the articles in this month's *Nink* for inspiration. Or if you're looking for more interactive discussions about your business and craft, be sure to visit our [private Facebook group](#) and/or our email loop [Ninlink](#).

My goal for the year is to increase NINC's visibility in author spaces and expand our membership in a thoughtful and intentional manner. If you are interested in volunteering on any committee, please reach out to me at president@ninc.com. Getting involved is a great way to both network *and* give back!

~ Lisa

USA Today bestselling author [Lisa Hughey](#) writes about strong heroines who are perfectly capable of rescuing themselves and the heroes who love both their strength and their vulnerability. She pens romances of all types—suspense, paranormal, and contemporary—but at their heart, her books celebrate the power of love. She lives in Cape Ann, Massachusetts, with her fabulously supportive husband, two out of three awesome mostly grown kids, and one somewhat grumpy cat.

About NINC

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

About Nink

Nink's goal is to provide our readers with high-quality articles that offer critical business advice, marketing how-tos, advanced craft coaching, or strategy to continue building a career, all geared to established authors. All members should feel confident that *Nink* provides something for them. We welcome pitches and submissions from all members; [propose an article](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).

NINC Member Benefits

Don't forget to sign up for the [email loop](#), [critique/brainstorming group](#), and the members-only [Facebook group](#) if you haven't already. The [Pro Services Directory](#), member [discount page](#), and [sample letters](#) are also great resources.

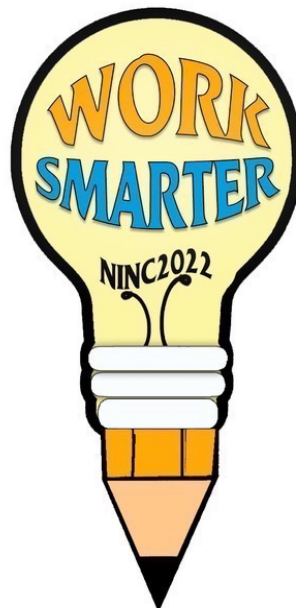
Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#).

Accessing the NINC Website

Not sure how to log in to the NINC website? Visit the login page here: <https://ninc.com/membership-overview/login-to-ninc/>



The 2022 Conference Team is pleased to announce that **NINC 2022: Work Smarter** will take place **September 21–25** at the Tradewinds Island Resort in St. Pete Beach, Florida. Thank you to Laura Hayden for designing our logo for this year!



Registration will open on Wednesday, March 16, at 10 a.m. EDT. A link will be shared in the March issue of *Nink* and will also be posted on both the Ninclink and Facebook groups.

Please note that the conference fee will be \$495 this year. This is the first time that the fee has gone up in over five years. The board made the decision to raise it this year to keep up with increasing hotel and food costs.

Our preliminary list of speakers will also be announced in early March.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone on the beach in September!

~ Tawdra Kandle, NINC Programming Chair

Tawdra Kandle is a USA Today bestselling romance author with over 100 books released. Her titles include new adult and adult contemporary romance; under the pen name Tamara Kendall, she writes paranormal romance, and under the pen name Tessa Kent, she writes erotic romance.

From the Central Coordinator

By Terese Ramin



I'm retiring as NINC's Central Coordinator in the next couple of months (between April 1 and mid-June, 2022).

It's been a pleasure serving NINC and its members, and I've loved every minute of it, but it's time for me to return to writing full time.

Thank you for being wonderful to work with—and please welcome incoming Central Coordinator, Laura Resnick. You can reach her at admin@ninc.com.

~ Terey/Terese

Terese Ramin is the oldest of eight children and mother of two. A brush with mortality made her pull up her socks and finish her first novel in 1987, which won the Romance Writers of America Golden Heart Award that same year. Since then, she has published numerous novels and short stories. Terese has also spent a lifetime rescuing the dogs and cats (and the occasional reptile and amphibian) that turn up on her doorstep swearing they only followed the signs that said "free love here." She has served as NINC's Central Coordinator since 2015.

Mastering Your Mindset

Taking positive steps forward in a negative world

By Trish Milburn



Focus. Discipline. Choice. Manifesting. Positivity.

As 2021 gave way to 2022, authors picked these and other powerful single words to use as their theme and guide this year after deciding enough was enough. Because, let's face it, the past couple of years have been...a lot. We've faced a global pandemic, social unrest, and a level of ugliness that has made it difficult to focus on anything other than binge watching *Bridgerton* or *Squid Game*. Many of us have languished, if not felt downright depressed. [Katie MacAlister](#) called what many authors have been experiencing "pandemic malaise cobwebs," and perhaps there has never been a better description.

It's not unusual to hear talk of goals and resolutions this time of year. But as we are hitting the two-year mark of the pandemic, authors are refocusing their mindsets to deal with the world as it is and not how they wish it was in order to benefit their careers, personal lives, and mental state. One tactic to accomplish this is the adoption of a guiding or focus word.

[Sally Kilpatrick](#) was able to work through 2020 and much of 2021 because of the necessity of meeting deadlines, but that changed in November.

"All of the stress I'd been ignoring hit me hard," she said. "Suddenly, I couldn't make myself write for anything."

So she chose a guiding word that directs how she deals not only with others but also with herself.

"I chose the word Grace. In order to not sink into hopelessness or shrivel up with bitterness, I have to cultivate grace for others," Kilpatrick said. "To move forward with my career, I have to cultivate grace for myself."

During the pandemic, [J.T. Ellison](#) has dealt with a move, renovations, a serious physical injury, and a slippage in deadlines because of supply chain issues. She also realized she was spending too much time online and not enough writing. Her guiding word is Choice.

“I choose to stay offline, engaging on Fridays only,” she said. “I choose to write more words. I choose to not let the fear and uncertainty of the past two years affect my writing anymore.”

Part of getting to a better mindset as a writer can be making a conscious decision to look at the same circumstances in a different way. For [Jean Joachim](#), this meant cleaning out, organizing, and renovating her apartment, creating a small office space in her bedroom.

“I find I love sitting in the big chair at the small desk writing and marketing,” Joachim said. “I no longer feel deprived or confined to quarters, but like I have a cozy hideaway. I now see this as a place safe from the virus, a haven, not a prison, which is what it felt like last winter.”

[Michele Dunaway](#) is all about Manifesting this year, and she’s gathering inspiration from several sources—a conversation during the NINC conference, *The Perfect Minimalist’s Journal* that she found while at Whole Foods, and the Abundance Mindset Authors group on Facebook.

“I’m going to make what I want to see happen,” she said.

[Troy Lambert](#) is getting twice the use out of his word of the year. Not only is he using Focus as you would expect, but he’s also turned it into an acronym for Follow One Course Until Successful.

“As authors we are often like squirrels,” Lambert said. “We get easily distracted, and it can become a form of self-sabotage. Having a focus word and putting it in front of yourself (as Lambert does on a vision board) every single day reminds us of what we are here for, what really matters, and helps keep us on track.”

[Lyn Cote](#)’s refocusing efforts were prompted by a downturn in her book sales. So her guiding word this year is the verb form of Progress.

