

Freestyle Note: Kia ora whanau - use this space to write a message & let your loved one know why you thought they'd be interested in this article.

Using Rejection to your Advantage

Many Opal people know all about rejection. For many of us we have memories of hellish school days where education was a cruel torment best avoided. When I was at college (High School) I remember writing a story and submitting it to the teacher for marking. I was really excited as I couldn't often do a lot of the work set for me - but on this occasion I was expecting to get a good mark. The day came when she handed out all the papers with their marks. Eventually she'd handed them all back out to everyone apart from me. Timidly I asked for my paper and she said "it was obviously not your work." That sadly was the last time I wrote for the next 30 years.

When I got the courage in prison to start writing I had to spend a lot of time 'learning how to write 'because my spelling, grammar and ability to write legibly were not very good. When I left prison I entered my first writing competitions and started putting forward submissions.

OUCH: But I wasn't prepared for the pain of rejection. The first story I'd submitted was very personal to me and I was so hopeful of getting some positive feed-back.

Instead I got a letter that detailed every single error in my story and additional feedback on how out-dated and wordy my writing was. I felt so humiliated that I couldn't even talk to my husband about the rejection letter I'd received because I was embarrassed. My already low self-esteem had plummeted.

It took me about two weeks to get over the shock of all the negative feed-back, but eventually I was able to work through each comment by asking myself 'how can I fix that' because I'd decided that I wanted to be able to learn how to tell my stories in a way that people would 'want' to read them.

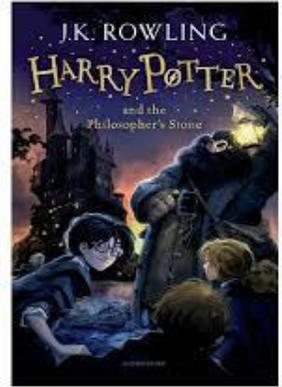
When I started re-directing all the energy that'd been created by the rejection letter into refining my writing - that's when I took back control. I'm happy to say that since that first rejection letter I've received countless more rejection letters! And yes - they still hurt. But I know that as an aspiring writer that any piece of feed-back is a good piece of feed-back (even though it may suck at the time).

Many other writers and other artists (song, lyric, poetry, etc) get rejected. Rejection is just part of what being an artist is all about.

Here's a prime example: Let's take a look at the writer of the famous Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling.



Years of Rejection Just Made J.K. Rowling More Determined



By Charley Lanyon

J.K. Rowling's latest movie, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, comes to American theaters on the 18th, and Hollywood is expecting a massive success. Before it even started filming, Warner Bros. agreed to produce four more films in the series — movies so hotly anticipated that some analysts claim they were the catalyst for AT&T's recent bid to buy Time Warner.

They have plenty of reason to be hopeful: Rowling's first franchise, *Harry Potter* — ever heard of it? — raked in a record-setting \$7.7 billion. Today, Rowling has more money than the queen — *much more* — but it wasn't always that way. Just 20 years ago she was a single mother living on welfare, her manuscripts rejected by more than a dozen publishers.

With Rowling's next big hit upon us, we thought we'd take a look back at the years of frustration she went through to get here — and the many publishers who missed their chance at making history.

Rowling still remembers her very first rejection. The agent didn't even send a proper letter — just a slip of paper — and instead of critiquing the manuscript, he went after her stationery, saying, "The folder you sent wouldn't fit in the envelope." Later Rowling recalled that she "really minded about the folder, because I had almost no money and had to buy another one."

Eventually, Bloomsbury agreed to publish *Harry Potter*, though they were less than enthusiastic. Her editor, Barry Cunningham, even advised her to get a day job because she would never make any money in children's books.

Rowling never did need another day job — but she wasn't quite done with rejection. After the massive success of *Harry Potter*, she tried her hand at a new genre, writing crime-mysteries under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. Editors turned down Galbraith in droves, sometimes rudely.

One publisher wrote to Galbraith - who was really J.K. Rowling:

At the risk of 'teaching my grandmother to suck eggs', may I respectfully suggest the following:

Double check in a helpful bookshop, on Amazon or in the twice yearly 'Buyer's Guide' of the Bookseller magazine (order via newsagents, or available in your local reference library) precisely who are the publishers now of your fiction category/genre. [Note: it said on this publisher's website that they specialized in crime fiction]

Call the publishers to obtain the name of the relevant editor; it is rarely productive to speak to her/him in person. Nowadays it is perfectly acceptable

to approach numerous publishers at once and even several imprints within the same group (imprints tend to be compartmentalised).

Then send to each editor an alluring 200-word blurb (as on book jackets; don't give away the ending!), the first chapter plus perhaps two others, and an S.A.E.

The covering letter should state as precisely as you can the category/genre of fiction you are submitting - cite successful authors in your genre, especially those published by the particular imprint you are contacting. Again a helpful bookshop may be able to advise you.

Much vital information can be found in *The Writer's Handbook* and *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook*, but remember that details of an imprint's publishing policy may be out of date, and acquiring a literary agent is even harder than finding a publisher! Owing to pressure of submissions, I regret we cannot reply individually or provide constructive criticism. (A writers' group/writing course may help with the latter.) May I wish you every success in placing your work elsewhere.

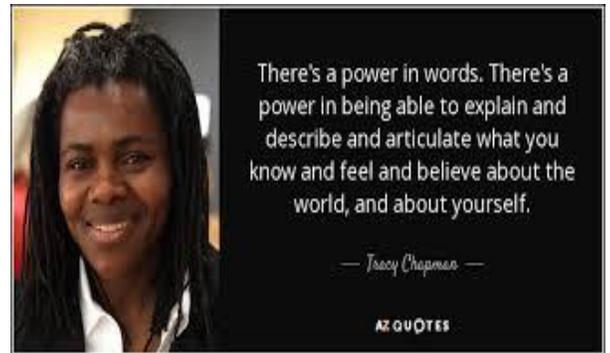
It must have been some consolation to Rowling that though this publisher tried to be helpful, in the end, one of the most successful authors in history was told to take a writing course!

Article Source: <http://nymag.com/vindicated/2016/11/years-of-rejection-just-made-j-k-rowling-more-determined.html>

So, now what?? Ready - Set - Write!

1. **Get writing & open yourself up to the potential that rejection can gift you.**
2. **You can't better your writing if you don't know where you're going wrong.**
3. **I have a belief that Opal people & their children have stories inside us that have the power to change the world into a better place.**
4. **Read as much as you can & read a wide variety of material.**
5. **Learn as much as you can about everything so that you expand what's available in your 'bag of tricks' (*that's your brain*)**
6. **Then dream, plan & write**

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