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415 Words

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”, Anne Lamott proves that point but offering her first-hand account of writing and struggling with the quality of her content. She recognizes, to create a good quality piece of work, it takes multiple tries with a lot of revision. Lamott wants her 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 and diction. 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.

"Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott does a great job of explaining to her readers that making mistakes is incredibly common in the writing world. The famous authors did not become famous over night after writing the perfect story, but by returning to their work for revisions. "Nobody's perfect" and "Practice makes perfect" are two opposites that make life confusing, but Lamott brings the two contrasting ideas to form a very revised, writing-related one.