“I thought over many words,” she said. “I considered Challenge, Forward, Reassess, but I think Progress combines all of them.”

Dealing with the pandemic simply as a person living through these times is enough, but for those who have day jobs in health care it’s even more difficult.

“I’m dealing with a bit of COVID burnout,” said [Nicole Evelina](#). “Being in health care communications means I can’t escape it. Add book deadlines and lack of fun and travel to that and I am toast. This year I am all about self-care and learning how to live in a permanently changed world, both professionally and as a person. I’m turning to every source I can: spirituality, metaphysics, health coaches. I’ll take tips and tricks to rebalance anywhere I can get them.”

All that considered, it’s not so unusual that Evelina chose Glam as her word for 2022. “Glam is everything that is me: big, bold, outrageous, sparkly, beautiful. I certainly want to draw more of that into my life.”

Evelina points out that your word of the year gives you a touch point to go back to regardless of what is going on in your life and reset your mind. It can be a useful guide when you are trying to make a decision.

While a guiding word is often about refocusing, sometimes it signals an even deeper change in mindset. That's true of my own choice of the word Positivity. The past few years have been a barrage of negativity that's almost impossible to escape, but after watching some webinars in December (Alessandra Torre's on Goodreads and making a business plan, and an introduction to Book Brush), something clicked inside me that said I needed to make this year about positivity even in the face of a negative outside world.

Allie Pleiter found herself in a somewhat similar boat. "I've chosen a word of the year for many years," she said. "I never go looking for it—it always seems to find me. This year my word is Abounding. It's listed as an adjective, but I am choosing to see it as a verb as well. I found myself falling into a scarcity mindset in the past year, and I knew that abundance is as much about outlook as it is about quantity or quality. I am making the choice to see this year as abounding in many good things and opportunities, even though it may not seem so at first glance. I look for the idea to show up and be used in all kinds of ways—visuals, music, books, verbiage, and even the way I talk about myself, my craft, and my circumstances."

Well before the pandemic, Pleiter had faced hard times that challenged her creativity.

"I think it takes a particular effort to remain creative, adapting, and moving forward in chaotic times (personal and global)," she said. "I ended up developing a series of practices to protect and nurture my creative energy when I felt so much push-back against it. These included:

- utilizing music, visuals, and scents to 'cue my muse,'
- paring down my word count to a more realistic expectation,
- writing *about* my stressors when I couldn't escape them—and then finding where similar emotions showed up in my work-in-progress so I could use that description as a jumping-off point to make progress within the book,
- setting a timer—even just 15 minutes can get your toes far enough into the water to enable more, and
- a structured daily time of reflection for gratitude, daily goals, prayers, and affirmation of others so that I move forward one day at a time."

During these past few years, even if writers have managed to stick the landing on all their deadlines, the enjoyment of the writing process has often suffered.

"My focus word this year is Joy," said Jeannie Chin. "I've gotten bogged down in the grind of my writing career, and I hope to recapture some of the joy of writing that first brought me to this field in the first place."

Another author who began to find her way back to her pre-pandemic writing self through classes is [Katie MacAlister](#). She began with Becca Syme's Write Better Faster 101 class (WBF), which helped her not only understand her strengths but also to recognize when she was too stressed to write. Late in 2021, she attended the virtual Romance Author Mastermind and left with 67 action points that were admittedly overwhelming until she took Sarra Cannon's HB90 Bootcamp in December.

"I have a solid quarterly HB90 plan that integrates self-knowledge (WBF) and a bunch of ideas (RAM) I want to implement, and I feel like I am in a place to cope with the continued stresses of the pandemic world and my own writing goals," MacAlister said.

There is power in deciding to make positive changes despite the world around us, and in choosing a word that will help guide us on that journey. The range of focus words authors choose is fascinating. Like [Brighton Walsh](#), who chose Bloom because "I've spent the past few years planting a whole lot of seeds, and now it's time for that garden to bloom."

[Trish Milburn's](#) business plan for 2022 is ambitious but has infused her with a burst of positivity and excitement. Part of the plan already came to fruition with the release of the eighth book in her Idol in Love K-pop romance series, Shining Star, that coincided with the re-launch of the entire series with new covers and a new site at [WordoftheK.com](#) that highlights those books, K-pop and K-dramas.

Laws of Attraction

Writing sexual tension

By Naima Simone



Oh, sexual tension.

What is it? Why do we need it? Is it *that* important?

I'm going to explain it.

I'll explain that, too.

And bite your tongue, yes it is!

[Encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com) gives us a clear and accurate definition, especially as pertaining to romance as "... often hidden or suppressed feelings of anticipation, excitement, attraction, and desire that may occur in relation to another person ... a necessary part of the sexual flirtations, courtships, and sexual foreplay. In the context of the sexual, the term *tension* refers to sets of unresolved, sometimes unidentified, feelings of excitement, which are disguised by an appearance of outward calm or even disdain. Sexual tension is an intrinsic part of ... the plots of many novels, films, and television shows and often drawn out to pique and retain viewer interest."

Simply put...

Sexual tension is:

- **The push and pull.** It's the tango or the hustle. It's coming together, chest to chest, thigh to thigh, only to swing apart, then collide again. It's this resistance that keeps the reader breathless, on edge and invested.
- **Necessary.** Whether the romance has closed-door or no sex, reader investment in the main characters' (MCs') journey and love story is a must. We want readers to root for

our MCs and buy into them and their HEA. If not, a story can be incredibly well-written, but the reader will simply not care about the characters.

- **Chemistry.** A spark must be immediate. That instant chemistry sets the two—or three, or four, hello, reverse harem!—MCs apart from the rest of the characters. It signifies to the reader who will be falling in love.
- **A vehicle for the romance.** Sexual tension drives the romance forward, but it is *not* the romance. If the story was a car, the plot is the vehicle, the romance is the driver, and sexual tension is in the passenger's seat.

Sexual tension is *not*:

- **Sex.** Do not mistake sex for sexual tension. A romance can have delicious sexual tension and no sex scenes. Which also means sexual tension isn't only for books with higher heat levels. Regardless of whether the romance is sweet or erotic, physical attraction should be evident.
- **Optional.** In a romance, that dynamic, taut push and pull between the MCs is not elective.
- **Love.** Characters can experience sexual tension and not end up in a relationship or in love. Consider romances with love triangles or ménages. There is chemistry between other characters but often—unless it is a defined trope or genre such as polyamory or reverse harem—there is a clear, definite choice of the love interest.
- **Abusive.** Sexual tension is never an excuse or vehicle to steal a character's voice or consent.

Who?

Who our characters are influences sexual tension. Their backstory, issues, dysfunctions, strengths, weaknesses—all affect how the characters demonstrate attraction, excitement or resistance. A hero or heroine's age, where they are in their maturity, and the experiences only life can bring will determine their willingness to be vulnerable or show their attraction. For example, with an age-gap trope, a younger character may be more forward or bolder in their display of affection, not caring what other people think. An older, more established person with children, a settled job, and community connections might be more cautious and reserved with their demonstration. The cost of "not caring" may be too high. A character's job, personality, and sexual history can all influence expression of desire and chemistry. A lawyer, whose job calls for control, possibly won't be as open and demonstrative as a kindergarten teacher. An extrovert, playboy hero will be more confident and flirtatious, while an introvert, bitter "beast" hero will lash out and resist the attraction in fear of being rejected. If we, as the authors, know "who" our characters are, we also know how they reveal that push and pull.

