



## **Giving & Receiving Criticism**

### **Giving Criticism**

Arrive with the attitude that all are here to help others (and ourselves) get to the next level in our writing.

In giving criticism:

- Use the sandwich method. Start with something you liked, then provide constructive criticism, then end with something you liked.
- Use “I” statements. It is better to say “I found this part boring” than to say “This part was boring.” If you “found this part boring,” explain why you found it boring by offering suggestions to make it not boring.
- Discuss the manuscript, not the writer.
- Do not rewrite in your own voice.
- Do not take ownership. The writer makes the final decision on whether to accept or reject any criticism.
- Even if you hate a piece of writing, the writer has invested time and effort on the manuscript. Phrase your criticism in a way that would not offend you if it were your writing.

### **Receiving Criticism**

In receiving criticism, it is important to remember:

- No draft is perfect.
- Do not take criticism personally.
- There is no need to defend your writing.



- You may think your work is perfect; but, others may think it is too long or too short, for example. Learn to classify voices offering criticism to decide which criticism trumps which.
- The final decision about what goes into your manuscript is the writer's; but, sometimes following the hardest advice can be the most worthwhile.
- Be open-minded and challenge your assumptions. The more you listen, rewrite, and see improvements in your work, the easier it will become to accept criticism in the future.
- After hearing criticism, let it sit for a day or a week before going back to revise or to think about changes. Make changes in your manuscript based on what rings true to you.
- Listen to what people think does not work for your story, then figure out how you want to fix it.