

# MEDITATIVE WRITING'S



## SCREENPLAY CRAFT TOOLBOX

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M e d i t a t i v e W r i t i n g . o r g

## FIRAT DRAFT AND FINAL DRAFT

A great script is an artist's emotional truth told through the character's journey for the entertainment and catharsis of an audience.

### FIRST DRAFT

#### DO

Emotional connection

Visualization

Exploration

Curiosity

Seek out the conflicting

Seek out the paradox

Seek out the seemingly impossible

Feels true but makes no sense/don't understand

Write to discover

Assume you know nothing

Ask questions and seek out better questions, not answers

Follow your characters

Get to know characters

Discover your emotional truth while the characters pursue wants

Overwrite

Let your characters go further than you yourself are capable of going

Treat your characters as real

Write options

Working title

Replace judgment with curiosity

Accept that this is the very begging of a long process. Play the long game

Embrace the challenge, learn to enjoy the sensation of difficulty and growth

## DO NOT

Focus on the logic of the story

Worry about the audience/producers/production etc

Edit while you write

Edit while you write

Rewrite the first 15 pages

Rewrite any pages

Edit while you write

Plan everything out and execute it as you planned

Play it safe

Hold back

Write from logic over emotion

Be egotistical and foolish enough to think that your first draft will look anything like a final draft - that is delusional and a waste of time - you are better off believing that you can lose 25 pounds in one day of exercising - don't be delusional - *all suffering comes from expectation.*

Waste time wishing you were further along than you are

Waste time wishing it was easy. It is hard. It will always be hard. Accept that fact and move on

Wait for it to sound right in your head. What works in your head won't work on the page, and vice versa

Edit while you write

Treat your characters like puppets

Judge. Yourself, your writing, your characters - don't be judgemental.

The most important thing about a first draft is that it is done, and done means more material than you need - the truth of your characters' journey, beginning, middle, and end.

It is helpful to think more like a documentary filmmaker. Go out and get 150 hours of footage. Then we sit down and spend most of our time going through and deciding what bits of truth the audience needs to have the experience you want them to have.

Focus on arching yourself and your character.

Do not worry about your audience or producers etc., until a later draft.

## FINAL DRAFT

### The Reader Draft

Don't show up to a job interview in your pajamas.

Take care of your reader. Go above and beyond.

EXPERIMENT: At the end of a very long day. On little sleep. When you are in a not-great mood - read a screenplay. Notice what is difficult. Notice what is annoying. Now read three more.

The mind of the reader. What do they want?

Scene headings  
Name consistency  
Pronouns  
Action breaks  
Sentence length  
Read it out loud  
Have a reading  
If it is not needed, cut it out  
Character Intros  
Exact phrasing for recall  
Primacy and recency effect  
8th-grade reading level  
Reader draft not shooting draft  
Spell check (not you) (not grammar)  
Professional Script Consultation

WHEN IS YOUR SCRIPT DONE?

**FINAL THOUGHTS**  
**Or**  
**IF YOU ONLY REMEMBER A FEW THINGS JESS HAS SAID**

Start with your art; shape the art with your craft.

Write from feeling and truth, not logic and reason.

Growth mindset at all times.

Learn to love the difficulty, find meaning and value in the struggle.

Your character does not know they are in a film.

Write from your curiosity, not your ego.

Selling a screenplay will not fix your marriage, your self-loathing, or your fear that you are not good enough. It will only amplify those things - get therapy, stay in therapy.

Do not waste time trying to hack the process. Use that time to find an approach that works *for you*. If you prioritize ease and comfort over quality, you will never enjoy the life of a writer.

If you don't enjoy the act and process of writing, you will likely never succeed in having a career as a writer. Write because you love to write, and the act itself is worth it. You will be more likely to write something that makes it. And it will be more likely you can do that again and again.

Art is subjective.

A great script/film is an artist's emotional truth told through the character's journey for the entertainment and catharsis of an audience.