



# THE TRICK TO REJECTIONS

*by Pat White*

Rejections. They're horrible. Gut wrenching. Devastating. And reading them is a complete waste of your energy.

Or is it?

Sure, when you first get your rejection letter, describing in detail what's wrong with your heroine, your plot, your writing style, your hairstyle; your first reaction is to go face down in a gallon of Moose Tracks ice cream and come out five hours later.

But here's the trick: give yourself time to throw your tantrum. Get it out of your system. Drink your red wine, eat your chocolate (or even better, dip the chocolate in the red wine), stomp around the house, throw darts at the publisher's website, yes, even shout back at the letter if you have to.

Whew, once that's over, play a game of "a friend of mine just got this letter and I need to help her learn from it."

I'm not kidding.

And no, I'm not drunk.

With a fresh, objective eye, read it again, considering each criticism as a lesson. These rejections are all your teachers, sharing insight that will make you a better writer. That said, please disregard the letters that include comments like "you shouldn't waste anymore trees by trying to write." I call these "diseased" and they need to be destroyed so the disease won't spread.

Onto a few lessons I've learned from rejections.

**Lesson one:** When an editor says "There's not enough conflict in your story" guess what? There's probably not enough conflict in your story. Remember, no conflict, no story. Nada. Nothing. Conflict is, in my opinion, the pulse that keeps your story beating. A great reference book on conflict is Deb Dixon's "Goal, Motivation, and Conflict."  
(<http://www.debradixon.com>)

**Lesson Two:** When an editor writes, "I'd be happy to accept submissions from you in the future" she is not kidding and you'd better send her something else. Honest. Editors don't have time to be nice and make friends with Amanda Author. They recognize something they like when they see it. If they see it in your voice, and ask for it again, send something.

**Lesson Three:** Don't take it personally. HA! You knew that was coming. Publishing is a business and the goal is to make money. An editor wants to buy authors who are going to sell lots of books and make the publisher lots of money. Simple. You may not have what they think will sell this month, but six months down the line, your writing will be that much better and the tide may have changed and they're suddenly looking for books like yours.

Accept rejections as road signs directing you to your ultimate destination: publication!

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