What?

Think of your current manuscript. What are your tropes? If there are power dynamics in the book, what are they? What are the surrounding, supportive relationships? What are my MCs' needs, wants, desires? All of these influence sexual tension. Tropes aren't just for shaping the plot. Because one purpose of a trope is to heighten conflict, it also increases sexual tension. In the older brother's best friend trope, the heroine may not feel desired or pretty enough for the hero, especially if he previously friend-zoned her. And the hero doesn't feel worthy enough of the heroine, especially if the brother warned him away. Then throw in the added conflict of them not wanting to lose their friendship. This is rife with conflict, which leads to very organic sexual tension. If the MCs are employer/employee, they will resist their attraction because of that power dynamic. So there might be longing glances, furtive touches, or snarky dialogue and heated, I-hate-to-want-you looks. The display of the tension is different, but it keeps the reader on edge for when they finally give in to each other. Most of these—the tropes, power dynamics, the MCs' needs—are rooted in conflict.

Why?

Why are your MCs' goals opposed? Why are they apart? Why do the MCs believe they shouldn't be together? Not to beat a dead horse, but *conflict*. The opposition of goals equals conflict, and the greater the conflict, the greater the tension. So surface conflict leads to surface sexual tension. The deeper the conflict is rooted in the MCs themselves, the greater the tension as the conflict is much harder to overcome. Emotionally, the MCs hold out longer, even if they surrender to each other sexually.

Where?

Think of a book where the setting is at a wedding where wine is flowing, love is in the air, and matchmaking shenanigans are afoot. Now consider a book where a hero and heroine are tucked away in a safe house with the Bad Guys on their trail and danger's surrounding them. In the wedding book, the sexual tension will look flirtier, feel lighter, the banter sexy and even funny. But in the safe house book, the tension will be thicker, the conversation heavier, maybe more emotional, the touches more desperate because they're in a dangerous place with a ticking clock and tomorrow isn't promised. The "where"—where the story takes place, where the MCs are from—directly affects sexual tension.

When?

I've been asked, "When does sexual tension start?" Easy answer. From their first meeting, the reader should know these two people are destined to have an HEA, and they should be desperate to take the journey with your characters. How do you reel your reader in? Yes, plot.

Yes, amazing characterization. But, oh yes, that immediate chemistry between your characters. Even if it's subtle or confusing to the MCs, *it is not* to the reader. "When does sexual tension end?" It doesn't. Sexual tension does not end after sex. It continues until the end of the book, overlaid with emotional tension. After sex, the emotional tension is as high as the sexual, but the sexual *does not end*. Also, with "when," think about the time period. The demonstration of sexual tension will look different in Victorian England than it will in the 21st century. "When" is *timing* and it's a *time*.

How to show sexual tension?

We are in the business of "show vs. tell," and when we write sexual tension, it's not enough to tell the reader, "He wants her," or "She's falling for him." Readers want to see it, and it's our job to draw the picture. Here are several ways to show sexual tension:

- **The senses.** Sight. Describe body language or facial expression. Smell. The character's unique scent or the scent of lust in a paranormal. Hearing. The drum of a heart or a pulse. The fading of sound. Touch. A shiver running through a body. A bristle of beard over fingertips. Taste. The taste of an almost kiss. A romantic dinner. The musky tang of skin.
- **Action.** Is there an aggressive pursuit or a romantic, slow wooing? A dominant/submission power exchange? Do the MCs act on the tension or resist it, ignore it? Is there no action at all?
- **Internal dialogue.** Inner thoughts that share with the reader what the character is thinking. An invaluable tool for the reader to receive a perspective into the MCs that others aren't privy to.
- **Sexual scenes.** Not the complete sexual act, but oral sex or manual stimulation. It kicks the tension into high gear and has the MCs even hungrier for each other, no matter the external or internal conflict that is keeping them apart.
- **Emotional growth/fear of emotional growth.** This comes with conflict. One character might want to push the physical aspect of the relationship because being vulnerable terrifies them. While the other character will insist on the emotional because physical isn't enough for them anymore. Character arc brings amazing sexual tension.

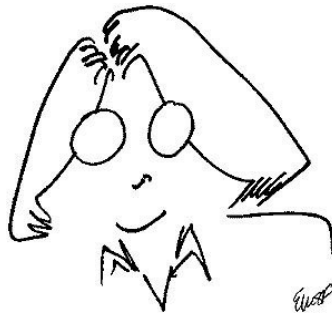
There isn't a right or wrong way to write or show sexual tension. It is as different and varied as our stories and the characters in them. And more than all of the tips above, our characters influence sexual tension. But do ask yourself: Is your conflict deep enough? Are you using all the senses in your scenes? Are your characters fleshed out enough? Are you showing the progress of the romance? Because, remember, tension builds with pacing. Are you using sex to replace a lack of sexual tension? Consider these questions and I leave you with one last piece of advice.

Have fun!

Published since 2009, USA Today bestselling author [Naima Simone](#) loves writing sizzling romances with heart, a touch of humor, and snark. Her books have been featured in The Washington Post and Entertainment Weekly, and described as balancing “crackling, electric love scenes with exquisitely rendered characters caught in emotional turmoil.” She is wife to Superman, or his non-Kryptonian, less bulletproof equivalent, and mother to the most awesome kids ever. They all live in perfect, sometimes domestically challenged bliss in the Southern United States.

Pop Culture Is All of Us

By Elizabeth MS Flynn



You've seen all the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies, so you're an expert on comics and pop culture, right? Not quite. You've barely begun, my young Padawan. There's a lot to unwrap when it comes to pop culture.

Pop culture is all around us: the DC and Marvel movies (and television series and video games based on the comics), video games (and the movies and TV series based on video games), enthusiasts young and old walking around staring at their smartphones looking for Pokemon Go digital characters, and so much more. Like it or not, pop culture (and its variations) is everywhere we look, and it shapes us, much as it shapes our storytelling. If you want to incorporate it into your work, even to reference it, you need to be aware of what popular (or "pop") culture really is.

Pop culture, according to Wikipedia, is mass appeal; it's "a set of the practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time." In other words, it's the new thing as opposed to elements of society and culture that have been in existence for longer periods of time (folklore, for example, or farming culture, part of the agricultural society in our past). The countries currently behind the driving force of pop culture are the United States, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, as well as China, Italy, and France. The notable difference is that folk culture and farm culture come from common life experience, while pop culture is primarily "a system of commercialism"—it's trademarked and copyrighted.

Whether it's movies based on comic books (DC, Marvel, and Dark Horse, to name only a few), movies inspired by old serials (Indiana Jones and *Star Wars*), TV inspired by other TV (*Star Trek* was originally pitched as "Wagon Train to the stars") or TV and movies based on manga (Japanese comic books, a topic in itself), and so much more, pop culture drives us in these modern times.

Because it's all around us, the assumption is—mistakenly—that what “we” know is the given, whether right or wrong. But what we know as pop culture is driven by corporations and comes with trademarks and copyrights that control those characters and worlds. Those copyrights and trademarks are fiercely defended; Superman and Spider-Man are both superheroes and superheroes, with or without the hyphen, and for a long time the twain could never meet. In fact, there's a DC property called the “Legion of Super-Heroes” and for a long time that hyphen was very important before the powerhouses came to an agreement.

You see, behemoths Marvel and DC have a trademark on the word “superhero/superhero” —which means that other companies “cannot enter certain areas of commerce with the word/phrase ‘superhero’” as part of their product names, according to comics website Comic Book Resources. So they hold a lock on that term, with or without the hyphen. Similar reasoning goes behind the term “mutant,” which is why Marvel TV series and movies refer to the “enhanced” while DC TV series and movies use the term “metahuman,” with the term “mutant” used only in the Fox-produced X-Men movies (until recently not a part of the Disney/Marvel empire). Pop culture is big business, and if you go to the U.S. Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS), you'll find hundreds of examples, both live and lapsed. Even now, talks are ongoing at DC and Marvel, the Big Two when it comes to American comics, concerning the end of the life of copyright of their biggest characters, the biggest in their industry. If you have questions, both have public relations offices to which you can drop a line to ask anything you need to know. And there are podcasts with people in the know as well.

Different sides of pop culture work together. Dark Horse is purportedly the third-largest comics publisher in the U.S., with properties such as *Hellboy* and *The Umbrella Academy*. The latter was adapted and debuted on Netflix to critical acclaim, and it didn't hurt that the property's creator, Gerald Way, is the lead singer for the musical group My Chemical Romance.

And then there's Diana Gabaldon of *Outlander* fame (both books and TV series), who wrote for Disney comics featuring Scrooge McDuck and other characters, and even wrote a graphic novel; according to Gabaldon, Marvel Comics even asked her if she was interested in writing for them. (She declined.)

Where can you start your research? Glad you asked. You may be aware that there are comic conventions all over, both small ones and giant ones. The most famous is perhaps San Diego Comic-Con International, which started in 1970 as Golden State Comic Book Convention; its attendance has grown every year, as high as 167,000 as of 2015. The convention is now broadly pop culture-oriented, more movies and TV, with fewer comics publishers represented seemingly every year. Not only that, but more and more you can even attend some of their presentations and workshops online if you don't care for the overwhelming crowds. Then there are the college libraries with comic book collections: Michigan State University and Columbia University are two, and there are many more. Check out your local institutions of higher learning to see if they have a collection of pop culture-related materials. In fact, universities are

offering college-level courses on the topic, so you can take a step into the industry as viewed by academics.

Then there are the Grand Comics Database and Comic Vine, both of which can give you an idea of the creators in the business, both past and present, as well as their properties.

Of course, comics (or graphic novels, or manga—any form of sequential storytelling) aren't the only element of pop culture that's raking in the money and attention. *Dune*—the novel by Frank Herbert—is a science fiction classic, but the reactions about the movies based on the original novel have ranged from “Masterpiece!” to “Why?” Think of *Blade Runner*, the movie based on a short story by Philip K. Dick. Think of *Minority Report*, another movie based on another Dick short story. The TV series *Game of Thrones*, based on the fantasy novels by George R.R. Martin, has a firm grip on the viewership, even after the TV series has ended (and the novels have yet to do so), with hotly anticipated prequels in the planning stages. Whether or not you're a fan of the horror genre, Stephen King's books and stories are well represented in movies and TV. The list goes on.

If you're going to use something about pop culture in your work, remember you can do all sorts of research—and this kind of research can be fun and unexpected. You can ask a pop culture historian what you need to know for any details you may need; they do this for a living. You can track down someone who will give you the details for whatever pop culture you want to explore. Look around; you can even sit in on a Zoom meeting with comic book creators and find out what their concerns and current projects are.

The takeaway from all this? You service your story best if you go in with the most on-point world-building details. It is important to remember that pop culture, and all its variations, is big business, and to dismiss the necessary research into it poorly serves the story or themes you want to explore. In the same way that genre fiction is big business, pop culture is as well. Remember: Power Girl (two words), but Supergirl (one word, and no hyphen), and of course, Spider-Man (hyphen, upper case) but Superman. It makes a difference.

Elizabeth MS Flynn is a professional editor and has been for more than 40 years, defending the language and fighting for facts in academia, technology, finance, genre fiction, and comic books. Her work for this article comes from her distant background in comics, since she sold comic stories to DC Comics when she was seventeen years old and married a fellow fan later on.

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Taming Trolls and... *Squirrel!*

Tips and strategies for writers with ADs

By Patricia Burroughs



Editor's note: This is part two of a two-part article on the challenges facing neurodiverse writers. Part one appeared in the January issue and discussed dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia.

In this issue we look at the final of our four trolls (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and ADD) that block us from crossing the bridge to publishing.

We also give you some advice on how to go around the bridge and blast through that mountain instead. For those of you who don't have a neurodivergent brain, you'll probably find advice at the end of the article to help you, as well.

Attention Deficit Disorder

ADD is a notorious, yet misunderstood, disorder.

Most people associate Attention Deficit Disorder with hyperactivity, which isn't always present.

Many with ADD are criticized for daydreaming or not paying attention because their distractions are all mental. Deceptively, a hyperactive brain can exist behind a calm exterior.

Possibly the most frustrating aspect of ADD is that every symptom is one that everybody experiences. The difference is that neurotypical brains can shake it off or buckle down and keep going. Neurotypical people sometimes believe that those with ADD can and should do the same, and the fact that they don't demonstrates a lack of desire to take care of business.

However, the neurodivergent brain is sending false messages or inadequate stimuli. A person with ADD can no more use willpower to push through these obstacles than a diabetic person can use willpower to fix their diabetes. Both are caused by atypical release of hormones in the body.

Understanding what ADD is, and accepting that this is the reality of my brain has been huge. Knowing that I'm not mentally lazy has been wonderful. I'm simply easily distracted, and not necessarily by outside forces. I'm distracted by internal voices that throw out new and interesting things for my brain to attend to rather than what I'm currently doing. Now that I know what's going on, I can tackle the issue in a more direct way.

—*Jeannie Steinman w/a Jeannie Watt, ADD*

Hyper-Focus has been called ADD's secret weapon. While most people are capable of a form of hyper-focus, what people with ADD often experience is described as an "intense fixation" that can last for hours, as long as they can focus on something that interests them. Some people with ADD spend hours in front of video games, reading, or writing with intense focus and no awareness of the world around them—because they're engaged in an activity that is interesting and pleasurable. Medications that allow someone with ADD to focus better can be amazing, but the individual still has to focus on the right things.

Hyper-focus is an example of why people with ADD are best described not as having a short focus but rather having an impaired ability to control their focus. Most struggle with at least some of the symptoms on the list below.

