

How to Cope with a Rejection Letter

It can feel a little bit like a catch 22 scenario when you start to think about submitting your writing or illustrations to competitions or even...shock horror...to an agent or a publisher. You want to submit your work forward because without doing so, you'll never get to see your work in print, you'll never become a famous writer or illustrator, and you'll never be able to give up the day job, earn loads of money and retire in Malibu. But, submitting your work for another person to read means just that; someone else has to read it. And this can be a horrible, daunting experience. Particularly if they don't selection your work as a winning competition entry or if they choose not to publish it, or decide that you don't fit what they are looking for at an agency. Basically, if they reject your work it can be tough. So what do you do?

Well you most definitely **don't** avoid competition entries, and you don't tuck that manuscript or artistic portfolio away in a top drawer of your study somewhere, having spent 2 years perfecting it and then 2 minutes convincing yourself of its worthlessness. As an aspiring artist or writer you have to put yourself out there and anticipate and expect "rejection". No-one is perfect, everyone can learn and improve, and no-one will ever be fantastic to everyone. If you start to anticipate the fact that you might not be shortlisted for that competition but you may get some useful feedback on your craft, or that you might not be accepted by a particular publisher but at least this will help narrow down the genre and type of publishing companies you should be approaching, then you'll have a much more positive and useful approach to submitting work for critical appraisal and review.

So, if it happens, if you receive a rejection letter, if you don't find yourself shortlisted for that Man Booker prize then sit and sulk about it for a few minutes, eat the odd biscuit or two and then try to turn the receipt of the letter into as positive an experience as possible:

- Allow yourself to be upset about what has happened. It is disheartening to receive a rejection letter or to find out that you haven't been short listed for a prize. It is a natural reaction to be put out by this – don't beat yourself up for taking that rejection personally.
- Don't let the sulking drag on for too long however. No good can come of this! EVERYONE receives rejection letters; even the big names in the industry. This was bound to happen, so remember how tough the creative industry is.
- Look at the letter you have received. Have they given you any specific feedback? If they have this is a real bonus! 99% of people just receive a bog standard rejection letter. How can you apply this feedback to your work?
- Take out the entry or submission piece that you have submitted and review it again. Looking at it now, with a different set of eyes, would you change anything? If so what? Think about rewriting the piece to address these issues and then resubmit it to a different publisher, competition or agent.
- Start to draw up a new list of competitions, publishers or agents that you can submit this or a new piece of work to. Refocus your attention on the next submission piece - keep living in the moment and looking for opportunities to further your writing. Don't dwell on what has happened in the past.

Avoid the whole rejection scenario in the first place by using Words Worth Reading Ltd's [proofreading services](#).