

So You Want to Be an Author

Three Rules That Must Not Be Broken

1. **Your story must be believable.**

- Readers want to believe the story they are reading could really happen.
- Every story has unspoken rules for how characters behave and for the event that occur in the story.
- Your characters can't magically find the answer to their problems.
- Coincidences aren't accepted unless the groundwork has been laid to make it not be a real coincidence.
- To make a scene believable, the answer to the problem must be setup in advance of the moment needed.

2. **Your characters must be relatable.**

- Readers must understand the goals and motivations of the characters. This is how they connect with your characters on a personal level.
- Goals are the things your character want.
 - External goals are physical - a job, a house, to stop a villain
 - Internal goals are emotional - the need to belong, be loved
 - Internal goals develop out of a character's emotional wound—an area where a negative experience has created some sort of lack in their life
 - Internal connect on an almost hidden level with the external goal.
 - Your characters are going to have wants and needs that are universal to man—things like being accepted by others, loved for who they are, respected, etc.
- Motivation is the why behind what they want.
 - the stronger the why, the less likely the character is to give up
 - the higher the stakes, the higher the motivation
 - Stakes - what will happen if they don't succeed
 - Internal motivation is developed through asking why
 - Asking why will reveal your character's wound, values, fears, flaws, the lies they believe, and the event in their life that kicked it all off.
- Check out Susie May Warren's *The Story Equation* for more details on how to do this.

3. **NEVER forget why you write.**

- Writing is a gift from God, and if you are here, it is a passion He has given you.
- There will be hard days, easy days, and days in-between.

- Spend time with God, God's Word, and in reflection to determine why you write and then write it down and stick it somewhere safe. (I focused on Ephesians 4 to help me determine my why.)
- Be encouraged. God has called you for a purpose. His plans are not to harm you—though some pain may be involved. His plans are to give you a hope and a future. Our hope and future are in Christ, not in writing. Keep that in focus, and this writing gig becomes a ministry and not the ultimate end.

Suggested Books

The Story Equation by Susan May Warren

Getting into Character by Brandilyn Collins

The Dance of Character & Plot by DiAnn Mills

Goal, Conflict, & Motivation by Debra Dixon

The Emotional Wound Thesaurus by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi