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If I Could Rewrite This, I Probably Would Just Start Over

The two classic phrases, “Nobody’s perfect” and “Practice makes perfect” are interesting when compared. They obviously contradict each other, and make the matter confusing to the listener. What are they supposed to believe? Well, the two phrases can both be relevant when it comes to writing. In “Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott, “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer Adler, and an interview with Ray Bradbury, proves that point by offering their first-hand accounts of writing and struggling with the quality of their content. The recognize, to create a good quality piece of work, it takes multiple tries with a lot of revision, research, and analysis. These writers want their readers to embrace the mistakes in their writing and to work to keep improving, even when it seems useless.

With this essay having such a casual tone, I could not help but relate. Whenever I write papers, I feel like getting started is the most difficult part. Brewing up ideas and forming them into word is way harder than it sounds. Lamott agrees with that when she talks about writing food reviews. She would constantly be writing down what first pops into her head, crossing out sentences at a time when they just did not fit the criteria. While reading that part of the essay, I could not help but be a little confused. While writing for school, we were never encouraged to cross out multiple sections and go back

to completely rewrite them. We were only taught to fix simple grammar mistakes, diction and to tweak the thesis. Although I was confused at first, the idea made more sense as the piece went on. Of course, someone's writing will not be perfect the very first time, because those people would be worshipped! Lamott made me rethink the way I critique my own writing. It is acceptable to want to go back and think of something brand new. Your ideas should connect and make sense, but returning and fixing an older thought does not make someone's idea incorrect, but better.

Both Ray Bradbury and Adler have similar views about reading a writing. They both believe that the two are important in society, and for a person's well-being in general. First, we can look at the importance of writing, where Adler focuses. He thinks that writing is necessary so we can, in a way, understand ourselves. We need to be able to reach inside of our minds and pull out ideas, even if they are subconscious. Even if we write something down and immediately throw the paper away, our brains will remember that content much more compared to if we just thought it. Adler also agrees that concentrating on crucial points in your writings is where you can build your support and/or argument (Adler). These techniques would help any writer through the process of making his writing flow and make sense to the reader.

Bradbury would feel the same way, except more towards reading. In his interview, he mentions Hitler's book burnings. The reason for these book burnings was to symbolize taking away people's ability to read and be a functioning, productive member in society. Without the basis of education, no one could make the best choices in a democracy (Bradbury). Without us realizing it, our lives would be completely different without reading and writing. No one would be able to learn anything without directly

experiencing it, and society would not advance nearly as fast as it is now. Reading and books was Bradbury's life. He lived and breathed books because they gave him a purpose (Bradbury). I am sure he used inspiration from his favorite authors to help create his content and learn which techniques work and which do not.

When it comes to writing, no draft is ever perfect. Lamott, Adler, and Bradbury all recognize that they cannot create the perfect piece right off the top of their heads. First drafts, revisions, and different techniques are never used to make anyone's writing any less special, but to make their pieces more impactful and inspiring. When looking at famous books, we fail to recognize all the work and time that went into them before the final publication, but with the help of these interviews and inside looks, we have a greater appreciation. Now, we can get a little closer to being perfect, but just from dedication and experience.

Works Cited

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