I was diagnosed at 53. I've worked through "just make them sit down" to "hey, grow out of it" (my fave). Then I found myself completely paralyzed and not able to write or move forward in any way. I reached the point of going for help. It's brain wiring. That doesn't change.

—*Eileen Dreyer, ADHD*

A few symptoms of ADD:

- Having so many simultaneous thoughts that it's difficult to follow just one
- Struggling to complete tasks, even ones that seem simple
- Tendency to overlook details, leading to errors or incomplete work
- Poor organizational skills, resulting in a messy or cluttered home, office, desk, or car
- Tendency to procrastinate

- Trouble starting and finishing projects
- Chronic lateness
- Forgetting appointments, commitments, or deadlines
- Losing or misplacing items (keys, wallet, phone, documents, bills)
- Underestimating the time it will take to complete tasks
- Difficulty concentrating on what people say
- Inability to sit still or remain seated, even in meetings and other important situations
- Inability to relax
- Finishing other people's sentences
- Time blindness — a faulty perception of time
- Trouble with emotional outbursts or regulating emotions
- Difficulty following detailed instructions, whether written or verbal
- Physical and emotional exhaustion from a brain that won't slow down

Writers with ADD fight a daily battle. Some use prescribed medications that have helped them maintain their careers. But there are no magic bullets. You may have better focus, but you still have to choose the right thing to focus on!

I'm self-diagnosed with dysgraphia—problems with writing. (Yeah, ironic.) I'm lucky, problems are minor. I make more than the average number of typos, and there are certain combinations I mess up, like writing "5" for "r" and vice versa. I have a beta reader friend who is a killer proofreader, plus my editor and the publisher's proofreaders catch the worst of my errors. I've always had these issues, but they never rose to the level of academic or career damage.

—*Mary Jo Putney, dysgraphia*

What's a neurodivergent writer to do?

In the January *Nink* article “Nevertheless We Persisted,” we began looking at the four trolls some of us contend with daily. The following tips aren't separated by disorder because brains are odd things and sometimes something not on your own list of recs works for you. The workings of neurodiverse brains are unpredictable in that way.

Nobody gets a “get out of jail free” card just because their brains are working against them, just as color-blindness doesn't excuse a person from obeying traffic lights. The neurodivergent person has to develop ways to cope.

But fortunately there are many techniques to test and adapt. Books, articles, and the internet are great resources, as are support groups. Find the ones that help you.

I have to make a special editing pass where I move words around in the sentence that have been transposed. Generally spell-checkers catch any letter transpositions. I have to have a photo of someone who I picture as the hero and heroine, because I can't merely make up a face, or even bring up a mental image of an existing person's face. I also don't read expressions well, so I have to make a special point of being sure I put in enough descriptions for readers of what the people's faces are displaying, etc.

—[Katie MacAlister](#), synesthesia, prosopagnosia, dyslexia

Teach your brain to trust you

"Write everything down." I scorned such useless advice, useless because I knew I would never do it. The phone rang. Hospital. Insurance. I idly jotted details while we talked. Added time and date. After that I "wrote everything down" on phone calls for weeks. Then got a "runaround" letter from the insurance company. I steamed. I called. Went back to that first note. Quoted what I'd been told, by agent name, at 10:37 on July 12. They were stunned. Checked. Told me never mind. Ha! Writing things down had made me armed and dangerous. I started writing everything down.

—[Patricia Burroughs](#), ADD, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and associated cognitive disorders

Your lovely brain gives you thoughts for a reason. Don't trust yourself to remember. Don't assume it's not worth remembering. Not right now. Just write it down. When you have written it down, your brain will relax and stop all the things you're trying to remember. When you actually process and use that info, your brain grows even less stressed.

A few strategies for the neurodiverse brain to get you started

"I set timers. It's a trick I learned that helped my students when I taught first grade. I allow myself an hour in the morning for housekeeping while I drink my first cup of coffee. After my brain is working, I turn off the hotspot and write or edit for two hours. I find that breaks every hour or two also helps. I can focus better if I get up and move around every so often."

—[Aubrey Wynne](#), ADD

- **Delegate.** Pay or barter with someone else to do the things you can't.
- **Mind-mapping.** This freestyle, nonlinear approach was developed for brainstorming, but for some of us, it is a way to get a handle on a scene or book or article.
- **Bullet points** can be used to make ideas, events, scenes, etc., more manageable when you're trying to create a plot or structure for your writing.
- **Think out loud.** Some people work out problems better by talking it out. Use a recording device, a writing partner, a critique group, or even talk to yourself.
- **Large monitor screens.** Experiment with zooming text, line spacing, graphic sizing and use of color. Experiment to find whatever helps your neurodivergent brain work best.
- **Speech recognition software** for writing can capture your ideas without forcing you to type them.
- **Text-to-speech software** can read to you. Using different voices/accents for each draft can help it feel fresh.
- **Scanning devices.** Use these to produce the text for text-to-speech software.
- **Audiobooks.** Adjust the speed or volume of narration to help you listen better or speed up the book.
- **Use color.** Writers who "get lost" in a mass of text break it into chunks of different colors to focus on each part more easily. Or use the right colors in your workspace, office products, and computer wallpaper to calm, energize, or otherwise enhance your neurodivergent brain. Other uses of color can also help in unexpected ways.
- **Writing sprints.** Break time into smaller pieces. For example, sprints are timed sessions of focused writing, usually 15 to 60 minutes. When the time is up, quit and reward yourself. Rinse, repeat. Manageable chunks. Give yourself some small writing goals—as small as you need, as long as you have to open the file to do it. Two words. Two sentences. Two paragraphs. A hundred words. Sometimes once you start, you want to keep going and write more. Other times you watch that word count until it hits 100 and get diabolical pleasure from stopping right there without finishing the

Don't forget your body

Having a neurodisorder is exhausting. Our brains are working in overdrive all the time to adapt to a world that operates contrary to our strengths, and toward our weaknesses. The stress builds in our bodies as well as our thoughts. So...

- Take vitamins.
- Eat smart.
- Move around every hour, even if it's just dancing to your favorite song.

- Go outside and take deep breaths, soak up the Vitamin D from the sun, shake out your arms and legs. All of these things are proven by medical studies measuring our brain waves to improve our brain function.

Your body supports your brain. It's a total package. Take care of it like you'd take care of a newborn baby who is totally dependent on you to live. Because it is.

The final bit of advice is to nurture yourself. Treat yourself kindly, with the patience and understanding you extend to others.

I thought I could never be a writer because of my poor spelling. My husband, who says he knows spelling ability has nothing to do with intelligence, offered to do this for me. I started off writing feature articles for my local paper and gradually slopped into fiction.

—*Ruth Glick, dyslexia*

Discover what tricks and techniques help your unique brain do its beautiful job without struggling so hard. Use research, trial and error, and remember that the same techniques don't work every single time. Find new ones.

Writers in NINC have been doing this for years.

Don't let a few trolls stand in your way.

Pooks (a.k.a. Patricia Burroughs) is a novelist and screenwriter. She is an Academy Fellow, having received the Academy Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting (awarded by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences). She loves Pratchett, Aaronovitch, Dunnett, and Heyer. She desperately needs a maid.

