

The past few weeks may have seemed like I was a little harsh about what not to do at a pitchfest. Maybe it was poor taste to tell some of you to “stick it in and break it off,” but I feel as if some of you need to hear it.

Call it tough love.

Some of you might have just said “this guy’s a prick” and moved on thinking that what I had to say didn’t apply to you.

Let’s get this straight right now:

If at any time you read any or my articles and thought “thank God, I’m not like that!”

Guess what?

You’re like that.

So stop.

Please.

All you’ll accomplish is wasting time, money and burning bridges. That’s not how you become a successful screenwriter.

You become a successful screenwriter by being able to write...and write something good. It’s not hard.

Go and read scripts. They’re out there.

It’s called practice. Athletes do it. Musicians do it. Why don’t you do it?

Study your craft. Know the business. Know who’s who and who’s doing what.

It’s not hard. Read Variety every day. Read the Hollywood Reporter. Read Deadline Hollywood.

For you iPhone users, all of the above have apps for that shit.

The information is out there, why are you not using it?

I’ve spent weeks yelling at you. Have you been listening? Believe it or not, I’m actually trying to help you. I hope you recognize that.

No one else is going to tell you this shit. It’s what I’m here for. I’m here to help. You might not like the WAY I’m trying to help, but sometimes you need to be bitch-slapped.

You’re welcome.

So what’s the plan from here? What do you do when you feel like your whole world is pulled out from under you?

You do what you need to do.

You pick your shit up off the floor, roll up your sleeves, crack your knuckles and get ta typin'! That's what I do. You know why?

Because I want it. I want it so bad that I can taste it.

And I will do whatever it takes to get there.

Last week I finished a pretty big script. I had been working on it slowly. In all honesty it was really a backburner project that I worked on from time to time. I never really meant for it to be anything more than a writing sample. Something I could use to show people I could write. In the meantime, I would focus on the stuff that I *really* wanted to write.

I wanted to be the next Woody Allen.

It took me many years to realize I couldn't be the next Woody Allen. That's not my wheelhouse when it comes to my writing.

I can honestly say that shit fucks you up. It's not easy to realize what you're doing is shit. Especially when you set out with one idea in your mind of who you are.

At the end of the day, you write because you have to write. So it doesn't matter. You learn, you adapt and most importantly, you grow. You become who you're supposed to be naturally.

That being said, I finished this script and gave it to someone pretty high up in the company I work for. I thought I was good. I thought I was done. I had my writer's "blindness" on.

He finally read my script and gave me seven notes on my script. Six of them were fucking GENIUS. So genius that I got re-excited about the script and wanted to get right back into it.

(SIDENOTE: That seventh note? I don't remember it, but I knew it wasn't right. I totally smiled, nodded my head and said "uh huh." Then immediately forgot it.)

It wasn't easy; those notes meant some major re-hauling of my script. It was going to be a lot of work. But fuck it, I loved the script and buckled down and got it done.

This led to my second draft. Upon that draft, I knew I had it. I fixed all of the issues and the script was so much better than its first version.

Then I gave the script to a friend of mine. Someone I really trust. She rips it apart. Popped my balloon. But she was right. It needed to be better.

What did I do? Rolled up the sleeves. Make it work.

I spent the next 36 hours barely sleeping and cranking it out.

I fixed it. Fixed it to the point where it felt right. I gave the script out to a few friends, a wider audience and they loved it. No notes. I had nailed it.

I gave it back to the person high up in my company. He read it. He loved it.

But he had three notes that he told me I could choose to ignore, but that he felt would make the script better.

I listened. I evaluated his notes and let them process. Two of the three notes were easy fixes. The third one? It meant a total overhaul of the structure of the script.

This happened yesterday.

I'm about to go into the fourth draft of the script. I'm going to completely dive in and re-tool the structure and it's going to be a lot of work.

But you know what?

I'm fucking excited about it. I'm almost there. I can feel that brass ring.

And that feeling is pretty fucking good.

I want all of you to have that feeling. I want all of you to feel what I'm feeling about my writing.

The first step?

Stop being a douche in a pitchfest!

Once you do that, you're going to be a better writer. When that happens, you're going to get your script read off of a pitchfest.

After that, what do you do?

Next week I'm going to tell you the etiquette to follow after a pitchfest. What to do when you actually get an industry person to ask to read your script.

Till then...