Smart Marketing for Savvy Authors

Level up with smart marketing

By Tawdra Kandle



Last summer, the Nink team surveyed the membership about possible topics for a new regular column in the newsletter. The overwhelming response was that our readers want to hear more about ... marketing! So for the next twelve months, we'll do a deep dive into an examination of how we can most efficiently and effectively raise the visibility of our books. Each quarter, we'll focus on a different subtopic of marketing. We're kicking off the year by doing a deep dive into marketing where you are, discussing how to maximize ideas on a limited budget (January), how and when to make a push for leveling up (February), and marketing time optimization (March).

When did you know?

At what point did you realize that you were a real author—not just someone who'd written a book, but a legit, professional writer of words that others would pay to read? I suspect we'd all have a different answer to that question, just as we all might have a different response to a second query:

When did you decide you wanted even more?

When did you figure out that while being an honest-to-goodness author was amazing, you wanted to kick your career up a notch? It might have been after a fabulous book release that made you aware of what's possible in our business, or maybe it was during a less-than-spectacular launch, when you acknowledged that you were sick and tired of putting in the work only to see lackluster results.

"It was in 2018, so I'd been publishing about five years at the time and had about sixteen books out," remembers *USA Today* bestselling romance author [Melanie Harlow](#). "I'd had some nice releases, a couple I'd consider 'unicorns.' I was making six figures. But I really had no idea,

other than luck, what was making some releases soar and others flounder. It was frustrating. I saw others doing it way better—those ‘one-click authors’ that just seemed to slay every release. I wanted to level up.”

For other authors, the push can come courtesy of a life change, as noted by [Genevieve Jack](#), also a *USA Today* bestselling author of paranormal romance.

“For most of my writing career, I ran my business while I raised my children. Family always came first. There was only so much I could give to my business. I was happy with whatever income my books produced in the time I had to give to them and felt very fortunate to make a solid full-time income out of the gate. All that changed when my youngest went away to college and my oldest finished school and moved out on her own. I decided to be more deliberate and focused about my books and my company.”

Once the decision is made to take your author business to the next level, the first step can be daunting. Both Harlowe and Jack were intentional about their plans.

“I used to write under two pseudonyms, GP Ching and Genevieve Jack,” explains Jack. “In 2019, I abandoned GP Ching and focused exclusively on Genevieve Jack. GP Ching had been a very successful brand for many years, but it became clear to me that I couldn’t continue to be two people and do it well. The audiences didn’t overlap, and it just wasn’t cost effective. Everything from advertising to website design and maintenance was cost times two, and because I’d switch back and forth, I couldn’t put out more than two books a year under each name. So, my first change was focus. I decided I would write as Genevieve Jack full time. I also planned one signature series under that brand to focus on and made sure the quality of that series was at the forefront. That strategy paid off. Book one, *The Dragon of New Orleans*, won multiple awards and was a *USA Today* bestseller.”

The decision to focus on one brand allowed Jack to concentrate on learning Facebook, AMS, and BookBub ads, as her ad dollars were no longer split between two separate names. While she hadn’t previously had much success with advertising, during the past two years, it’s become a major part of her strategy.

Finally, Jack paid more attention to structure, becoming more deliberate and organized around existing tasks such as a regular newsletter advertising, cross-promo with other authors, and building her audience.

Harlow took a four-prong approach to upping her game: she researched her ideal reader, what the reader loves about her books, and how that reader wants to feel; she embraced popular romance tropes; she committed to staying in her lane; and she dedicated herself to growing her subscriber list.

“I realized I wasn’t being specific enough about *who* I was writing for and thinking about what they wanted to read or how they wanted to feel when reading a book. I was only thinking about myself—what story do I want to write, how can I make it unique/different, what conflict would be most compelling, what kinds of characters would best suit this conflict. But then I’d have this well-written story that was not always easy to market.”

Sometimes, the biggest obstacles we have to overcome are our own misconceptions or beliefs. “I was terribly stubborn and really downright stupid about tropes. I was always trying to avoid them because I thought they were tired and boring. But I realized that the trope is the thing that sells the book before you’re a one-click author. So I stopped being stupid about them and learned to embrace them. I surveyed my reader group and subscriber list about what kinds of tropes and characters they like best. I paid attention to things they said about the ‘feelings’ my books gave them.”

One way in which Harlow went about doing this was by asking her readers to fill in this blank: “I’d recommend a Melanie Harlow romance to a friend who was looking for _____.” She also researched the kinds of covers and blurbs that were selling well in the space in which she planned to excel. Then she planned out a five-book series that would give her readers all their favorite things—characters, tropes, setting, themes—and envisioned exactly how she would package them in a way that would signal immediately *you will love this book*.

“I gave up on reaching the widest possible audience and *only* thought about those ideal readers,” she explains. “I catered right to them. Then after that series was done (and was very successful for me), I did it again with a four-book series. Was I sometimes bored? Did I often think I was being repetitive? Did I wonder if people were going to think I just write the same thing all the time? Did I sometimes crave the novelty of writing something else? **Yes**. 100%. But my accountant wasn’t bored. I went from six figures to seven. So I stayed in my lane and kept going.”

Both authors believe strongly in leaning on an ad strategy. Jack notes, “Paid advertising via Facebook, AMS, and BookBub ads, I believe, has been the single biggest driver of increased revenue and was made more successful by having a long, nine-book series with a strong sell-through rate. I’ve been a six-figure per year author since 2012, but I doubled my gross income and netted well above my 2020 results in 2021.”

Harlow adds a word of caution about ads. “I believe in paid advertising, and I spend a lot (for a new release, I put up to 30% of daily gross income right back into ads). But it’s not a miracle fire starter; it’s more like throwing gasoline on a fire already going. Write a great series with at least three books in it, and *then* start doing paid ads on book one (assuming the series did well). Be sure the back matter is optimized to lead the reader through.”

Aside from leaning heavily into marketing and promotion, Harlow and Jack both stress that *what* you write is essential to making that leap into bigger success.

“Quality is so important,” says Jack. “I see a lot of five-figure authors skimping on editing, designing their own covers (poorly), and not spending the time to build their brand. You could get away with that in 2010 and 2011. Now, there are just too many other options for readers. Your craft, cover, and blurb have to be on point. No book is perfect, and no book is going to appeal to every reader, but publishing additional poorly constructed books faster isn’t the answer.”

“Research what is selling in that space and how it is packaged,” advises Harlow. “Release well-written, well-paced books *in series* on a consistent basis (that works for your brain and your life) and package them in a way that immediately signals to the ideal reader *this is the kind of book you love.*”

What advice would these leveled-up authors offer to those of us who want to do likewise?

“Find your lane, and commit to staying there,” Harlow says. “Don’t genre hop. Know who your ideal readers are and what they like. Know your comp authors. Remember that you are not your reader, and what appeals to *you* on a cover or even inside the pages might not be what appeals to them. And if your goal is to sell books and make money, the reader—the market—wins. Don’t be stubborn about covers or blurbs... if something isn’t working, change it.”

She also suggests honing your blurb-writing, hitting the tropes, and making it clear who the hero is. Harlow recommends Elana Johnson’s book *Writing Killer Cover Copy*.

“Optimize that back matter to lead them to your subscriber list and the next book,” she adds, noting that a key change for her was prioritizing her subscriber list. “I have an opt-in right after *The End* that offers a future bonus scene with the characters they just finished reading about if they’ll subscribe. I have grown my list by over 50K that way in the last two years, and nothing moves the needle for me like sending an email. I send two a month, every other Tuesday.”

Jack reminds us, “Great marketing may sell book one, but you won’t get that glorious snowball effect that takes you into six-figure territory and beyond. If you have a lot of books out but just aren’t growing your audience, it’s time to take a beat, hire a developmental editor or a more seasoned cover artist, and really take a hard look at the product you are putting out there. If the quality is there, and you have three or four books out that hit market expectations, then it’s a matter of discoverability, and that comes down to branding, social media, advertising, and pricing strategy. It’s never too late to sell a good book.”

Tawdra Kandle is the USA Today bestselling author of over 100 romances that span genres from contemporary through paranormal. Her engaging and realistic characters bring readers back again and again to devour the steamy love stories she spins. She lives in central Florida with a husband, a mischievous pup, and too many cats.

The Mad Scribbler

Editors & Editing

By Laura Resnick



“A good editor is a collaborator. Don’t treat them like a censor. But don’t defer too much.”

—Ken Auletta, American writer & journalist

I have so far spent my entire career in traditional publishing, having self-published only a few old backlist books that reverted to me. But as I look ahead, it seems likely that some or all of my future books will be indie releases. This expectation has made me start thinking about how I want to structure that whole process. With that in mind, some of my initial questions are about editors and editing.

Obviously, a key difference in the indie world is that the power is in the hands of the writer, rather than the editor. The indie writer chooses her team and pays their fees, and so it’s up to her to decide who edits her work and what the editing process should involve. This process encompasses many more options than my traditional publishing experience of just trying to sell books to editors I can work with and avoid or escape editors who are a nightmare to deal with.

So I asked some NINC members about their decisions and experiences with editors in their indie ventures. Do they work with a copy editor? What about a proofreader? Do they use a story editor (which I’ve also heard called a content, concept, or development editor), someone who evaluates how well the story works and where it needs improvement. (Is the protagonist of your lesbian-terrorist-nun theology thriller believable as a nun? Is the pace actually thrilling? Is the theological conflict well developed?) Speaking as someone used to fitting into each editor’s own working process wherever I sell a book, I’m also interested in what their working process is like with the editors they hire.

“I believe the editor I use would be considered a content or developmental editor,” said [Barbara Meyers](#). “He is wonderful at separating the forest from the trees... He often points out issues I never even considered. He’s very good at pointing out if I have something in the wrong

sequence, and also he corrects *a lot* of sentence structure and gives suggestions on word choice.” With regard to their working process, she explained, “I send him the completed MS in a Word doc, and he does edits via track changes. I usually send him the blurb or a brief synopsis as well. He keeps me updated on his progress via email as he’s doing edits and tells me about anything major he’s found that I can be thinking about or looking at before I get his final edit back. There is *a lot* of back and forth during the entire process. Anything about the edit I need clarification on, he is always there to answer my questions and offer further input.”

Meyers noted that the main way this process differs from working with an editor in traditional publishing is that the editor is “not restricted by anyone above him telling what will fly with the publisher and what won’t. We’re a team both working independently. I think it’s called *freedom*.”

Freedom also includes the ability to fire an editor. Meyers described her indie experience with a different editor who “did virtually nothing to improve the work, made few suggestions and some of the ones she did make were completely wrong and I had to point it out to her! I paid her, but I will never use her again nor will I recommend her to anyone else.”

[Susan Carlisle](#) responded, “I work with a content and copy editor. The content is not as heavily needed because I have done enough romances to be comfortable with content. That being said, I do appreciate and pay attention to suggestions or questions the editor might offer in the content area. My focus—need—is copy editing. I need the security of someone checking grammar, spelling, and phrasing as well as a good set of eyes that know what they are looking for or are sensitive to what might be needed to make the story great.” Noting how this differs from her traditional publishing experience, Carlisle said, “I am more in control with deciding when the editing and book is done with my self-pub books than with my traditional editor. I must take the traditional editor’s suggestions for the most part. She has the final say in when the book is at its best. I learned from my traditional editor to know when the self-pub book is ready.”

Like Meyers, Carlisle also dropped a previous indie editor who didn’t work out: “I had one who didn’t get back to me and didn’t answer my emails. When she finally returned my work, we parted quietly. I started looking for another editor.”

[Rachel Aukes](#) works with a copy editor and a proofreader (two different people) but not a content editor. “By the time I began indie publishing, I had a half-dozen traditionally published books under my belt and felt like I was relatively competent at content edits.” She described her working process with them: “I reserve space on my editors’ calendars before I begin writing a new project, as their schedules fill up fast. Having a delivery date helps keep me on schedule and also helps me in planning the release date. Once I have my manuscript drafted and polished, I hand it off to my copy editor, who generally takes two weeks to read through and then edit. When I receive their edits back, I can usually make the changes in under a day and then send it off to my proofreader, who takes about one week to proof.”

The main difference she has noticed between indie and traditional editing? “When it comes to self-publishing, the editing process moves much faster and there are more communications between the author and editor.”

Like Meyers and Carlisle, Aukes fired a previous editor: “My voice and her editing style didn’t fit together, and rather than copy edit, she essentially rewrote much of my manuscript. I think I ended up accepting one out of every fifty edits she made. It made for a long all-nighter to get the manuscript ready for my proofreader. Needless to say, we didn’t work on another project.”

With all three of these writers having had both good and bad experiences when hiring editors, I asked their advice about how to choose one. All of them cited word-of-mouth recommendations as their method of whittling down the possibilities to a shortlist.

Then, Aukes advised, “Before you commit to working with an editor, have a few sample pages edited to make sure you’re a fit.”

Carlisle explained that after compiling a list of recommended names, “I wrote a list of questions to ‘interview’ the editors about their processes, what type of report I would receive, the time it would take them to return my work, the cost. I could tell by the emails between us what type of professionalism the different editors were offering. I did my diligence by asking questions and then I just had to give my editor a chance. I was fortunate my planning and questions paid off. I got a good editor.”

“Credentials. Experience. Testimonials. Background... Do your research before committing to an editor,” Meyers said. “Most editors will do a sample edit of your work, and if I were looking for an editor I’d want to see that before hiring them.” She also recommended taking compatibility and “outlook on life” into account. A very conservative writer and a very liberal editor, for example, might both be skilled, talented, and professional, but they just might not be a good fit.

Since being indie means freedom, there are also other paths to follow for editing solutions. One writer who responded to my questions chose her editor from among the beta readers she got via her newsletter subscribers. One of the readers was so insightful, the author now relies on this person as her editor. With a degree in English, the author does her own copy editing, as well as relying on her editor and her writing software to monitor spelling and punctuation.

“It’s important to know what your weaknesses are and choose editors who fill in those gaps,” she said. “I tell [my editor] as soon as I know when each book will be ready for her. I give plenty of notice, so she can schedule time for me. I remind her I want her to find plot holes and inconsistencies, and I thank her for being so good at that.” (Meyers also noted that thanking and complimenting your editor once in a while is good policy.)

In yet another alternative, [Patricia Rice](#) works with [Bookview Café](#), a cooperative of multi-published authors, many of whom also earn income from editorial work outside the co-op. As Bookview Café’s business model has been explained to me, each member provides one or more useful skills, such as editing, cover design, production, website maintenance, marketing, etc., and each member has access to the skills of the other members. The co-op also has a website with an online bookstore. The idea is that writers helping each other in a structured way can get more accomplished than the same number of writers each working alone.

Rice said, “I tend to be independent and want the freedom to write outside of market niches, hence my departure from traditional publishing, where content editors ruled. No one in our cooperative will tell me what to write or how to write it. What they will do is give my first

draft a thorough read and make suggestions. I value those suggestions in the same way I did editorial direction in traditional publishing, because a second set of eyes can see things I can't. But I'm free to make my own choices about those suggestions... Once I'm completely satisfied with the book, I hand it over to our copy/proof editors. They may call details into question and correct grammar/punctuation/spelling, etc."

So the process Rice described is very similar to what is now a "traditional" indie relationship with an editor, but the framework (a co-op, rather than a freelance hire) is different.

I find that the vast array of choices (and tasks) in self-publishing can induce a paralysis of indecision (and terror). Fortunately, though, it also comes with the opportunity to tailor those choices to fit your own specific needs and preferences, which is rarely an option for writers in the traditional publishing world.

I'm still thinking through my options for editing in my indie future, but feeling a greater appreciation now for how specific to myself my choices can be. Additionally, whereas a bad editing experience in traditional publishing can kill a book (or a career), it's comforting to realize that in the indie world, a writer who has a bad editing experience can correct course and soon get the book (and career) back on track.

Laura Resnick is the incoming Central Coordinator for NINC.

NINC Member Discounts

Fixional

By Emilie Richards



Whether you're an indie author looking for editorial assistance or a traditionally published author making certain a new manuscript is your absolute best work, [Fixional](#) can help. Fixional, which discounts NINC member subscriptions by 20% and removes word count restrictions for us, not only edits for grammar, spelling and tone, but also assesses the quality of the entire manuscript. Fixional then provides a report and detailed comments to the author.

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[Emilie Richards](#) is the author of over 80 novels which have been published in more than 21 countries and 16 languages. Emilie has won the RITA from Romance Writers of America and multiple awards from RT Book Reviews, including one for career achievement. She regularly appears on bestseller lists, and ten of her books have been made into television movies in Germany. Emilie lives in Sarasota, Florida, with her husband in the winter and Chautauqua, New York, in summer.

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Are you taking advantage of all your member benefits?

As a NINC member, your benefits include industry discounts, newsletter and website articles, professional services directory, networking opportunities, and more.

We've compiled all of these—which you can also find on our website—into this list as a helpful reminder.

Networking

The email list for Novelists, Inc., members: <https://groups.io/g/NINCLINK>

Join our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>

We offer a critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>

Follow NINC on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc

Conference:

Conference information: <https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/>

Newsletter

Propose an article: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/>

Submit a letter to the editor: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/submit-letter-to-editor/>

Newsletter archives: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/news-archive/>

Website (You must be logged in to access these services.)

Legal Fund: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/>

Pro Services Directory: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/pro-services-directory/>

Sample Letters: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/>

Articles & Links: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/>

Welcome Packet: *A link to the new member packet will be included as soon as it's been updated.*

Member discounts

NINC members are eligible for certain professional discounts. A complete listing of these can be found at <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/> along with other member discounts.

Volunteer

One of the greatest benefits of NINC is the opportunity to volunteer your talents to benefit other members – which pays incredible and unexpected dividends in networking and knowledge. Learn more about volunteer opportunities here: <https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/>

Open positions include:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- Anything!



Founded in 1989

NINC Statement of Principle

Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

Founders

- Rebecca Brandewyne
- Janice Young Brooks
- Jasmine Cresswell
- Maggie Osborne
- Marianne Shock

2022 Board of Directors

If you have questions regarding Novelists, Inc., please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

- President: Lisa Hughey
- President-Elect: Celeste Barclay
- Secretary: Hallee Bridgeman
- Treasurer: Timothy Cerepaka
- Newsletter Editor: Harper St. George
- Advisory Council Representative: Steven Womack

Advisory Council

- Lou Aronica
- Brenda Hiatt Barber
- Linda Barlow
- Jean Brashear
- Janice Young Brooks

- Laura Parker Castoro
- Meredith Efken
- Donna Fletcher
- Kay Hooper
- Tawdra Kandle
- Barbara Keiler
- Julie Leto
- Pat McLaughlin
- Kasey Michaels
- Julie Ortolon
- Diana Peterfreund
- Pat Rice
- Erica Ridley
- Marianne Shock
- Wayne Stinnett
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

2022 Committees

Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.

- Central Coordinator: Terese Ramin
 - Assistant Coordinator: Mica Stone
- 2022 Conference Committee
 - Conference Director: Mel Jolly
 - Assistant Conf. Director & Programming Chair: Tawdra Kandle
 - Assistant Prog. Chair: Hallee Bridgeman
 - NINC After Dark Coordinator: Tamsin Ley
 - Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
 - Assistant Hotel Liaison: Tegan Maher
 - Conference Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
 - Assistant Registrar: Stephanie Julian
 - Sponsorship Chair: Sarah Woodbury
 - Assistant Sponsorship Chair: Dylann Crush
 - App Coordinator & Graphic Design: Laura Hayden
- Authors Coalition Representative: Laura Phillips
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee
 - Chair: Celeste Barclay
 - Misti Boehm
 - Pooks Burroughs
 - Malorie Cooper
 - Lynn Emery
 - Gwen Hernandez
 - Pamela Kelley

- Ellis Leigh
- Hildie McQueen
- Alison Perry
- Harper St. George
- Samantha Silver
- Social Media Committee
 - Chair: Violet Howe
 - Sylvia McDaniel
- Membership Committee
 - Boyd Craven
 - Sarah Woodbury
- *Nink* Newsletter
 - Editor: Harper St. George
 - Acquisitions Editor: Trish Milburn
 - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
 - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee
 - Chair: Wayne Stinnett
 - Tanya Anne Crosby
 - Katherine Garbera
 - Pamela M. Kelley
 - Kathryn Le Veque
 - Kristine Smith
- Discounts Program: Emilie Richards

Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin

P.O. Box 54, Hartland MI 48353

admin@ninc.com

Address changes may be made on the website.

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Nink's goal is to provide our readers with high-quality articles that offer critical business advice, marketing how-tos, advanced craft coaching, or strategy to continue building a career, all geared to established authors. All members should feel confident that *Nink* provides something for them. We welcome pitches and submissions from all members.

To request reprint rights or to **submit an article proposal**, please contact [the editor](#).

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